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All Americans have been deeply moved by the tragic events in southern Africa. At the same time, we have admired the determination of the governments and people of the region to meet this challenge. We have also been gratified by the generous response of the American people and others in the international community.

I offer the strong support of the Government and the people of the United States to the people of Mozambique, and all of southern Africa, and pledge that we will work with you to address this crisis.

NOTE: The related memorandum of March 2 on emergency disaster assistance for southern Africa is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on International Agreements

March 1, 2000

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. Chairman:)

Pursuant to subsection (b) of the Case-Zablocki Act, (1 U.S.C. 112b), I hereby transmit a report prepared by the Department of State concerning international agreements.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Jesse Helms, chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on the National Emergency With Respect to Iraq

March 1, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c) and section 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), 50 U.S.C. 1703(c), I transmit herewith a 6-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to Iraq that was declared in Executive Order 12722 of August 2, 1990.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
March 1, 2000.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 2.

Message to the Congress Transmitting the Trade Policy Agenda and the Trade Agreements Program Report

March 1, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 163 of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended (19 U.S.C. 2213), I transmit herewith the 2000 Trade Policy Agenda and 1999 Annual Report on the Trade Agreements Program. The Report, as required by sections

122, 124, and 125 of the Uruguay Round Agreements Act, includes the Annual Report on the World Trade Organization and a 5-year assessment of the U.S. participation in the World Trade Organization.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,

March 1, 2000.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 2.

Interview With Katie Couric of NBC's "Today" Show
March 2, 2000

Michigan Shooting

Ms. Couric. Mr. President, thank you so much for joining us.

The President. Good morning, Katie.

Ms. Couric. Good morning. Let me ask you, first of all, when you heard the story of a 6-year-old boy in Michigan, a first grader bringing a gun to school and shooting to death his 6-year-old classmate, what was your reaction?

The President. Well, first, I think I had a normal human reaction. I didn't respond as President. I was just—as a parent I was heartbroken, and then I was angry. I thought, you know, how did this child get the gun in the first place? What's a 6-year-old doing with a gun?

Gun Safety Legislation

Ms. Couric. When something like this happens, politicians often jump on it as an excuse for more gun control. But I know that, Mr. President, you're very proud of pointing out that gun deaths have dropped to their lowest levels in more than 30 years in this country. So should we view this more as a tragedy than a reason to call for more gun control?

The President. Well, it's both. The gun death rate has dropped to its lowest point in 30 years, but it's still by far the highest of any advanced nation in the world. And if we had passed the child trigger lock provision and we applied it to all new guns, then at least those guns would not be used by 6-year-olds to kill other 6-year-olds. I think that's very important. That's a part of this bill, which also closes the gun show loophole in the background check law, bans the import of large ammunition clips, that the Congress has had for 8 months now with no action.

So I'm going to call the leaders of both parties in both Houses and ask them to come down here and break the logjam. There's been a House version and a Senate version of this bill for 8 months, and they have done nothing, and meanwhile, 13 kids every day—every single day there are 13 children who die from guns in this country. So I do think we need more legislation.

Ms. Couric. Well, why is it locked in committee, why has it been stalemated? And when would you like them to come to the White House?

The President. Well, I think it's been locked in committee because the Senate—the Vice President cast the tie-breaking vote in the Senate, so we got a tough bill in spite of fierce lobbying against it by the NRA. And the two Houses can't resolve their differences. But maybe this tragic death will help. We need these child trigger locks on the new handguns. That will begin to make a big difference. And then in this year's budget, I've asked them to fund some more research into smart gun technology, which would enable us to have guns that could only be fired by the adults who own them. That also would be a big advance.

One of the things that's being debated in Michigan is whether there should be parental accountability provisions. We had provisions in our law for that, so that all States would have these laws—several do, but most don't—and those were taken out, so maybe they'll be revisited in the conference as well.

But the main thing is, if we can just get the child trigger locks and fund investment in the smart gun technology, I think we'll be a long way down the road. Of course, I think ultimately what we ought to do is license handgun owners the way we license people who drive cars. I think that is the critical next step. And I hope that we will consider that, as well.