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gress, and pursuant to the North Atlantic Council (NAC) decision of December 1, 1995, I have ordered the deployment of approximately 1,500 U.S., military personnel to Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia as part of a NATO "enabling force" to lay the groundwork for the prompt and safe deployment of the NATO-led Implementation Force (IFOR). United States personnel participating in the enabling force will be under NATO operational control and rules of engagement. To date, I have also authorized the deployment of approximately 3,000 additional U.S. military personnel to Hungary, Italy, and Croatia in order to establish forward U.S. support infrastructure for the enabling force and the IFOR. These personnel will deploy in the very near future and will remain under U.S. command and control and rules of engagement.

As I have indicated before, now that I have approved the NATO operation plan for implementation, I will be requesting an expression of support from the Congress.

The enabling force will join previously deployed NATO communications personnel in Croatia as well as various national forces currently part of the United Nations Protection Force; these other national forces will come under NATO operational control when the IFOR main force is deployed. The enabling force consists of headquarters and administrative staff, communications units, movement control teams, logistics units, special forces units and civil affairs personnel under NATO operational control. The enabling force will have combat capability for force protection. These forces will be fully authorized and equipped to defend themselves, and will be backed by U.S. and NATO forces in the theater of operations, including U.S. air assets supporting Deny Flight and an amphibious reaction force in the Adriatic that are ready and able to counter any threat to their safety. In addition, British and other elements of the U.N. Protection Force/Rapid Reaction Force (UNPROFOR/RRF) in Bosnia will be available to protect U.S. forces. It is envisioned that the IFOR main body will begin to deploy following the signature of the peace agreement in Paris and the issuance of final NATO and U.S. orders. The enabling force will thereafter remain as part of the IFOR.

The U.S. forces participating in the enabling force being deployed to Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia are drawn largely from U.S. forces stationed in Germany. Among the nations providing forces to the enabling force are the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and Canada. In total, approximately 2,600 troops will be deployed as part of the enabling force.

I authorized these deployments in conjunction with our NATO allies following NAC decisions to permit implementation of the peace agreement following its formal signing. I have directed the participation of U.S. forces in these operations pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct the foreign relations of the United States and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive.

I am providing this report as part of my efforts to keep the Congress fully informed about developments in the former Yugoslavia, consistent with the War Powers Resolution.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Strom Thurmond, President pro tempore of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 7.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Congressional Leaders and an Exchange With Reporters

December 7, 1995

Bosnia and the Budget

The President. I'd like to just say a couple of opening words. First, I want to welcome the bipartisan delegation of House Members who are here and thank them for coming as we continue to discuss the question of our mission in Bosnia and search for unity on that.

I also want to say that I took a step today which I hope will help us to find unity on the budget. I presented a budget that is a 7-year balanced budget that protects Medicare, Medicaid, education, and the environ-

ment, doesn't raise taxes on working families, and meets the conditions that were set out in the resolution to which we all agreed. And I hope it will be taken as a gesture in good faith that will start us on the road to real negotiations over this budget, and that will bring about a constructive resolution for the American people.

So I'm very hopeful about that, and I'm looking forward to having the opportunity to have a discussion about Bosnia with the Members who are here present. And some of them I think have recently returned from a trip of their own to Bosnia, so I think we'll have a lot to discuss. And I thank you for being here. And I thank you for being here.

Q. Mr. President, Chairman Kasich said late today your budget came up there 400 in the hole. And he said by submitting this document you have breached the contract you signed with them a few days ago.

The President. Well, I disagree with that. You know, if you look at—we thought there would be new budget estimates coming out of the Congressional Budget Office by now, but they haven't been. That's fine, and I haven't attacked them for not doing it, even though they said they would. And I don't think that's very constructive.

Our budget—let me point out two things. All this is is a—the balanced budget plan is a plan over 7 years. No one can know what will happen between now and then, but we do know what's happened for the last 3 years. For the last 3 years, both the Congressional Budget Office and the Office of Management and Budget have underestimated the deficit reduction as a result of the 1993 economic plan, although we have been closer to accurate than the CBO.

We know that our plan was submitted based on basically splitting the difference of all the experts in America who predict what the economy will do. And therefore, it is mainstream, and it's good, and it's a good place to start discussions. And I think that's the attitude they ought to take. And if they have a—I've made a proposal; now I'd like to see what theirs is.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:05 p.m. in the Indian Treaty Room at the Old Executive Office Building.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Proposed Legislation to Protect Retirement Plans

December 7, 1995

Dear _____:

Since the beginning of this Administration, we have worked together to protect the retirement savings of hard-working Americans. Last year, Congress passed legislation proposed by the Administration that secured the retirement promises made to over 40 million workers in traditional pension plans.

Now we must all act to ensure that the savings of the 22 million American workers who put their hard-earned money into 401(k) plans are safe. We need to make certain the government has the tools to assure American workers they can put their savings—and their trust—into a system that will be there when they need it most.

I urge you to swiftly approve legislation we sent to Congress in July that would give both private auditors and the government new strength and more effective tools with which to enforce the law and prevent abuse of employee retirement savings by unscrupulous employers.

My Administration has consistently urged Americans to save for their retirement—a message echoed by financial planners, consumer groups and virtually everyone who has considered this issue. But Americans need to know their savings are safe if they are to follow this sound advice.

While the vast majority of employers fully respect and protect their employees' savings, some employers are abusing that trust. Last week, the Department of Labor, which protects private pensions, urged consumers to watch for warning signs to protect their 401(k) investments. The Department of Labor's Pension and Welfare Benefits Administration has begun a nationwide enforcement initiative that has already uncovered the misuse of millions of dollars of contributions by workers. Over $3.5 million has already been returned to workers; 310 investigations remain open, and more cases are coming.

On July 6, Secretary of Labor Reich transmitted to Congress the "ERISA Enforcement Improvement Act." Our legislation would help in early identification of potential