

exclusively through peaceful, democratic dialogue, and to show full respect for international obligations including cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Statement on Releasing Funds From the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program

December 18, 2000

Today I am directing my administration to release \$156 million to help low-income households throughout the Nation cope with substantial increases in home heating fuel costs. The significant and sustained rise in energy costs has posed a special burden on low-income families, in many cases forcing them to choose between

food and other essentials or a bare minimum of heat in these winter months. Releasing these heating funds today will ease the burden on the Nation's low-income families by helping cover their higher home heating costs in the cold weeks and months to come.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on the Deployment of United States Military Personnel as Part of the Kosovo International Security Force

December 18, 2000

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

In my report to the Congress of June 16, 2000, I provided information on the deployment of combat-equipped U.S. military personnel as the U.S. contribution to the NATO-led international security force in Kosovo (KFOR) and to other countries in the region in support of that force. I am providing this supplemental report, consistent with the War Powers Resolution, to help ensure that the Congress is kept fully informed on continued U.S. contributions in support of peacekeeping efforts in Kosovo.

As noted in my previous report, the U.N. Security Council authorized member states to establish KFOR in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1244 of June 10, 1999. The mission of KFOR is to provide a military presence in order to deter renewed hostilities; verify and, if necessary, enforce the terms of the Military Technical Agreement between NATO and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY); enforce the terms of the understanding with the former Kosovo Liberation Army to demilitarize and reintegrate itself into civil society; provide oper-

ational direction to the Kosovo Protection Corps; and maintain a safe and secure environment to facilitate the work of the U.N. Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK).

Currently, the U.S. contribution to KFOR in Kosovo is approximately 5,600 U.S. military personnel. An additional 500 U.S. military personnel are deployed as the National Support Element in Macedonia with an occasional presence in Albania and Greece. In the last 6 months, all 19 NATO nations and 20 others, including Russia, have provided military personnel and other support personnel to KFOR in Kosovo and the surrounding countries.

In Kosovo, the U.S. forces are assigned to a sector principally centered around Gnjilane in the eastern portion of Kosovo. For U.S. KFOR forces, as for KFOR generally, maintaining a safe and secure environment remains the primary military task. United States forces conduct security patrols in urban areas and in the countryside throughout their sector. Approximately 75 percent of KFOR soldiers are dedicated to patrolling, manning check-points, and

mounting border and boundary patrols. The KFOR forces operate under NATO command and control and rules of engagement.

Since my report to the Congress of June 16, free and fair municipal elections have been held in Kosovo, electing municipal assemblies in 27 Albanian-majority municipalities. In addition, on October 5, former FRY President Slobodan Milosevic stepped down from the presidency in the midst of popular outcry after he was defeated in the September FRY presidential elections. Despite the progress of democracy in Kosovo and the FRY, ethnic tensions persist. The United States is actively engaged with our allies in Kosovo and leaders in the region to stop ethnic violence.

The UNMIK continues to make progress in establishing the necessary structures for provisional self-government in Kosovo. The KFOR supports UNMIK at all levels, including public administration, and is represented at the Kosovo Transitional Council and the Joint Civil Commissions. Also, KFOR provides a security presence in towns, villages, and the countryside, and organizes checkpoints and patrols in key areas of Kosovo to provide security, protect minorities, resolve disputes, and help instill in the commu-

nity a feeling of confidence. Finally, KFOR is helping to provide assistance, within means and capabilities, in the areas of humanitarian relief, international civil police training, and the maintenance of civic works resources.

In November, NATO formally reviewed KFOR's mission, and will continue to do so at 6-month intervals. The reviews provide a basis for assessing current force levels, future requirements, force reductions, and the eventual withdrawal of KFOR. Over time, KFOR will incrementally transfer its security and policing responsibilities to the international civil administration, local institutions, and other organizations.

I have taken these actions pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct U.S. foreign relations and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive. I appreciate the continued support of the Congress in these actions.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Strom Thurmond, President pro tempore of the Senate.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Action To Implement the African Growth and Opportunity Act

December 18, 2000

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

I hereby transmit a Proclamation to implement the non-textile/apparel benefits of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (Title I of Public Law 106-200) (AGOA) by expanding the list of products eligible for duty-free treatment under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) program when imported from beneficiary sub-Saharan African countries.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, 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 19. The proclamation of December 18 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.