

Nov. 20 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1995

Again, I urge the Congress to meet its responsibilities by sending me the remaining regular FY 1996 appropriations bills in acceptable form.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
November 20, 1995.

NOTE: H.R. 2020, approved November 19, was assigned Public Law No. 104-52.

Statement on Signing the Legislative Branch Appropriations Act, 1996 *November 20, 1995*

Last night I signed into law H.R. 2492, the "Legislative Branch Appropriations Act, 1996."

The Act provides fiscal year 1996 appropriations for the Congress, the Congressional Budget Office, the Architect of the Capitol, the General Accounting Office, the Government Printing Office, and the Library of Congress.

On October 3, 1995, I vetoed the first Legislative Branch Appropriations bill, indicating at the time that the bill was acceptable but that the Congress should not take care of its own business before it takes care of the people's business. At the time the Legislative Branch bill was sent to the White House, the Congress had passed only one other of the 13 appropriations

bills. The Congress has now completed action on six bills that I have been able to sign.

While much work remains to be done and the Congress remains behind schedule, I signed this bill recognizing that the Congress has indeed made some progress since October 3.

I urge the Congress to meet its responsibilities by sending me the remaining FY 1996 appropriations bills in an acceptable form.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
November 20, 1995.

NOTE: H.R. 2492, approved November 19, was assigned Public Law No. 104-53.

Remarks Announcing the Bosnia-Herzegovina Peace Agreement and an Exchange With Reporters *November 21, 1995*

Good morning. About an hour ago I spoke with Secretary Christopher in Dayton, Ohio. He informed me that the Presidents of Bosnia, Croatia, and Serbia have reached a peace agreement to end the war in Bosnia, to end the worst conflict in Europe since World War II.

After nearly 4 years of 250,000 people killed, 2 million refugees, atrocities that have appalled people all over the world, the people of Bosnia finally have a chance to turn from the horror of war to the promise of peace.

The Presidents of Bosnia, Croatia, and Serbia have made a historic and heroic choice. They have heeded the will of their people. Whatever their ethnic group, the overwhelming majority of Bosnia citizens and the citizens of Croatia and Serbia want the same thing. They want to

stop the slaughter; they want to put an end to the violence and war; they want to give their children and their grandchildren a chance to lead a normal life. Today, thank God, the voices of those people have been heard.

I want to congratulate America's negotiating team, led by Secretary Christopher and Ambassador Holbrooke, for their extraordinary service. Their determination, along with that of our European and Russian partners, along with NATO's resolve, brought the parties to the negotiating table. Then their single-minded pursuit of peace in Dayton made today's agreement a possibility and eventually a reality.

The people of Bosnia, the American people, indeed people throughout the world, should be very thankful for this event today. The peace

plan agreed to would preserve Bosnia as a single state, within its present borders and with international recognition. The state will be made up of two parts, the Bosnian Croat Federation and the Bosnian Serb Republic, with a fair distribution of land between the two. The capital city of Sarajevo will remain united.

There will be an effective central government, including a national parliament, a presidency, and a constitutional court, with responsibility for foreign policy, foreign trade, monetary policy, citizenship, immigration, and other important functions. The presidency and the parliament will be chosen through free democratic elections, held under international supervision. Refugees will be allowed to return to their homes. People will be able to move freely throughout Bosnia. And the human rights of every Bosnian citizen will be monitored by an independent commission and an internationally trained civilian police. Those individuals charged with war crimes will be excluded from political life.

Now that the parties to the war have made a serious commitment to peace, we must help them to make it work. All the parties have asked for a strong international force to supervise the separation of forces and to give them confidence that each side will live up to their agreements. Only NATO can do that job. And the United States as NATO's leader must play an essential role in this mission. Without us, the hard-won peace would be lost, the war would resume, the slaughter of innocents would begin again, and the conflict that already has claimed so many people could spread like poison throughout the entire region.

We are at a decisive moment. The parties have chosen peace. America must choose peace as well. Now that a detailed settlement has been reached, NATO will rapidly complete its planning for the implementation force known as IFOR. The plan soon will be submitted to me for review and for approval. As of now, we expect that about one-third of IFOR's force will be American. The rest will come from our NATO partners and from other nations throughout the world.

At the same time, once the agreement is signed, the international community will initiate a parallel program to provide humanitarian relief, to begin the job of rebuilding, to help the thousands of refugees return to their homes, to monitor free elections, in short, to help the

Bosnian people create the conditions of lasting peace.

The NATO military mission will be clear and limited. Our troops will take their orders only from the American general who commands NATO. They will have authority to meet any threat to their safety or any violation of the peace agreement with immediate and decisive force. And there will be a reasonable timetable for their withdrawal.

I am satisfied that the NATO implementation plan is clear, limited, and achievable and that the risks to our troops are minimized. I will promptly consult with Congress when I receive this plan, and if I am fully satisfied with it when I see it in its final form, I will ask Congress to support American participation.

The central fact for us as Americans is this: Our leadership made this peace agreement possible and helped to bring an end to the senseless slaughter of so many innocent people that our fellow citizens had to watch night after night after night for 4 long years on their television screens. Now American leadership, together with our allies, is needed to make this peace real and enduring. Our values, our interests, and our leadership all over the world are at stake.

I ask all Americans in this Thanksgiving week to take some time to say a simple prayer of thanksgiving that this peace has been reached, that our Nation was able to play an important role in stopping the suffering and the slaughter.

May God bless the peace and the United States.

Q. Mr. President, Congress seems deeply skeptical of sending American troops to Bosnia right now. How are you going to turn that around, and how soon would American forces have to go into Bosnia?

The President. Well, first of all, I believe it's important for the Congress to have a chance to review this peace agreement and to receive the assurances from the leaders of Bosnia, Croatia, and Serbia that they intend to do everything in their power to make sure the agreement is implemented in good faith and with peaceful intent and absolutely minimal violence. I think that will be an imperative part of this endeavor.

I will work with the leaders of Congress to establish a schedule for implementing that. I have placed calls to the Speaker, the majority leader of the Senate, and the minority leaders of the Senate and the House shortly before I came out here. I was only able to reach the

Speaker. The others were in transit, but I will speak to them all today. And I will work with them to establish a schedule for consultation with Congress that will begin as soon as I approve the final NATO plan.

I have had extensive briefings on this plan. And as I said, I am satisfied that based on what we knew at the time I was briefed, we had a clear, limited, achievable mission that minimized the risks to not only the uniformed forces of the United States but others who would participate as well. When I see the final plan, if I remain of that opinion, I will immediately consult with Congress and we will have an agreed-upon schedule for consultations, which I think will begin immediately in terms of the detail of the peace agreement itself. And that is the responsibility that I have to bear, and I intend to assume it.

Now, we have assured Congress that there will be no complete deployment until they have a chance to be heard on this issue. The only things that will be done in the preliminary period, assuming that things go forward as we anticipate today and you hear what I think you will hear shortly from the three Presidents, is that there will be some preliminary planning done in the Bosnia area, which is absolutely essential and which we have already fully disclosed to the Congress. But beyond that, the Congress will have a period of weeks before the final formal signing ceremony, which would trigger the involvement of NATO's forces. So that's what I expect will happen.

Let me say that I know you will have other questions about the details of this peace agree-

ment, how it was reached, the number of eleventh hours that came and passed. And even last night at midnight, when I had my last conversation with Secretary Christopher, we were not sure whether there would be peace this morning. When I got up and we began to work on this, we were not sure there would be peace. As often happens in a process like this, as I think happened in the Middle East, something stirred among the leaders themselves and they decided that they should not let this moment pass for the benefit of their people.

So I believe we'll be able to answer all the other questions in the days ahead, and the people in Dayton will be able to answer more of your questions when they have their press conference. The main thing is, I ask all Americans to remember what we have seen and heard and read about for the last 4 years and remember what the implications were not only for our consciences but for the prospect that that conflict could spread.

The fact that these leaders have voted to bring an end to this and to give the people of Bosnia a peaceful Christmas and a peaceful future is something for which we should be very, very thankful.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:40 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Alija Izetbegovic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, President Franjo Tudjman of Croatia, and President Slobodan Milosevic of Serbia.

Remarks at the Blair Homeless Shelter *November 22, 1995*

I'd like to just say one word, if I might. I want to say that Hillary and I came here to be with you at Thanksgiving and to celebrate Thanksgiving with our country because we wanted to thank the people who run this wonderful service here for their commitment, for their service.

I also want to say a word of thanks to my friend Henry Cisneros, the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, because he put to-

gether a homeless initiative for the District of Columbia that helps this project and many others, because after I became President, I said I was just tired of seeing people on the street. I want us to do something to give people some hope, to give people a place to be.

And on this Thanksgiving Day, Mr. Mayor, I say again, we are honored to be citizens of the District of Columbia. We are honored to have the chance to be with you and to work