

Aug. 5 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1999

Statement on Senate Confirmation of United States Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations

August 5, 1999

I am deeply gratified that the Senate has approved Ambassador Richard C. Holbrooke's nomination to be the U.S. Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations. I am grateful to Ambassador Holbrooke for his commitment to public service and especially for his willingness to persevere through the confirmation process.

Vice President Gore, Secretary Albright, and I welcome him back to our foreign policy team. With the U.N. facing significant challenges in

Kosovo, Iraq, Africa, and elsewhere, Ambassador Holbrooke is the right person to lead our efforts at the U.N. He will play a key role in working with the Congress to meet our obligations and to secure needed reforms at the United Nations.

Since he joined the Foreign Service 37 years ago, Ambassador Holbrooke has served our Nation with distinction in Asia, Africa, and Europe. I am confident that he will represent the United States with dedication.

Statement on Administration Action on Steel Imports

August 5, 1999

Many steelworkers and communities are experiencing continuing hardship as a result of last year's sharp rise in steel imports. I am determined to continue taking forceful action to address the unfair trade practices that have contributed significantly to this crisis. But from the start, we have maintained that we must do it the right way. We must ensure that our actions are consistent with our commitment to open markets and respect for international trade rules, just as we insist that other countries do the same. My administration has executed a strategy of vigorous, timely enforcement of our trade laws and direct high-level engagement with major steel exporting nations. These actions have cut imports to pre-crisis levels.

Now, we must ensure that imports remain at pre-crisis levels and give the industry a chance to regain its competitiveness—even as we put in place measures to prevent any recurrence. Today I am releasing a steel action plan

containing a number of measures to identify and address factors that pose continuing risks for the health and vitality of U.S. steel communities and companies and the U.S. economy. These include a systematic analysis of foreign subsidies and market-distorting trade barriers for steel and steel inputs, an international conference on unfair practices that support economically unjustifiable production capacity, bilateral discussions with key steel exporters to ensure that they play by the rules of fair trade and eliminate market-distorting subsidies, working with the international financial institutions to eliminate subsidies for steel production, enhancing our ability to detect incipient import surges before they happen, and strengthened enforcement of our trade laws.

I will continue to work with steelworkers, the steel industry, and Members of Congress to attack unfair trade practices around the world.

Statement on Proposed Legislation Advancing the New Markets Initiative

August 5, 1999

Not long ago I invited CEO's and other business leaders to join me in visiting new markets

across the country to highlight economic opportunities and to emphasize the need for greater

investment in underserved rural and inner-city areas. I am pleased to announce that today bipartisan legislation based upon my new markets initiative is being introduced in both the House and the Senate. This legislation expands upon the innovative approach to community empowerment that Vice President Gore and I have pioneered for nearly 7 years.

We need to provide the same encouragement to invest in Appalachia, Native American reservations, the Mississippi Delta, and the inner cities that we provide today to invest in new markets overseas. Through new tax incentives and investment tools, this legislation will help to attract equity capital that entrepreneurs and businesses need to start and expand enterprises

and create new jobs in low and moderate income communities. These tools will help corporate America to develop new markets in places where major corporations have rarely, if ever, looked before. It's good for business; it's good for America's growth; and it's the right thing to do.

I am encouraged by the bipartisan support for the new markets initiative, as demonstrated by the lead sponsorship of this legislation by both Democrats and Republicans. We will continue to work with Congress to pass this new markets legislation into law. At a time of remarkable economic prosperity, we need to ensure that no community or person is left behind.

Statement on Proposed Patients' Bill of Rights Legislation

August 5, 1999

With today's announcement led by Drs. Ganske and Norwood and Congressman Dingell, it is clear that there is now a bipartisan majority of House Members ready to vote for a strong and enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights. Unlike the partisan Senate-passed bill, this bipartisan initiative is a Patients' Bill of Rights not just in name but in reality. It provides meaningful patient protections to all Americans in all health

plans, and it holds plans accountable when their actions cause harm to patients.

Today's action proves that patient protections need not and should not be a partisan issue. It is time to do what this bipartisan coalition has done, put the well-being of patients before politics and special interests. I call on Speaker Hastert to schedule a vote on this long-overdue legislation immediately upon return from the congressional recess in September.

Statement on Proposed Juvenile Crime Legislation

August 5, 1999

Months after the tragedy at Columbine and the day before they are set to recess, Congress will finally begin the conference on juvenile crime legislation. Let's show our children that, when it comes to their safety, Washington will not take a break. I urge the conferees to stay in Washington and finish work on the bill during the August recess. This is a vital opportunity to take commonsense steps to keep guns out

of the wrong hands, prevent youth violence, and steer young people away from crime. They should send me a balanced and bipartisan juvenile crime bill, with the Senate-passed gun provisions, so we can give our Nation's parents more peace of mind as our children return to school.