

Dec. 4 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1997

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 4.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on the Operation of the Andean Trade Preference Act *December 4, 1997*

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

I hereby submit the second report on the Operation of the Andean Trade Preference Act. This report is prepared pursuant to the requirements of section 203 of the Andean Trade Preference Act of 1991. The report concludes that the Andean Trade Preference Act continues to

advance U.S. counternarcotics goals in the Andean region.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

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Remarks on Lighting the National Christmas Tree *December 4, 1997*

Thank you very much. I think, in the spirit of Christmas, the best gift I could give is a very brief Christmas message. *[Laughter]* Let me say to all of you, we've been doing this now for 85 years; for Hillary and me, Christmas begins with this wonderful ceremony. I want to thank all those responsible, and a special word of thanks to those who made it possible for the last 3 years for this beautiful Colorado spruce to be lit by solar energy.

Now I want to call up Whitney and Joseph, and ask them to stand with me, and put their

hands on the switch. And I'm going to count down three, two, one, and they'll flip the switch, and the Christmas tree will come on.

Merry Christmas to all of you. Three, two, one, light the tree.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:50 p.m. on the Ellipse during the annual Christmas Pageant of Peace. In his remarks, he referred to Campfire Girl Whitney Symone Powell and Campfire Boy Joseph Sherren, who helped the President light the National Christmas Tree.

Remarks Prior to Discussions With European Union Leaders and an Exchange With Reporters *December 5, 1997*

The President. Let me say very briefly that we are delighted to have another one of our EU summits, and it's particularly interesting because we now have two Luxembourgers here

instead of one, which gives them, I think, the highest percentage of world leadership compared to population of any country in the world by a good long ways. *[Laughter]* And we have

a lot to discuss, but I just want to thank President Santer and Prime Minister Juncker for the work that we have done together with the EU in the last 6 months under the presidency of Luxembourg, and I look forward to the discussions today.

International Agreement on Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Q. Are you changing your position, softening on global warming?

The President. Softening or toughening?

Q. Whichever. You tell us.

The President. Well, we're working in Kyoto to try to get an agreement, and we'll see if we can. We hope we can.

Q. Is a compromise impossible considering the distance between the two positions, the EU on one side, the U.S. on the other side?

The President. Not if everybody wants an agreement. Our position is that it's a global issue, we want to get global involvement, and we want this to be the beginning of a process which eventually will have everyone in the world involved in dealing with this issue. And I think that the chances that we can get an agreement are reasonably good if everybody there really wants an agreement and we want to see countries bound to targets which will lead us to reduced greenhouse gas emissions. That's the real test.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Did you give Secretary Albright any new marching orders on the Middle East?

The President. Well, we had a good meeting on things that we think will move the ball forward. And she's going with the instructions that I gave her to talk to Prime Minister Netanyahu and Chairman Arafat, and I'm very hopeful. I think it's in the nature of this process that the

less I say, the better chance we have of making progress, so I don't think I want to talk about it too much.

Q. But these are new ideas?

The President. Oh, yes, we have some new ideas at least about the process, about where to go from here, or at least the different approaches. And we hope that it will move the ball forward. I think that they both understand that this is a time when something needs to be done to show concrete progress. I'm encouraged by that. We'll just have to see what happens.

Assistant Attorney General Nominee

Q. Are you planning to make a recess appointment of Bill Lee?

The President. I don't have anything to say about that now.

Minority Leader Richard A. Gephardt

Q. How about your conversation with Gephardt? Did you fight?

The President. I had a good talk with him, and we had a good visit. We agreed that we needed to focus on 1998, not only in terms of the politics of '98 but also in terms of the substance of what we can do to serve the people here. It was a very satisfactory talk.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:56 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. The President met with Prime Minister Jean-Claude Juncker of Luxembourg in his capacity as President of the European Council and President Jacques Santer of the European Commission. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu of Israel and Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks Announcing Appointments to the National Bipartisan Commission on the Future of Medicare and an Exchange With Reporters

December 5, 1997

The President. Today I want to discuss our continued economic progress and important steps we must take to continue it. For the last 5 years we have pursued a comprehensive eco-

nomnic strategy to spur growth, to increase income, to create jobs and keep the American dream alive and well in a new century. Today we see the latest evidence that our economy