

had an income just about half the national average. I've got a cousin who lives in Arkansas. He's a small-business man—he works for a small business—who two or three times a week plays chess on the Internet with a guy in Australia. Now, they've got to work out the times; how they do that, I don't know. But the point I want to make to you is, he thinks he knows as much about his life and his interests and how he relates to the Internet and the world as I do. He thinks he knows just as much about his interests as his President does, who happens to be his cousin.

So we need these networks. And you are in an unbelievably unique position. So my one wish

for you—you might think I'd say China or this or that and the other—it's nothing specific: Develop a shared vision. When good people with great energy have shared vision, all the rest works out.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:36 p.m. in the Plenary Room at the Congress Center. In his remarks, he referred to President Andres Pastrana of Colombia; President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa; Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority; President Jose Maria Aznar of Spain; Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit of Turkey; and John J. Sweeney, president, AFL-CIO.

## Statement on Debt Reduction

*January 31, 2000*

Today we received further evidence that our economic strategy of fiscal discipline is working. By making the tough choices necessary to turn record deficits into record surpluses, we are now in a position to start paying down the debt. According to the latest numbers from the Department of the Treasury, we will pay down \$152 billion in debt in the 3 months from April to June—the largest debt paydown in our Na-

tion's history. By the end of this fiscal year, we will have repaid approximately \$300 billion in debt. If we continue on this path of fiscal discipline, we can pay off our national debt for the first time since Andrew Jackson was President. This will keep interest rates low and investment high and lead to savings on everything from mortgages to student loans for working families across America.

## Statement on Action To Resolve the Impasse Over Armed Forces Training on Vieques Island, Puerto Rico

*January 31, 2000*

Today I am announcing a course of action to resolve the impasse over United States Armed Forces training on Vieques. This course will give the people of Vieques the right to determine the future of the island while assuring that our training needs are met. I have received a letter from the Governor of Puerto Rico endorsing this course.

I am issuing two directives. They provide that between later this year and early 2002, there will be a referendum held on Vieques, in which the people of Vieques will be asked to choose between two alternatives. If they choose the first alternative, the Navy will cease all training on

Vieques and leave the island by May 1, 2003. If they choose the second, training will continue on Vieques on terms that will be presented at least 3 months before the vote.

During the period leading up to the vote, training done on Vieques will be limited to non-explosive ordnance—meaning there will be no live fire—and the Navy and Marine Corps will cut in half the amount of time they will spend training to no more than 90 days per year, which is what we need to meet our training needs. I will also implement measures to meet the health, safety, environmental, and economic concerns of the people of Vieques, and I will ask

*Jan. 31 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 2000*

Congress to begin transferring title to land on the western quarter of the island to Puerto Rico.

I believe this plan will help resolve the impasse over Vieques in the fairest possible way, because it will meet our training needs while giving the people most affected by this deci-

sion—the people who actually live on the island—the ability to choose for themselves the future of their island.

NOTE: The memorandums are listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

## Message to the Senate Transmitting the France-United States Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty With Documentation

*January 31, 2000*

*To the Senate of the United States:*

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, I transmit herewith the Treaty Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of France on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters, signed at Paris on December 10, 1998. I transmit also, for the Senate's information, an explanatory note agreed between the Parties regarding the application of certain provisions. The report of the Department of State with respect to the Treaty is enclosed.

The Treaty is one of a series of modern mutual legal assistance treaties being negotiated by the United States in order to counter criminal activities more effectively. The Treaty should be an effective tool to assist in the prosecution of a wide variety of crimes, including terrorism and drug trafficking offenses. The Treaty is self-executing.

The Treaty provides for a broad range of cooperation in criminal matters. Mutual assistance available under the Treaty includes: obtaining the testimony or statements of persons; providing documents, records, and items of evidence; locating or identifying persons or items; serving documents; transferring persons in custody for testimony or other purposes; executing requests for searches and seizures; assisting in proceedings related to immobilization and forfeiture of assets, restitution, and collection of fines; and rendering any other form of assistance not prohibited by the laws of the Requested State.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to the Treaty and give its advice and consent to ratification.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,  
January 31, 2000.

## Message to the Congress on the New NATO Strategic Concept

*January 31, 2000*

*To the Congress of the United States:*

Pursuant to the authority vested in me as President of the United States, including by section 1221(a) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2000 (Public Law 106-65), I hereby determine and certify that the new NATO Strategic Concept imposes no new commitment or obligation on the United States. Further, in accordance with section 1221(c) of the Act, I transmit herewith the attached unclas-

sified report to the Congress on the potential threats facing the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,  
January 31, 2000.