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low up on it is what I intend to talk about and will overshadow everything else.

I believe that things are proceeding reasonably well now in Iraq, based on what I know today. I feel good about that. I think the United States should pay its U.N. dues. We're going to pay our dues this year, and we'll start to pay our debts on a regular basis until we get our debt paid back. I think we ought to, and I've always felt that, as you know.

And our position on the future of the U.N. and the Secretary-General, a man for whom I have great personal respect, has been clear for many months now. So nothing's changed there. That's not new, not a surprise. And I expect it to be a good day.

Q. Have you got a replacement for him? Do you have a successor in mind?

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Q. What do you think about Bob Dole calling you a closet liberal and hitting you so personally on the drug issue?

The President. Well, let me—I'll just answer the liberal thing. I'll save the other one. I've got to have something to say at the debate. [*Laughter*]

But there's a real problem with that. One is my record, my record as Governor, my record as President. If you look at what we did on the deficit, bringing it down 4 years in a row for the first time since before the Civil War; what we did with the crime bill, which had the death penalty for drug kingpins and people who kill police officers and "three strikes and you're out" and 100,000 police and the assault weapons ban and the Brady bill; when you look at what we have done on welfare reform, starting in '93, that now has reduced the rolls on welfare by almost 2 million, the record doesn't support the charge. If you look at what I'm advocating for the next 4 years, it doesn't support the charge.

It is true that he and I had differences over the budget last year. And we will again in this campaign. And we have different tax cut plans. But I don't think that that qualifies me as a closet liberal.

Besides that, a President is too exposed. You can't be a—I don't have a closet. [*Laughter*]

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:45 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Reform Party Presidential candidate Ross Perot; Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin and Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov of Russia; and United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. H.R. 3230, approved September 23, was assigned Public Law No. 104–201.

Statement on Signing the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1997

September 23, 1996

Today I have signed into law H.R. 3230, the "National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1997," legislation authorizing fiscal 1997 appropriations for military activities of the Department of Defense, military construction, and defense activities of the Department of Energy. While I have reservations about parts of this Act, it is a step in the right direction, authorizing much of what my administration sought and omitting a number of provisions that we opposed.

First, the Act will improve the quality of life for military personnel by providing a 3 percent pay increase and better housing opportunities.

Second, the Act authorizes appropriations for important modernization programs requested in my budget. These programs, which are designed to provide our forces with the most modern equipment found anywhere on the globe, include the Army's Comanche helicopter, the Navy's Seawolf submarine, the Air Force's C–17 transport, and the V–22 Osprey for the Marine Corps.

Third, the Act authorizes additional appropriations for counter-narcotics programs, which my Administration sought in a FY 1996 supplemental appropriations request.

Fourth, the Act authorizes the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction program, which provides a highly effective means of enhancing U.S. security by eliminating nuclear weapons and preventing weapons proliferation in the states of the former Soviet Union. And the Act also establishes the Nunn-Lugar II program, which authorizes the Department of Defense to assist civilian law enforcement agencies in responding to emergencies involving biological, chemical, or nuclear weapons of mass destruction, and to provide funding to improve the security of U.S. and international borders.

Fifth, the Act creates a new National Imagery and Mapping Agency, which will provide a single focus within the Government for managing imagery and geospatial information.

Sixth, the Act advances my commitment to sound environmental management by fully funding my request for Defense environmental programs and authorizing solid waste management technologies for Navy ships.

Seventh, the Act authorizes my Administration's request to award the Medal of Honor to seven African American soldiers who demonstrated outstanding heroism in combat during World War II.

I am also gratified that the final version of this bill omitted certain provisions that my Administration staunchly opposed. These include: provisions that would have interfered with our ability to control ballistic missiles by legislating the standards for demarcating theater from strategic ballistic missiles and preventing the President from adding states of the former Soviet Union to the ABM Treaty; and a discriminatory provision requiring discharge of HIV-positive service members.

And I am pleased as well that this Act includes an important nondefense measure, the Interstate Stalking Punishment and Prevention Act, which makes interstate stalking a Federal offense. Most States have strong anti-stalking laws against those who seek to threaten, harass, or intimidate others, especially women and girls. But, until now, stalkers could not be charged with violating restraining orders if they travelled to another State to pursue their victims. This new measure eliminates that loophole and will allow Federal law enforcement to crack down on stalkers wherever they go.

For all its strengths, though, I do have some reservations about this Act. Most important, the Act authorizes $11.5 billion of appropriations above my 1997 budget request of $254.2 billion. I firmly believe that my requested funding levels maintain a strong defense without sacrificing important domestic programs. Moreover, much of the increase authorized by this Act is for programs not in the Department of Defense's long-range plan and will require additional future funding, precluding successful completion of modernization programs more vital to our national defense.

Nevertheless, authorization legislation establishes spending ceilings and not floors. The actual spending levels will be set through the appropriations process. Without adjustments to the proposed Defense Appropriations funding levels, I am deeply concerned about the Congress' ability to fund critical domestic needs in education and other areas. These needs must be met before the Congress adjourns.

I am also disappointed in several other features of the Act. First, it reduces funding for the important Dual Use Applications Program, the successor to my Technology Reinvestment Project. And it also omits my Administration's proposals to broaden the Defense Department's authority to acquire commercial or industrial supplies by contract from the private sector and to outsource more depot maintenance.

Further, the Act fails to include a provision passed by the Senate that would have permitted overseas military medical facilities to provide the same essential medical services to military personnel and their dependents stationed abroad for privately financed abortions that are available in the United States. I supported the Senate provision because I think it is unfair to deny American women serving our country overseas the ability to choose to have a safe legal abortion.

Other provisions of the Act raise serious constitutional concerns. Provisions purporting to require the President to enter into or report on specified negotiations with foreign governments, as well as a provision that limits the information that could be revealed in negotiations, intrude on the President's constitutional authority to conduct the Nation's diplomacy and the President's role as Commander in Chief. I will interpret these provisions as precatory.

Further, the bill's method for appointing the National Ocean Leadership Council would violate the Appointments Clause of the Constitution. I urge the Congress to pass amendments at the earliest possible time to provide for a

constitutional means of appointing this Council. Until this correction is made, the Council should not exercise significant governmental authority.

Another provision of the Act could be read to require intra-branch consultations before the Secretary of Defense could make recommendations to me regarding certain appointments. This provision is constitutionally questionable, and I therefore will construe it consistent with my authorities under the Constitution. I anticipate implementing the intent of the provisions with an Executive order.

The Act would overturn organizational arrangements in the Department of Energy's nuclear weapons complex that have served the Nation well for over 50 years. Because this micromanagement provision would severely limit the Secretary's ability to determine and control the best way to manage the Department's personnel, budget and procurement functions, I have directed the Secretary to study the provision's effects and to report to me and to the Congress on the study's results before implementing this provision. If reorganization is appropriate, the Secretary of Energy should use existing statutory authority to assure that the Department is organized in a way that is most efficient for carrying out the Department's business.

Finally, I note that the Act requires the Secretaries of Defense and Health and Human Services to submit a plan to the Congress to establish a Medicare subvention demonstration program. This program would allow Medicare-eligible beneficiaries to enroll in the Defense Department's TRICARE managed care program. These Departments recently reached agreement on a detailed plan to implement a 3-year Medicare subvention demonstration. Thus, I have directed the Departments to work with the Congress on bipartisan legislation that would initiate this demonstration.

On balance, this Act takes a number of important steps to advance our national security and the well-being of those who serve us with such loyalty and distinction in our Armed Forces. I look forward to working with the Congress to assure that the appropriated funding is consistent with my Administration's commitment both to defend this Nation and to honor its values.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
September 23, 1996.

NOTE: H.R. 3230, approved September 23, was assigned Public Law No. 104–201. This statement was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 24.

Remarks to the 51st Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York City

September 24, 1996

Mr. President, Mr. Secretary-General, heads of government, foreign ministers, ambassadors, your excellencies, distinguished guests: Three years ago, I had the honor of being the first American President born after the founding of the United Nations to address you. In its 51st year, the United Nations has not yet realized all its founders' aspirations, but the ideals of the U.N. Charter, peace, freedom, tolerance, prosperity, these now touch more people in more nations than ever before.

Now we find ourselves at a turning point in history, when the blocs and barriers that long defined the world are giving way to an age of remarkable possibility, a time when more of our children and more nations will be able to live out their dreams than ever before. But this is also an age of new threats: threats from terrorists, from rogue states that support them; threats from ethnic, religious, racial, and tribal hatreds; threats from international criminals and drug traffickers, all of whom will be more dangerous if they gain access to weapons of mass destruction.

The challenge before us plainly is twofold: to seize the opportunities for more people to enjoy peace and freedom, security and prosperity, and to move strongly and swiftly against the dangers that change has produced. This week in this place, we take a giant step forward.