

Q. Are you sure you will be using it next year?

The President. Well, that's up to the bosses out there. But I'll tell you this, I was more than happy—the majority in the Congress wanted to wait until January to put it in, for their own reasons, and when I was asked about it, without a moment's hesitation, I said yes. That was a reasonable compromise for me.

I think this is so important that we shouldn't—if they want to take it out of the context of this year's elections and the fall's budget negotiations, I think it is so important

to get into the law for the long run it was fine with me. I was very happy to do that. I don't have any problem with it. We did it. It's the right thing to do, and it's been done, and we did it together, and that's the way we ought to do more things.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:15 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Roy Romer of Colorado. S. 4, approved April 9, was assigned Public Law No. 104-130.

Statement on Signing the Line Item Veto Act April 9, 1996

Today I am very pleased to sign into law S. 4, the Line Item Veto Act.

This new law shows what we can achieve when we put our partisan differences aside and work together for the Nation. Members of both parties have fought for this legislation because they believed that no matter which party has control of the White House or the Congress, the line item veto would be good for the country.

I have consistently supported a Presidential line item veto as a Governor, as a candidate for President in 1992, and as President the last 3 years.

Starting with Ulysses S. Grant, Presidents of both parties have sought the line item veto so they could eliminate waste in the Federal budget. Most recently, Presidents Reagan and Bush called for its passage, as did many Members of Congress.

With this authority, Presidents will have a valuable new tool to ensure that the Federal Government is spending public resources as wisely as possible. It will permit the President to cancel discretionary spending, new entitlement authority, and tax provisions that benefit special interests at the expense of the public interest.

This carefully defined authority is also a practical and principled means of serving the constitutional balance of powers. The modern congressional practice of presenting the President

with omnibus legislation reduces the President's ability to play the role in enacting laws that the Constitution intended. This new authority brings us closer to the Founders' view of an effective executive role in the legislative process. The President will be able to prevent the Congress from enacting special interest provisions under the cloak of a 500- or 1,000-page bill. Special interest provisions that do not serve the national interest will no longer escape proper scrutiny.

No one, of course, believes the line item veto is a cure-all for the budget deficit. Indeed, even without the line item veto, we are already cutting the deficit in half—as I had promised to do when I ran for President. But the line item veto will provide added discipline by ensuring that as tight budgets increasingly squeeze our resources, we will put our public funds to the best possible uses.

I call on the leaders of the Congress, in the spirit of bipartisanship reflected in today's bill signing, to join me in continuing to make progress. We should move ahead by reaching an agreement to balance the budget by 2002.

Over the last several months, I have worked closely with congressional leaders to reach such an agreement. In fact, we have about \$700 billion in common savings. We should finish our work this year.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
April 9, 1996.

NOTE: S. 4, approved April 9, was assigned Public Law No. 104-130.

Remarks Prior to Discussions With Prime Minister Konstandinos Simitis of Greece and an Exchange With Reporters

April 9, 1996

President Clinton. Let me say it's a great honor for me to welcome Prime Minister Simitis here, along with his party. Greece has been a long and strong ally of the United States, and I'm looking forward to discussing a number of issues, including how we can be helpful in resolving some of the difficulties in the Aegean.

Let me say, first of all, that I think all these issues should be resolved without the use of force or the threat of force, with both parties agreeing to abide by international agreements and with a mutual respect for territorial integrity. With regard to the Imia question, the United States has already said we believe it should be submitted to the International Court of Justice or some other international arbitration forum.

I also want to thank Greece for its leadership in trying to resolve the problems in the future of the Balkans in a positive way. Greece is participating in IFOR and is working with the challenges presented in Albania, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, in a number of other ways.

And finally, I hope we have a chance to talk about Cyprus a little bit. This has been an area of intense interest for me since I became President, and I hope that we can do more in that area to help that situation to be resolved.

Iranian Arms Shipments to Bosnia

Q. Mr. President, are you concerned about the investigation of Iranian arms shipments to Bosnia during the war?

President Clinton. No.

Q. Did you allow it to happen?

President Clinton. Our record on that is clear. Mr. Lake has talked about it. There was absolutely nothing improper done.

Q. You know, Bob Dole supported lifting the arms embargo, and now he is talking about possible investigation of the flow of arms. What do you think is going on there, Mr. President?

President Clinton. He also took the position that we had the right to unilaterally lift it.

Q. What do you think his motives are though?

President Clinton. You all can comment on what is going on. I'm just going to try to do my job.

[*At this point, one group of reporters left the room, and another group entered.*]

Discussions With Prime Minister Simitis

President Clinton. Hello. Is everyone in? Let me say, first of all, it's a great honor for me, on behalf of the United States, to welcome Prime Minister Simitis here. I have already had the opportunity to thank him for the wonderful welcome that my wife and daughter received from the government and from the people of Greece recently. We have a number of things to discuss. I hope the United States can be helpful in resolving some of the problems in the Aegean.

At the outset, let me say, we believe that all these issues should be solved without the use of force, without the threat of force, with everyone agreeing to abide by international agreements and to respect the territorial integrity of other countries. With regard to the Imia situation, the United States has long said that we favor the resolution by referring the matter to the International Court of Justice or some other international arbitration panel, and we feel very strongly that these things have to be resolved.

I want to have an opportunity to thank the Prime Minister for the leadership that Greece has shown in resolving problems in the Balkans, involving Albania, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and participating in IFOR in Bosnia. And I think that the future of the Balkans as a secure and peaceful and hopefully more democratic place requires the leadership of Greece. And so I'm looking forward to that.