

Sept. 13 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1999

We have had enough talk about reform; the House of Representatives now has a rare and fleeting opportunity to act. The American people know the system needs to be fixed—but many have come to doubt Congress's will to fix it. I urge you to make this the year that Congress

proves the cynics wrong, and passes bipartisan, comprehensive campaign finance reform.

Sincerely,

BILL CLINTON

NOTE: Letters were sent to every Member of the House of Representatives.

Remarks on the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Summit and an Exchange With Reporters in Auckland September 14, 1999

The President. Good morning. I believe we've had a very successful meeting here with our Asia-Pacific partners. I want to begin by thanking Prime Minister Shipley and the people of Auckland and New Zealand for giving us quite a wonderful visit to a place that most of us have never been before.

Our 19 APEC members pledged to strengthen the world economy and advance our common prosperity. We also came together on East Timor. We unanimously resolved to strengthen the world trading system by opening more markets and agriculture services and industrial products. In November we'll go to Seattle to launch a new world trade round, determined to make this APEC agenda the world's agenda.

We can make trade even more beneficial if China joins the WTO on commercially viable terms. I had a good meeting here with President Jiang, resuming progress in our relationship on issues from the WTO to security matters like preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction. Our negotiators have now resumed substantive WTO talks.

APEC's members also reaffirmed the importance of continuing reforms in the global financial system. Asia's recovery is clearly underway. We want to keep it going, and to do so, we have to keep up the pace of reform.

At the same time, we stood together against the violence in East Timor. Indonesia's leaders agreed to reverse course. Now we and our partners are working rapidly to deploy an effective international security force to protect the people as they make their transition to independence. Again, let me say how grateful I am for the leadership of Australia and New Zealand in this endeavor.

This will be overwhelmingly an Asian force. But the United States is ready to provide airlift, communications, intelligence, and related capabilities. We are working out the details in consultation with Congress.

I hope the force can be ready to deploy within days. We are working with the U.N. today to bring that about. Until the international peacekeeping force deploys, it is essential that Indonesia works to prevent further violence. It must facilitate efforts to quickly bring humanitarian assistance to the people who have suffered so very greatly. The United Nations is ready to deliver food and medical supplies.

Let me say, finally, this week we made progress on another crucial security issue, building peace and reconciliation on the Korean Peninsula. Following talks in Berlin, we understand and expect that North Korea will refrain from testing long-range missiles of any kind, while our discussions continue. It's an important initial step in addressing our concerns about North Korea's missile program.

We're, in turn, considering measures to ease sanctions and move toward normalizing economic relations with North Korea. The work we've done in the past few days will help to build a more secure, more prosperous, more integrated Asia-Pacific region. It will give our citizens, all our citizens, all the way from New Zealand back to Washington, better lives in the 21st century.

Thank you very much.

Congressional Support for a Mission to East Timor

Q. [Inaudible]

The President. Well, I have only made about 10 calls, but of course, Secretary Cohen and Mr. Podesta have been back there, and they've been talking to more. My sense is that the Congress, even though we are heavily committed in the Balkans and elsewhere, will support a mission if we are there in a clearly supportive capacity, if we're talking about a few hundred people, not thousands of people on the ground, and the work we've been asked to do is actually work that a mission like this would need America to do the airlift, some of the internal transportation, the communications, the intelligence, some of the engineering work. These are things that, because of the size of our military, we are uniquely positioned to do.

And I stopped off in Hawaii, talked to Admiral Blair, our commander in chief in the Pacific, and he had been having very detailed conversations with the Australians. That's what we understand they're asking for. It would be a matter of a few hundred people, and I think we could do that.

Indonesian Response to United Nations

Q. Mr. President, how much trouble are the Indonesians making for the Security Council about the Australians leading—[inaudible]?

The President. Well, I know there was a statement yesterday by an Indonesian official, but we do not understand that to be the official position. So, so far, no trouble has been made. I hope that there won't be any. I think that we have tried to make it clear that we would welcome the cooperation with the Indonesian forces if they would work with us; they would be in a position to do some things there to

help facilitate this mission. But I do not believe they should be able to dictate the composition of it once having acknowledged that the United Nations should come in.

Australian Leadership in East Timor

Q. Is Australia's leadership nonnegotiable—[inaudible]?

The President. Well, that's, of course, for the U.N. to decide, but as far as I'm concerned, I'm quite comfortable with it and strongly supportive of it. Keep in mind, they are willing to provide what, in all probability, will be more than half of the total force needed.

We have a high regard for their abilities. We train with them. We work with them. We know that they can do this job, and in so doing, they make it possible for large numbers of other nations to participate who can make only more modest contributions. It's easier for New Zealand, for Malaysia, for the Philippines, for Korea, for any number of other countries to send in troops according to their ability to do it, knowing that there will be a large and very well-trained and led anchor force there. So the Australian commitment makes possible the effective commitments of a lot of other countries, just as our airlift capacity does.

So I would hope we can stick with it, and I think we will. I feel good about it.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:55 a.m. at the Stamford Plaza Hotel prior to departure from Auckland, New Zealand. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Jennifer Shipley of New Zealand; and President Jiang Zemin of China.

Exchange With Reporters in Queenstown, New Zealand
September 14, 1999

Q. How's your golf game today, Mr. President? Did it improve as you went along?

The President. It got a lot better. It had nowhere to go but up when I started. No, we did better, and we won the match, thanks mostly to my partner here. But we did okay. We played the way partners should play. When I had a good score, he didn't; when he had a good score, I didn't play good. We wasted no shots.

Burton Shipley. The President suggested at one stage that we were playing very good brother-in-law golf. I thought the line was very good.

Q. [Inaudible]

The President. We did, we actually played the pro and his partner, and we won, and they bought me a Diet Coke. It was a big stake here; it was great.

Q. [Inaudible]—the last hole?