

Statement on the Future of Federal Laboratories *September 25, 1995*

On May 5, 1994, I directed the Department of Defense, the Department of Energy, and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration to review their major laboratories. These three laboratory systems account for approximately one-fifth of the Federal investment in research and development (R&D)—approximately \$15 billion out of a total of about \$70 billion. I sought a study that would assess the continuing value of these laboratories in serving vital public needs, and I wanted an evaluation of options for change within these labs for the purpose of cutting costs and improving R&D productivity.

Informed by that review, I am announcing today an initial set of directives which will affect these laboratories well into the future.

I have concluded that these laboratories provide essential services to the Nation in fundamental science, national security, environmental protection and cleanup, and industrial competitiveness. Many of these laboratories are equipped with research tools that are among the finest in the world. They employ personnel with extraordinary and, in many cases, irreplaceable talent. These labs have contributed greatly to our Nation in the past and hold the potential for contributions of tremendous importance in the future.

One example where the national laboratories can help change the course of history is with respect to nuclear weapons. On August 11, 1995, I announced my decision to seek a “zero” yield Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). I was able to make that decision based on assurances by the Secretary of Energy and the Directors of the Department of Energy’s nuclear weapons labs that we can meet the challenge of maintaining our nuclear deterrent under a CTBT through a science-based stockpile stewardship program without nuclear testing.

To meet the challenge of ensuring confidence in the safety and reliability of our stockpile, I have concluded that the continued vitality of all three DOE nuclear weapons laboratories will be essential.

In accordance with this conclusion, I have directed the Department of Energy to maintain nuclear weapons responsibilities and capabilities

adequate to support the science-based stockpile stewardship program required to ensure continued confidence in the safety and reliability of the nuclear weapons stockpile in the absence of nuclear testing. Stable funding for this effort based on bipartisan support will be necessary in order to meet this requirement.

Strong bipartisan support equally is necessary across a broad range of other science and technology programs being performed in Federal laboratories, academia, and the private sector. Since the beginning of my administration, we have placed a high priority on investments in science and technology. We believe that few areas of Federal spending will be more important to the well-being of future generations than R&D. We are deeply concerned about budget actions that could cripple our capacity to find new ways of solving the scientific and technological challenges of the 21st century.

Among our greatest strengths as our Nation moves into the next century will be our ability to innovate, to design new drugs, to find new ways to enhance our national security, to develop new tools for managing enormous amounts of information, to generate new ways of harnessing energy, to produce new materials and processes that result in new products and industries at lower cost and with less pollution, and to expand the frontiers of our knowledge of the universe. These laboratories have excelled in such innovations as these and will continue to yield great public dividends for our Federal investment.

At the same time, these labs must be run as efficiently as possible. I have directed the agencies to review and, as appropriate, to rescind internal management instructions and oversight that impede laboratory performance. I have directed the agencies to clarify and focus the mission assignments of their laboratories. I also have directed the agencies to achieve all possible budget savings through streamlining and management improvements before productive R&D programs are sacrificed. Many agencies and laboratories already are making important progress in each of these areas of management reform.

Sept. 25 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1995

It has been said that R&D investments are an expression of our confidence as a Nation in our future. Today we are reaping the benefits of those who wisely invested in Federal R&D in the past. While it would be easy to destroy premier Federal laboratories through severe

budget cuts or senseless closures, that is not a path that this administration will follow. We will invest in our Federal laboratories while pursuing aggressive management reforms that ensure the maximum productive output for the taxpayers' investments.

Letter to Congressional Leaders and the Federal Communications Commission Chair on Radio Spectrum Reallocation

September 25, 1995

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)
(Dear Mr. Chairman:)

Title VI of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993 requires that the Secretary of Commerce identify 200 megahertz (MHz) of the radio spectrum assigned to Federal Government use for reallocation to the Federal Communications Commission for nonfederal use.

Under delegated authority, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) is responsible for managing the Federal Government's use of the radio spectrum. On March 22, 1995, Secretary of Commerce Ronald Brown submitted to you NTIA's Spectrum Reallocation Final Report that identified for reallocation in August 1995, the 2300-2310 and 2400-2402 MHz bands for exclusive nonfederal use and the 2417-2450 MHz band for mixed Federal and nonfederal use.

I am pleased to inform you that the Federal Government frequency assignments in the spectrum identified for reallocation for exclusive nonfederal use have been withdrawn by NTIA in compliance with section 114 of the Act. In addition, modifications were made to the National Table of Frequency Allocations for Government stations to reflect the reallocation of the spectrum.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate, and Reed E. Hundt, Chair, Federal Communications Commission.

Remarks on the Federal Budget and an Exchange with Reporters

September 26, 1995

The President. First of all, let me say, as you can see here, I am meeting with the Democratic members of the House Ways and Means Committee. I am delighted to be here with them to discuss the budget decisions that have to be made in the next few weeks.

As you know, I strongly favor balancing the budget to lift the burden of debt off of our children and to strengthen our economy. But I think we have to do it in a way that is consistent with our values, giving people the chance to make the most of their own lives, strengthening our families, protecting our children, hon-

oring our parents, growing the middle class, and shrinking the under class. Those are the values that we ought to be making these decisions on.

In my judgment, the congressional budget that the Republican majority has offered violates those values. And the American people need to be a part of this, and they need to ask some basic questions: Do we want to support that budget when it will deny 300,000 elderly people the right to be in nursing homes that they have today? Do we really want to eliminate all the quality standards for nursing homes?