

Message to the House of Representatives Returning Without Approval Legislation To Override a Line Item Veto

November 13, 1997

To the House of Representatives:

I am returning herewith without my approval H.R. 2631, "An Act disapproving the cancellations transmitted by the President on October 6, 1997, regarding Public Law 105-45."

Under the authority of the Line Item Veto Act, on October 6, 1997, I canceled 38 military construction projects to save the taxpayers \$287 million. The bill would restore all of the 38 projects.

The projects in this bill would not substantially improve the quality of life of military service members and their families, and most of them would not likely use funds for construction

in FY 1998. While the bill does restore funding for projects that were canceled based on outdated information provided by the Department of Defense, I do not endorse restoration of all 38 projects.

The Administration remains committed to working with the Congress to restore funding for those projects that were canceled as a result of data provided by the Department of Defense that was out of date.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
November 13, 1997.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization

November 13, 1997

*Dear Mr. Chairman: (Dear Mr. Ranking
Member:)*

I transmit herewith the 6-month report required under the heading "International Organizations and Programs" in title IV of the Foreign Operations Appropriations Act, 1996 (Public Law 104-107), relating to the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO).

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Ted Stevens, chairman, and Robert C. Byrd, ranking member, Senate Committee on Appropriations; and Robert L. Livingston, chairman, and David R. Obey, ranking member, House Committee on Appropriations.

Remarks Prior to Discussions With President Ernesto Zedillo of Mexico and an Exchange With Reporters

November 14, 1997

Iraq

Q. Mr. President, are you willing to extend the no-fly zone across the remainder of Iraq?

President Clinton. Let me first of all say that I believe that the Secretary-General and our team, the United Nations team, made the right decision in withdrawing the team of inspectors

there and not just leaving them there. But the real issue here is, how can we stop Saddam Hussein from reconstituting his weapons of mass destruction program, and what will achieve that goal. Any specific tactic will be designed to achieve that goal.

The world has got to understand that he had a weapons of mass destruction program, that

he is one of the few people who has ever used chemical weapons against both his enemies and his own citizens, and that there will be a big market for such weapons out there among terrorists and other groups.

This is not just a replay of the Gulf war; this is not throw a man who invaded a country, Kuwait, out of the country and reestablish territorial integrity. This is about the security of the 21st century and the problems everybody is going to have to face dealing with chemical weapons.

So as you know, I don't think it's appropriate for me to speculate about what we might or might not do with specific options, but I think that we have to steel ourselves and be determined that the will of the international community, expressed in the United Nations Security Council resolutions, will have to prevail.

This is simply—it's too dangerous an issue that would set too powerful a precedent about the impotence of the United Nations, if we didn't proceed on this, in the face of what I have considered to be one of the three or four most significant security threats that all of our people will face for the next whole generation, this weapons of mass destruction proliferation. We've got to stop it.

Q. Given that, sir, are you willing to let the situation last where he's able to manufacture weapons of mass destruction with no one on the ground watching? And if I may ask a second question, sir, why are you ordering a second aircraft carrier into the Gulf region?

President Clinton. Well, I'm ordering the carrier in there because I think it's appropriate under the circumstances. And let me say on the first question that one of the reasons the United States has supported the U.N. decision to continue the flights is that if we're not on the ground, it's been more important that we observe what we can in the air. And we are working this very hard.

We also—I want to say this is a United Nations endeavor, a United Nations resolution we want to implement. We want very much to work with our allies. We want to make sure that we've done all we can to see that they agree with us about the gravity of the situation, and I expect—the Secretary of State is meeting with a lot of the foreign ministers over the next several days, and I will be talking to a number of heads of state, and we'll keep working this. I don't

want to put a timetable on myself, because it's not just me, but we're working it hard.

Q. With the inspectors out, Mr. President, does he have some reason to believe that he's gotten his way?

President Clinton. Well, if he does, that would be a mistake. And of course, what he says his objective is, is to relieve the people of Iraq, and presumably the government, of the burden of the sanctions. What he has just done is to ensure that the sanctions will be there until the end of time or as long as he lasts. So I think that if his objective is to try to get back into the business of manufacturing vast stores of weapons of mass destruction and then try to either use them or sell them, then at some point the United States, and more than the United States, would be more than happy to try to stop that.

But if his objective is to lift the sanctions and to divide the coalition and get people more sympathetic with him, I think that he has undermined his objective because we could never, ever agree to any modifications of the larger economic sanctions on Iraq as long as he's out of compliance. And by definition, that's the way the U.N. resolution works. When I say "we" there, I mean the whole world community. So I would think he would not be furthering his objectives, if his stated objectives are his objectives.

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

President Clinton. Buenos dias.

Q. Hi, Mr. Clinton. How are you?

President Clinton. I'm fine, thank you.

Mexico-U.S. Cooperative Drug Efforts

Q. President Clinton, how are you going to convince people in Congress that the United States—[inaudible]—it is a fact, the consumption on drugs, and also narcotraffickers inside of the United States, and convince people that only see Mexico as the bad guys?

President Clinton. Well, first of all, I don't think that's quite fair. I think that Congress has targeted a number of other countries in a more focused way where the problem is not primarily the transit of drugs, but is the production of drugs, so I wouldn't agree with that.

I do believe that, as least for our administration, we have been very clear that the reduction of demand and dealing with the infrastructure

of drugs in the United States has to be a key part of our strategy, and we intend to implement that. I think the real issue, what we should be focusing on is how we can work together in our mutual interest, because drugs present a threat both to the United States and to Mexico.

My objective in working with Congress is to try to get a united American position without regard to party, where we should have partnerships with all of the countries that are also beset by this problem in one way or the other, and we should work together on all aspects of it. That's what I believe we should do.

Fast-Track Trade Authority

Q. President Clinton, are you going to be pushing for the fast track approval?

President Clinton. I think that this is not the last chapter in this story. I believe that you will see some more movement early next year, and I wouldn't be too discouraged. Keep in mind, we had—our preliminary vote in the United States Senate had almost 70 percent of the Senators and majorities of both parties in the U.S. Senate in favor of extending fast track. And I believe there is a working majority in the House of Representatives for a good proposal. We're going to work it hard over the holidays and see what happens.

But I would urge our friends throughout Latin America not to overreact to the House vote, that this story is not over yet.

Q. Do you see your failure to get fast track as a referendum of NAFTA?

President Clinton. I think that—no, first of all, I don't, because fast track doesn't have anything to do with NAFTA. That's the first thing. We have our agreement, and we're implementing it and we're working at it. So in a strict sense, it has nothing to do with NAFTA. And there are no two countries anywhere in our hemisphere—indeed, there are no two countries anywhere else in our world—that have the same relationship with either one of us that we have with each other, with so much promise and so many challenges. So NAFTA is not fast track.

But I personally believe that our relationships and our individual economies are stronger because we passed NAFTA than they would have been if we hadn't passed NAFTA. And I think there is enough recent history—you just go back over the last 25 years and look at what's hap-

pened in times of economic difficulty either in Mexico or the United States, and you look at all kinds of other issues—we are cooperating across a wider range of issues than ever before; we have a more integrated economic partnership than ever before; we are working on more labor and environmental issues than ever before. So my view is that we did the right thing to pass NAFTA and that both the United States and Mexico are in better shape today than they would be if we hadn't done it. That's what I believe.

But I also have made it clear to Congress that I think they're two separate issues.

[*At this point, two questions were asked and answered in Spanish, and a translation was not provided.*]

Mexican Economy and Democracy

President Clinton. I'd just like to make one comment about the question—you just asked him about the financial crisis, right? I think it is an indication of the strength and the direction that President Zedillo and his administration have taken that Mexico has done quite well in these last difficult weeks. It also, I think, is clear support for the decision that I made a couple of years ago to enter a partnership with Mexico when it was in difficulty, because I felt very strongly that the potential of the Mexican economy and the Mexican people was very great, and that President Zedillo was pursuing the proper course.

And I would hope that—it's not for me to say, but if I were a Mexican citizen, I would be very pleased with the performance of Mexico and its economy and its markets over the last several weeks in what has been a very challenging time for the world. And I think we need to focus—instead of focusing on the changes in these markets on a daily basis, our goal should be to work with all of the developing countries and all the sort of booming economies to make sure their underlying fundamentals are right.

If the underlying fundamental economic policies are correct, then, over time, the markets will follow that, and that should be the key. I think Secretary Rubin and his colleagues did a good thing to try to stabilize the situation in Asia, for example, but the long-term goal is, if the fundamentals are right, eventually you will have good markets and a good economy.

That's the most important thing, is to have a good economy for ordinary people.

Q. [*Inaudible*—economy? In Mexico?

President Clinton. Where?

Q. In Mexico or the developing economies?

President Clinton. I just have to say, to me, just as an observer and a passionate supporter of democratic government over my lifetime, that of course Mexico has a lot of challenges. But if you look at this transformation you've made to a multiparty democracy, it's quite amazing that it's happened in a way that we've seen stability maintained, government's freedom to pursue a responsible economic course maintained. It's been very impressive to all of us who are on the outside looking in that Mexico has made a dramatic change in its political system, which I think will stand you in very good stead over the long run.

We find our competitive system—although none of us who are in office like competition—but our system has stabilized America over the long run. I think Mexico will be stabilized by the political transformation, but it's amazing that it's happened so quickly and so well. And so for me, the political developments there have been interesting and very impressive, very hopeful.

Q. You don't see any obstacles—

President Clinton. There are always obstacles. There will always be obstacles.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:20 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at the Signing Ceremony for the Organization of American States Hemispheric Arms Trafficking Convention November 14, 1997

Thank you very much, Mr. Gurria, Secretary General Gavia, President Zedillo, distinguished permanent representatives of the Organization of American States, to all my fellow Americans who are here, and especially to two Members of our Congress, Senator Dodd and Congressman Gilman.

Today our 34 democracies are speaking with one voice, acting with one conviction, leading toward one goal, to stem the flow of illegal guns, ammunitions, and explosives in our hemisphere. Three years ago at the United Nations, the United States called on others to work with us to shut down the gray markets that outfit terrorists, drug traffickers, and criminals with guns.

Here at home we have prohibited arms dealers from acting as middlemen for illicit sales overseas, strengthened residency requirements for gun purchasers, banned foreign visitors from buying guns here in the United States, tightened export licenses to make sure that legally exported weapons are not diverted to illegal uses. But in an era where our borders are all more open to the flow of legitimate commerce, prob-

lems like trafficking in weapons and explosives simply cannot be solved by one nation alone.

Last May in Mexico, President Zedillo and I pledged to work together for a hemispherewide agreement to curb the illegal arms trade. I thank President Zedillo for Mexico's leadership. Mr. Secretary General, I thank you and the OAS member states for concluding this agreement in record time. We understand the magnitude of the problem. In the last year alone, thousands of handguns and rifles, hundreds of thousands of rounds of ammunition destined for illegal export have been seized in our nations.

The illegal export of firearms is indeed not just a hemispheric but a worldwide problem and demands an international response. Last year, the United States Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms received approximately 30,000 requests just from OAS member states to trace weapons used in crimes. Gun trafficking is an issue of national security for all of us and a matter of neighborhood security for the Americas.

This convention will neither discourage nor diminish the lawful sale, ownership, or use of