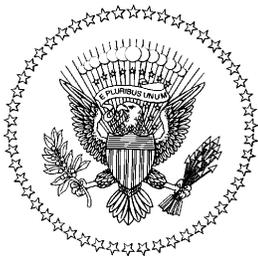


Weekly Compilation of  
**Presidential  
Documents**



Monday, December 23, 1996  
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## WEEKLY COMPILATION OF

## PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

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Week Ending Friday, December 20, 1996

**Statement on the United Nations Security Council Approval of Kofi Annan as Secretary-General**

*December 13, 1996*

I'm delighted by today's vote in the United Nations Security Council, selecting Kofi Annan of Ghana to be the new U.N. Secretary-General. We are hopeful that the General Assembly will concur with the Security Council early next week.

Through his decades of work at the United Nations and in the international arena, Kofi Annan has established excellent working relations with many countries, including the United States. Over the last 4 years as U.N. Undersecretary for Peacekeeping, and throughout his impressive career, he has proven himself an able and energetic manager—professional, impartial, well-versed in the issues at hand, and a true proponent of reform. We are confident he will take concrete steps to inspire the world to support the U.N., inspire the U.N. to live up to its ideals, and transform those ideals into action.

Since its founding more than half a century ago, the United Nations has been a vehicle for peace and progress that has served the interests of America and the world. Since taking office, I have worked hard with Congress to sustain America's support for the United Nations.

Precisely because we believe in the United Nations, my administration has also led the fight for far-reaching U.N. reform. To meet the challenges of the 21st century, the U.N. must keep pace with the times—achieving its work with fewer people and resources, reducing waste and rationalizing priorities, and producing better results at lower costs. The world community needs a United Nations that spends less on overhead and outdated agencies and more on services that directly benefit people's daily lives.

I believe the United Nations must have a leader who is committed to these goals.

That is why I decided we needed a new Secretary-General. I knew this would be a controversial decision, but it was the right thing to do.

The outgoing U.N. Secretary General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, is an honorable man who has led a great career—from the breakthrough for Middle East peace at Camp David to his leadership of the United Nations as it celebrated its 50th anniversary. Now, we must prepare the United Nations for the demands of the *next* 50 years. I am confident Kofi Annan will rise to this task with conviction.

I am committed to work closely with the Congress to meet America's obligations to the United Nations and to make good on our arrears. And I am sure that my nominee for our U.N. Ambassador, Bill Richardson, will work effectively with the new Secretary-General to renew and revitalize this historic organization to take on the challenges of the future.

NOTE: This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

**Executive Order 13031—Federal Alternative Fueled Vehicle Leadership**

*December 13, 1996*

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including the Energy Policy and Conservation Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. 6201 *et seq.*), the Energy Policy Act of 1992 (Public Law 102-486) ("the Act"), and section 301 of title 3, United States Code, and with the knowledge that the use of alternative fueled motor vehicles will, in many applications, reduce the Nation's dependence on oil, and may create jobs by providing an economic stimulus for domestic industry, and may improve the Nation's air

quality by reducing pollutants in the atmosphere, it is hereby ordered as follows:

**Section 1. Federal Leadership and Goals.**

(a) The purpose of this order is to ensure that the Federal Government exercise leadership in the use of alternative fueled vehicles (AFVs). To that end, each Federal agency shall develop and implement aggressive plans to fulfill the alternative fueled vehicle acquisition requirements established by the Act. The Act generally requires that, of the vehicles acquired by each agency for its fleets, subject to certain conditions specified in section 303(b)(1) of the Act, 25 percent should be AFVs in fiscal year (FY) 1996, 33 percent in FY 1997, 50 percent in FY 1998, and 75 percent in FY 1999 and thereafter. These requirements apply to all agencies, regardless of whether they lease vehicles from the General Services Administration (GSA) or acquire them elsewhere. That section also defines which Federal agency vehicles are covered by the AFV acquisition requirements; this order applies to the same vehicles, which are primarily general-use vehicles located in metropolitan statistical areas with populations of 250,000 or more.

(b) To the extent practicable, agencies shall use alternative fuels in all vehicles capable of using them. Agencies shall continue to work together in interagency committees recommended by the Federal Fleet Conversion Task Force established by Executive Order 12844 of April 21, 1993, to coordinate their vehicle acquisitions and placement.

**Sec. 2. Submission of Agency Plans and Reports on Statutory Compliance.** (a) Sixty (60) days after the date of this Executive order, and annually thereafter as part of its budget submission to the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, each agency shall submit a report on its compliance with sections 303 and 304 of the Act. A copy of the report shall also be submitted to the Secretary of Energy and to the Administrator of General Services. The report shall state whether the agency is in compliance with the Act, and substantiate that statement with quantitative data including numbers and types of vehicles acquired and the level of their use. At a minimum, the report shall indicate the number of vehicles acquired or converted for each fuel type and vehicle

class, and the total number of vehicles of each fuel type operated by the agency. The Director of the Office of Management and Budget shall issue further reporting guidance as necessary.

(b) If an agency has failed to meet the statutory requirements, it shall include in its report an explanation for such failure and a plan, consistent with the agency's current and requested budgets, for achieving compliance with the Act. The plan shall include alternative sources of suitable AFVs if the agency's primary vehicle supplier is unable to meet the AFV requirements.

(c) The Secretary of the Department of Energy and the Administrator of General Services shall cooperatively analyze the agency AFV reports and acquisition plans, and shall submit jointly a summary report to the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

**Sec. 3. Exceptions for Law-Enforcement, Emergency, and National Defense Vehicles.** Section 303 of the Act allows exemptions to the acquisition requirements for law-enforcement, emergency, and vehicles acquired and used for military purposes that the Secretary of Defense has certified must be exempt for national security reasons. Law enforcement vehicles shall include vehicles used for protective activities. Each agency that acquires or utilizes any such vehicles shall include in its report an explanation of why an exemption is claimed with respect to such vehicles.

**Sec. 4. Fulfilling the Acquisition Requirement.** (a) Agencies may acquire alternative fueled vehicles to meet the requirements of this order through lease from GSA, acquisition of original equipment manufacturer models, commercial lease, conversion of conventionally fueled vehicles, or any combination of these approaches. All vehicles, including those converted for alternative fuel use, shall comply with all applicable Federal and State emissions and safety standards.

(b) Based on its own plans and the plans and reports submitted by other agencies, the Administrator of General Services shall provide planning information to potential AFV suppliers to assist in production planning. After consulting with AFV suppliers, the Administrator of General Services shall provide to Federal agencies information on the pro-

duction plans of AFV suppliers well in advance of budget and ordering cycles.

(c) As required by section 305 of the Act, the Secretary of Energy, in cooperation with the Administrator of General Services, shall continue to provide technical assistance to other Federal agencies that acquire alternative fueled vehicles and shall facilitate the coordination of the Federal Government's alternative fueled vehicle program.

**Sec. 5. Vehicle Reporting Credits.** The gains in air quality and energy security that this order seeks to achieve will be even larger if medium- and heavy-duty vehicles are operated on alternative fuels, and if "zero-emissions vehicles" (ZEVs) are used. Therefore, for the purposes of this order, agencies may acquire medium- or heavy-duty dedicated alternative fueled vehicles or ZEVs to meet their AFV acquisition requirements, and they shall be given credits for compliance with their AFV targets as follows. Each medium-duty and ZEV shall count the same as two light-duty AFVs, and each dedicated alternative fueled heavy-duty vehicle shall count as three light-duty AFVs. The ZEV credits may be combined with vehicle size credits. The Director of the Office of Management and Budget, in consultation with the Secretary of Energy, shall issue detailed guidance on the classification and reporting of medium-duty, heavy-duty, and ZEVs. In the reports mandated in section 2 of this order, medium- and heavy-duty AFVs and ZEVs shall be identified separately from light-duty vehicles.

**Sec. 6. Funding Alternative Fueled Vehicle Acquisition.** (a) The Department of Energy will no longer request or require specific appropriations to fund the incremental costs of alternative fueled vehicles, including any incremental costs associated with acquisition and disposal, for other agencies. Agencies shall formulate their compliance plans based on existing and requested funds, but shall not be exempt from the requirements of the Act or this order due to limited appropriations.

(b) An exception regarding funding assistance shall be made for electric vehicles, which are in an earlier stage of development than other alternative fueled vehicles. The Secretary of Energy shall establish a program beginning in FY 1997 to provide partial fund-

ing assistance for agency purchases of electric vehicles. Up to \$10,000 or one-half the incremental cost over a comparable gasoline-powered vehicle, whichever is less, may be provided as funding assistance for each electric vehicle, subject to the availability of funds.

**Sec. 7. Agency Cooperation with Stakeholders on Alternative Fueled Vehicle Placement and Refueling Capabilities.** The Secretary of Energy shall work with agencies procuring AFVs to coordinate the placement of their vehicles with the placement of similar vehicles by nonfederal alternative fuel stakeholders. Federal planning and acquisition efforts shall be coordinated with the efforts of the Department of Energy's "Clean Cities" participants, private industry fuel suppliers, and fleet operators, and State and local governments to ensure that adequate private sector refueling capabilities exist or will exist wherever Federal fleet alternative fueled vehicles are located. Each agency's fleet managers shall work with appropriate organizations at their respective locations, whether in a "Clean Cities" location or not, on initiatives to promote alternative fueled vehicle use and expansion of refueling infrastructure.

**Sec. 8. Definitions.** For the purpose of this order, the terms "agency," "alternative fueled vehicle," and "alternative fuel" have the same meaning given such terms in sections 151 and 301 of the Act.

**Sec. 9. Executive Order 12844.** This order supersedes Executive Order 12844.

**Sec. 10. Judicial Review.** This order is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit or trust responsibility, substantive or procedural, enforceable by a party against the United States, its agencies or instrumentalities, its officers or employees, or any other person.

**William J. Clinton**

The White House,  
December 13, 1996.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:26 a.m., December 16, 1996]

NOTE: This Executive order was published in the *Federal Register* on December 17. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

## **The President's Radio Address**

*December 14, 1996*

Good morning. Today we're taking important new steps to make adoption easier and to move children out of foster care faster. These efforts will help to give even more children what every child needs and deserves, loving parents and a strong and stable home.

I'm delighted to be joined in the Oval Office today by a remarkable group of children and parents who know firsthand the tremendous possibilities of adoption and by the First Lady who has worked so long and hard on this issue and whose efforts have made today possible.

I'm especially pleased to be able to take this action now, in this season of hope and light. The holidays we celebrate this month teach us that through faith and love we can truly repair the world. I can think of no better way to fulfill the promise of this season than to bring a child into a family and a family to a child.

There are more than 450,000 children in the Nation's foster care system. They are placed there because of abuse, neglect, or a home life that is neither safe nor secure. While most of these children eventually return to their original homes, nearly 100,000 of them simply don't have that option. Those children wait far too long, typically 3 years or more, to find permanent homes and families to love them.

Promoting adoption has been at the heart of our administration's efforts to protect our children and strengthen our families. Earlier this year I was proud to sign a \$5,000 tax credit to help families adopt children. We put an end to racial preferences for adoption. No longer can laws keep children of one race from nurturing arms of adoptive parents of another. This is a good start, but we must do more.

That is why I have just signed a Presidential directive with a clear goal: We will double the number of children we move from foster care to permanent homes, from 27,000 a year today, to 54,000 a year by the year 2002. With this effort we're saying no child should be trapped in the limbo of foster care, no child should be uncertain about what

the word "family" or "parents" or "home" mean, particularly when there are open arms waiting to welcome these children into safe and strong households where they can build good, caring lives.

As part of this initiative, I'm directing the Secretary of Health and Human Services, Donna Shalala, who is also with us today, to launch an extensive effort to determine what steps we must take to meet our goal. I want the Secretary to report back to me with her recommendations in 60 days. This report must tell us how we can help States set and meet urgent new adoption targets. It must describe how we can improve coordination among local, State, and Federal authorities so that every community has access to the best ways to encourage adoption. And it must outline what sensible financial incentives we can provide States to raise adoption rates.

I also want the Secretary to determine what additional changes we can make in Federal laws and regulations to ensure that children won't get trapped in foster care. And I want to know if there are any new provisions we can put in place to move children through the system faster and to protect them when they leave.

There are other steps we are taking immediately. I'm instructing the Departments of Treasury, Labor, Commerce, and Health and Human Services to launch an all-out effort to heighten public awareness about adoption and to recognize those in the private sector who are committing themselves to this important cause.

Let me also say how grateful I am to those in Congress of both parties who are working so hard to make adoption a reality for America's most vulnerable children. I want to thank especially Senators Rockefeller and DeWine and Representatives Kennelly and Camp for their efforts.

The fact that we are commemorating the birth of a child that began life in a manger and became the Prince of Peace should remind us that the promise of God has been placed in every child. We must work tirelessly to make sure that every boy and girl of America who is up for adoption has a family waiting out to reach him or her. No child should be in foster care for one day longer than he or she needs to be.

This is a season of miracles, and perhaps there is no greater miracle than finding a loving home for a child who needs one.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:06 a.m. from the Oval Office at the White House. Following the address, the President and First Lady talked with children in foster care.

**Memorandum on Adoption and Alternate Permanent Placement of Children in the Public Child Welfare System**

*December 14, 1996*

*Memorandum for the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Secretary of the Treasury, the Secretary of Labor, the Secretary of Commerce, the Director of the Office of Personnel Management*

*Subject: Steps to Increase Adoptions and Alternate Permanent Placement for Waiting Children in the Public Child Welfare System*

During this Holiday Season, as we reflect on the importance of family in our own lives, let us remember the tens of thousands of our Nation's children in the public child welfare system who live without permanent and caring families. Foster care provides temporary shelter and relief for children who have been abused or neglected.

I am committed to giving the children waiting in our Nation's foster care system what every child in America deserves—loving parents and a healthy, stable home. The goal for every child in our Nation's public welfare system is permanency in a safe and stable home, whether it be returning home, adoption, legal guardianship, or another permanent placement. While the great majority of children in foster care will return home, for about one in five, returning home is not an option, and they will need another home, one that is caring and safe. These children wait far too long—typically over 3 years, but for many children much longer—to be placed in permanent homes. Each year, State child welfare agencies secure homes for less than one-third of the children whose goal is adoption or an alternate permanent placement. I know we can do better.

I believe we should increase the number of children who are adopted or permanently placed from the public foster care system each year toward the goal of at least doubling that number by the year 2002. Returning home is not an option for about 100,000 of the over 450,000 children in the Nation's foster care system, yet only approximately 20,000 were adopted last year and approximately 7,000 were permanently placed in legal guardianships. While the number of adoptions each year has been constant for many years, I believe that by working with States to identify and break down barriers to permanent placements, setting annual numerical targets, rewarding successful performance, and raising public awareness, we can meet the target of at least 54,000 children adopted or permanently placed from the public foster care system by the year 2002.

Today, therefore, I direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services, in consultation with State and civic leaders, to report to me within 60 days on actions to be taken to move children more rapidly from foster care to permanent homes and at least to double, by the year 2002, the number of children in foster care who are adopted or permanently placed out of the public foster care system.

I. To increase the number of children who are adopted or permanently placed each year, this report should include, but should not necessarily be limited to, recommendations in the following areas:

- (a) Plans to work with States on setting and reaching State specific numerical targets, using the technical assistance of the Department of Health and Human Services National Resource Centers to make information on best practices available to States and to engage community leaders, parents, and the business and faith communities;
- (b) Proposals to provide per child financial incentives to States for increases in the number of adoptions from the public welfare system. Options considered should have little to no net costs, as increases in the number of adoptions from the public system will reduce foster care costs, thereby off-

- setting much if not all of the incentive payments;
- (c) A proposal to ensure continued aggressive implementation of the Multi-ethnic Placement Act, as amended by the Inter-ethnic Adoption Provision of the Small Business Job Protection Act;
  - (d) Plans to compile and publish an annual State-by-State report on success in meeting the numerical targets; and
  - (e) Plans to recognize successful States.
- II. To move children more rapidly from foster care to permanent homes, the report shall also recommend changes to Federal law and regulations and other actions needed to emphasize the importance of planning for permanency as soon as a child enters the foster care system. The Secretary's report should include, but should not necessarily be limited to, recommendations in the following areas:
- (a) Plans to provide States with funding to identify barriers to permanency and to develop targeted strategies to find permanent homes for children who have been in foster care a particularly long time;
  - (b) Proposals to shorten the period of time between a child's placement in foster care and his or her initial hearing at which a permanency determination is made;
  - (c) A proposal to clarify that the purpose of "dispositional hearings" is to plan for permanency and, as appropriate, to consider referrals for family mediation, termination of parental rights, adoption, legal guardianship, or other permanent placements;
  - (d) A proposal to clarify the "reasonable efforts" requirement and other Federal policy as it relates to permanency and safety;
  - (e) Plans to ensure that States give appropriate weight to permanency planning by establishing standards for securing permanency through adoption or guardianship, once a decision has been made that a child cannot be returned home; and
  - (f) Plans to examine alternative permanency arrangements, such as guardianship, when adoption is not possible.
- Last month, I signed a proclamation designating November as National Adoption Month—a time to increase awareness about the tens of thousands of children waiting for families and to encourage all Americans to consider the rewards and responsibilities of adoption. However, adoption must be a national concern throughout the year. Therefore, I direct:
- (a) The Secretary of Health and Human Services to develop and lead a public awareness effort including use of public service announcements, print materials, and the Internet;
  - (b) The Secretaries of Health and Human Services and the Treasury in consultation with State, civic, and private sector leaders to develop and disseminate information about the new adoption tax credits and other adoption benefits;
  - (c) The Secretaries of Labor and Commerce, in consultation with State and civic leaders, to identify and recognize companies in the private sector with model policies to encourage and ease adoption among employees; and
  - (d) The Director of the Office of Personnel Management to direct all Federal agencies to provide information and support to Federal employees who are prospective adoptive parents.

**William J. Clinton**

### **The President's News Conference With European Union Leaders**

*December 16, 1996*

**President Clinton.** Thank you very much. Please be seated. It is a pleasure to welcome back to the White House Prime Minister Bruton of Ireland and President Santer of the European Commission.

A year ago in Madrid, the United States and the European Union launched the New Transatlantic Agenda to fight international crime and terrorism and drug trafficking, to support peacemakers around the world, to

bring down barriers to commerce between our two nations. Today I am proud of the concrete progress we have made in that short year.

Our commitment to reducing trade barriers is paying off, clearing the path to greater prosperity. Next month our negotiators will finish work on a set of mutual recognition agreements which will abolish requirements that a broad range of products, including telecommunications and medical equipment, be reinspected and recertified for each other's markets. This will remove barriers on \$40 billion worth of trade between the United States and the European Union, cutting red-tape for our businesses and prices for our consumers: one standard; one test; one time.

I want to especially thank the Transatlantic Business Dialogue for their leadership in achieving these agreements, especially the European and American cochairs, Jan Timmer, former chairman of the Phillips Corporation—excuse me—Phillips Electronics Corporation, and Dana Mead, chairman of Tenneco. They are both here today, and I'd like to ask them to stand and be recognized. Thank you very much, gentlemen, for what you did.

I also thank our European partners for helping us to complete the landmark information technology agreement finished last week in Singapore. It will eliminate by the year 2000 all tariffs on computers, semiconductors, telecommunications equipment, and software products. That's a \$5 billion cut in tariffs on American exports which will benefit producers and consumers all over the world.

We have also deepened our work for peace and freedom in Bosnia. Today we agreed the civilian reconstruction effort there must move faster and that we have to have greater progress on projects for which funds have already been pledged. I thank the European Union for the generosity that has made it the largest donor to reconstruction, and we're working together to ensure the success of another donors conference next year.

The U.S. and the EU are also moving to confront new security threats. Our law enforcement officials are now working on a new joint counternarcotics offensive in the Caribbean. We're on the verge of an agreement

for the EU to join the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Corporation. The EU's financial contribution and political support for KEDO are essential so that we can keep frozen and eventually dismantle North Korea's dangerous nuclear program.

And I welcome the EU's positive response in our proposal to establish an African crisis response force. This initiative would help African nations respond under the auspices of the U.N. to humanitarian and peacekeeping needs like those we have seen recently in Rwanda and Zaire. We look forward to working with European, African, and other nations to turn this concept into a reality.

I applaud the European Union for the important step forward it has taken by adopting a common position on Cuba, one that puts support for democracy at the heart of the relationship between Europe and Cuba, in keeping with values shared by great democracies on both sides of the Atlantic. And I hope that together we and our allies will continue to increase our support for freedom there.

As we look ahead, the historic strength of the relationship between the United States and Europe is deepening and taking new forms as we face new challenges. I thank Prime Minister Bruton and his government for the outstanding leadership that Ireland has given the EU during its Presidency. And I thank President Santer for making the last year's achievements possible. I am determined that we will carry them on in the coming year.

Mr. Prime Minister.

**Prime Minister Bruton.** Thank you very much. Mr. President, this has been a very successful summit between the European Union and the United States. We have discussed how we can promote peace and stability in the world, how we can enhance our trade between Europe and the United States, how we can meet the new challenges that are emerging on the world's stage.

And one of those I think was very aptly described by you, Mr. President, in your book "From Hope To History" when you said, the very openness of our society makes us vulnerable to new forces of destruction that cross national borders: organized crime, drug cartels, the spread of dangerous weap-

ons, including biological and chemical ones, and most of all, vicious terrorism. These were the challenges that this summit, first and foremost, set out to address.

We have identified, in Europe at the Dublin summit, that organized crime represents perhaps the biggest single threat to the security of ordinary individuals in our societies at the present time. Organized crime respects no borders. It is using the most modern technology available to promote its evil ends. And it can only be combated if civilized states are equipped with the same sophistication and are willing to cooperate with one another with the same will as those who are seeking to break our laws and threaten the lives of our people are applying in their illicit activity.

We have taken major steps at this summit in regard to the fight against drugs, which feeds organized crime. We've agreed on a program of action to support the governments of the Caribbean area to ensure that that area is no longer used as a transit area for drugs. We have reached agreements to cooperate on money laundering. And one of the suggestions that I made to the President is that we should also look at how we can pursue the assets gained through crime, so that there will be no place that people who have gained assets through crime can hide those assets in the world without law enforcement being able to confiscate those assets in order to compensate the victims of the crimes that are being committed.

We also, I think, have got to use technology to the full to combat the use of technology for crime. In the book that I've just quoted, Mr. President, you said that when a child born today is old enough to read—that's in 3 or 4 years' time—there would be 100 million users of the Internet in the world. The truth of the matter is that the Internet is being used to promote child sexual abuse. Modern technology is being used to move money across the exchanges from one country to another, money that has been gained through the sale of narcotics or other criminal activities. We must equip ourselves with sufficient sophistication, as civilized governments, to ensure that we can meet that challenge head on.

I believe if there's anything subject that requires—there's no subject, rather, that requires more cooperation across the Atlantic for which our citizens will give us full support than the subject of the battle against crime.

I'd also like to say, however, that this wasn't the sole subject we discussed. We applauded the work of those who are involved in the very successful World Trade Organization summit in Singapore. And I emphasize the word "very." This was an outstandingly successful summit with a huge number of countries taking part, and yet in Singapore itself, through sophisticated negotiation, we were able to reach major agreements. You've mentioned the result of them. They will free up trade and information technology, and they are showing out a pathway for the future as far as trade is concerned, which is extremely good.

I am glad to say also that we will reach agreement before the end of January on the mutual recognition by our standards authorities of products produced in the EU and in the U.S. A lot of business costs will be saved by ensuring that one certification will apply for a product. If it's safe enough for the United States, it would be safe enough for Europe and vice versa. That will save a lot of money for business and will enable more employment and more innovation to take place.

As the President said, we share concern about the recent annulment of elections in Serbia, and we look forward to the OSC mission there. We also welcomed the U.S. proposal for an African crisis response force, which you referred to, which is a practical, longstanding requirement.

We enhanced, during the Irish Presidency of the European Union, Europe's participation in the Middle East peace process. And we hope, as you do, Mr. President, for a rapid conclusion to the negotiations in Hebron. This is a vital and long overdue confidence-building measure as far as the peace process in the Middle East is concerned.

And I, like you, Mr. President, would like to applaud the people who have been involved in the Transatlantic Business Dialogue. They have kept us on our toes. They have ensured that we reached agreements that we mightn't have agreed were it not for their practical pressure.

Finally, I think it's appropriate as we enter 1997 that we should look back in history and say that next year will be the 50th anniversary of the Marshall plan. Through the Marshall plan, a prosperous and triumphant United States assisted a prostrate Europe back onto its feet in one of the greatest acts of generosity in human history. There was no requirement on the United States to do what it did under the Marshall plan. It did it, and it is fair to say that the United States has profited and prospered as a result of that generosity, even though that wasn't its intention.

I think now that Europe and the United States are on an equal footing, we can, I think, continue in that spirit of mutual generosity. We have the capacity to be generous, too, now in Europe, just as you were, the United States, so generous in 1947. And I hope that our dialog will intensify on that basis.

Thank you.

**President Santer.** Mr. President, Prime Minister, ladies and gentlemen, 6 months ago in this very room I said the world needed joint leadership from Europe and America as much as ever before. And 6 months later progress in that regard has been impressive.

The New Transatlantic Agenda signed a year ago has brought us a rich harvest. We have worked successfully together on humanitarian aid and nuclear nonproliferation, and we are cooperating to bring peace to the Great Lakes region, as well as making sure it holds in Bosnia and in the Middle East.

The New Transatlantic Agenda has also delivered to the world the prospect of a major deed on information technology in Singapore which will boost trade and provide vast new opportunities for business. We are also working together for a worldwide agreement on telecoms.

Next month we are hopeful of promoting transatlantic trade by cutting unnecessary administrative controls on business through a mutual recognition agreement. We are also fighting drugs and drug-related crime by working to stop dangerous chemicals falling into the wrong hands.

Today's summit has helped us take stock and prepare to cooperate in other areas. Let me mention two. Firstly, we have helped clear the air on Cuba. Today's talks have con-

vinced me that although our views may differ on the means, we certainly agree on the end goal. Europe will remain firmly opposed to all extraterritorial legislation, whatever its source, and will continue to defend its interests. But we remain determined to search for common ground with the United States in our desire to bring democracy, freedom, and human rights to Cuba. We must all continue to work to bring Cuba into the international community.

Two days ago European leaders restated in some detail the policies they have held towards Cuba for at least a year. They endorsed a common position calling on Cuba to reform its laws so as to guarantee political and civil rights. We must sustain a dialog with Cuba in which we make clear that the further deepening of our relations with that country is linked to Havana's own efforts to improve human rights and political freedom. No agreement with Cuba could be envisaged if political circumstances did not improve.

Secondly, I have greatly appreciated the chance to discuss China with President Clinton and, in particular, China's entry in the WTO. There is little really that separates us on many of the key issues. We must work to get China into the WTO as soon as possible on the right terms for China and for us all.

I was also able to confirm Europe's determination to press ahead with the enlargement of the European Union, to include countries from Central and Eastern Europe. This is vital for the stability of the continent and as such is a major interest of the United States.

Let me conclude by saying that the stronger Europe becomes, the more effective our joint leadership with America will be. I have reassured President Clinton that a united Europe will be a stable, open, and powerful friend of the United States. Those here in America who doubt the will of most European Union countries to build such unity should witness their resolve to create a single currency at the EU summit that I and, of course, Prime Minister John Bruton, as President in office, have just attended in Dublin.

President Clinton has shown himself to be a loyal ally of the European Union. We look

forward to working with him over the next few years, a time when Europe will undergo great change, change that I believe to be fundamentally in the interest of the United States economically and politically.

Next year, as the Taoiseach said, next year we will see that 50th anniversary of the Marshall plan and the 40th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome which created the European Community. Those events are naturally connected. The Marshall plan has helped to revive and unite Europe, which is now working in a renewed partnership with the United States throughout the world. History shows that there is always more that unites us than divides us.

Thank you.

**President Clinton.** Helen [Helen Thomas, United Press International].

#### **Middle East Peace Process**

**Q.** Mr. President, since you've been otherwise preoccupied, the Middle East peace process is going down the drain. The Israeli Prime Minister is encouraging the expansion of settlements in occupied Arab lands and also new financing. Isn't it time that you spoke out? And while we're in the region, are you prepared to lift the ban on travel to Lebanon?

**President Clinton.** The answer to the second question is that our advisers still tell me they do not believe it is safe for American business people to do that, and so I am not, at this time, prepared to do it.

The answer to the first question is, of course, we have been in active contact with both sides in the negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians, pushing for an agreement on Hebron. There's been very little difference between them for weeks and weeks and weeks now. And we need to get the Hebron agreement over and behind us and go on to other issues.

With regard to settlements, I believe the State Department stated yesterday what my position is, which is that it just stands to reason that anything that preempts the outcome of something that both parties have agreed to should be part of the final negotiations cannot be helpful in making peace. And that's my concern about that.

**Q.** Can you do anything about it?

**President Clinton.** Well, we can say what we believe and we can press our views on all those issues, and we are. But I want to assure you that we have been in very close contact with both parties for some time now—I have personally, our administration has—and we're pushing ahead.

The talks are at a critical juncture, I think. The situation is full of tension and full of frustration. And I'm pleased that the Prime Minister and Chairman Arafat talked yesterday. That's a good thing, better than not talking. But sooner or later they have to do something. And they've had an agreement within grasp with very little difference on Hebron for some time now. The time has come to make that agreement. But I don't think that on the settlement issue that anything should be done which would, in effect, be seen as preempting the outcome of something they've already agreed to should be part of the final negotiations. And we've had a very clear position on that all along.

#### **Cuba and the Helms-Burton Amendment**

**Q.** Mr. President, Jacques Santer says you've cleared the air on Cuba. Does that mean you won't be implementing Helms-Burton? And, Mr. Bruton, does that mean that Europe will be withdrawing its court action against the United States at the WTO? Or are you still at loggerheads?

**President Clinton.** I thought you'd never ask. [Laughter] I don't think it necessarily means either one. I'll let the Prime Minister or President Santer speak for themselves. I have a decision deadline on that which has not been reached, and I have not gotten the final recommendation from Mr. Eizenstat, who's been working on that for me, and others in the administration.

But I would say this was a decision that Europe made on its own that was very impressive to me, not only the common position on democracy but the action taken by all the member nations of the EU on human rights and the decision made to channel further aid through the nongovernmental organizations. All those steps are quite significant and show that we are now working together to promote freedom and democracy in Cuba. And that, to me—it obviously has to be a factor in the decision I make, but that decision will be

made sometime in the middle of next month. And I'm not prepared to announce it yet and haven't received a final recommendation yet.

**Prime Minister Bruton.** Could I say that there is, of course, a difference in method, but there is absolutely no difference in objective between the European Union and the United States. We both want to see pluralist democracy in Cuba at the earliest possible moment. We believe that the denial of democratic rights to the Cuban people is an anachronism in the modern world and is denying the Cuban people something to which they are absolutely entitled. The United States and the European Union are working with vigor towards the same objective. It's fair to say that at the 2d of December council chaired by Dick Spring, a very strong declaration was adopted by the European Union, absolutely unanimously, calling for democracy in Cuba and saying that we will work together as a union of 15 to achieve that objective.

Of course, there are differences between us in regard to what we consider to be an attempt to apply U.S. law outside U.S. territory, to the detriment of European companies. However, that's an issue that can be—an issue that we will deal with in the course of normal negotiation.

**Q.** Monsieur Santer, does that mean that the European Union is going to drop its effort to take this issue of the Helms-Burton law to the World Trade Organization or to the World Court, in following up the first question?

And Mr. President, if I could ask you a related question: Why is it useful to engage in constructive engagement and trade policy with China, which has a human rights policy which you so strongly oppose, yet it's not worthwhile to engage in constructive engagement with Cuba? And at the risk of following up with a very self-serving question—

**President Clinton.** You asked three questions there. [*Laughter*]

**Q.** Very self-serving question. As you know, the Cuban Government—

**President Clinton.** Do I watch CNN every day? Yes, I do. Go ahead. [*Laughter*] I was thinking of the most self-serving question I could think of. Go ahead. [*Laughter*]

**Q.** You're close. [*Laughter*]

**Q.** The Cuban Government has given CNN permission to open up a bureau in Havana. The U.S. Government is sitting on that request right now. Do you think it's appropriate to give CNN permission to have a bureau in Havana, President Santer?

**President Santer.** For the first question—[*laughter*—I must say, I remember it as the Taoiseach said, we have the same target. We are sharing, the United States and the European Union, the same values of democracy, of pluralism, and so on. We are already differing in means. And in that respect, we're sticking, of course, to the decision taken by the European Council about this—about also the panel which is pending before the WTO in Geneva.

But on the other hand, I repeat that we have adopted a clear policy, a common position for Cuba in a positive way, and we are implementing this common position. And the head of states and government in Dublin last weekend, they confirmed this common position. And we're working on that, and we're elevating on that, I hope so, very constructively with the United States to bring the pluralism of democracy to Cuba.

**President Clinton.** On the question of Cuba versus China or any other country, I can do no better than Ambassador Albright did when she pointed out that the United States cannot afford to have a cookie-cutter approach to the promotion of peace, democracy, and prosperity. We have to have different policies for different nations, different regions, different realities. That's the first point. The second point is the Chinese have not shot down any innocent American citizens out of the sky recently, and that had a very chilling effect on our relationships with Europe—or with Cuba and clearly raised the security issues related to our proximity.

On the bureau location, this is the first I've heard of it. I think you better give me a chance to huddle, think, and I will give you an answer to that, in public or private, but I can't do it right now.

Mr. Fornier [Ron Fornier, Associated Press].

### **Middle East Peace Process**

**Q.** I want to ask you a question about your CIA designate. But a quick followup to Hel-

en's question. Your aides have been intimating that—more than what you said—the West Bank—it's not helpful, the West Bank settlement issue. Your aides have been intimating that it's actually an obstacle to peace. Do you agree with that?

**President Clinton.** Absolutely.

**Q.** It is an obstacle to peace?

**President Clinton.** Absolutely.

#### **Director of Central Intelligence-Designate**

**Q.** And on Tony Lake, he is telling congressional leaders that it was a mistake to keep Congress uninformed when your administration looked the other way as Iran shipped arms to the Bosnia Muslims. Do you agree it was a mistake, and do you think his confirmation is in jeopardy?

**President Clinton.** No, I don't think his confirmation is in jeopardy because he did a superb job as National Security Adviser, and this country is in better shape than it was 4 years ago, and because he's very well-qualified to be head of the CIA.

I believe that what he said is right. A lot of things were happening during that period of time. We were not under any legal obligation of any kind, as far as I'm aware, to make any kind of specific notation about the cables that went back and forth regarding this issue. But in retrospect, he said it probably would have been better to inform key Members of Congress on a confidential basis, and I accept that.

I would like to point out, though, one reason why I don't see how in the world this could be any kind of basis for voting against him—the Congress actually mandated that policy just a few weeks later, if you'll remember. The Congress actually mandated that the arms embargo not be enforced by the United States, going far beyond anything that had transpired in the cables. So I think that ought to be on the public record, and that will be a factor here.

#### **Mutual Recognition Agreement**

**Q.** How long will it take for business—on the MRA's?

**Prime Minister Bruton.** Pretty well immediately after it comes into force, because any new standards, any new products that

are being introduced will not have to go through a twin-track approach, they will be able to get the requisite recognition in one jurisdiction and that would then be recognized in the other.

**President Clinton.** Do you agree with that?

**Mr. Dana Mead.** Yes, sir. Essentially immediately.

#### **Central Intelligence Agency**

**Q.** [Inaudible]—cooperation in Europe, we have an agency called the Central Intelligence Agency, which you may or may not know much about, but they are living in secret all the time, and they're trying to overthrow other nations around the world and sell arms to nations—even those fighting in a civil war, they sell to both sides. Don't you think that's adverse to cooperation?

**President Clinton.** They shouldn't do anything illegal, and if they are today, I don't know about it. I can't vouch for what they did before I showed up.

Yes, go ahead.

#### **Middle East Peace Process**

**Q.** Mr. President, during your second administration, are you prepared to enforce your policy on the settlement issue upon the Israeli Government, using American financial, political means in order to enforce the policy?

**President Clinton.** Let me say what I have said all along, what I strongly believe. I believe the United States cannot impose a peace in the Middle East. What the United States can do is to create the conditions in which it is easier for peace to be made by the parties because we work to minimize the risks of peace.

From my point of view, sir, the most significant incentive to making peace in the Middle East is the clear consequence of what will flow if it is not made. We cannot—this is not a situation in equilibrium here. It's not as if tomorrow will be like today and the day after tomorrow will be like today and the day after that will be like today. This is a process that, once having been undertaken, is either going to go forward or fall back. It will either lead to greater integration or greater disintegration and greater trouble. And I think the

leaders of the Middle East are well aware of that.

It has always been my position that we exercised the influence most profoundly when we did it in that context—when we said what we had to say to them in private, but our public role maintained its essential balanced neutral position that we had to create the conditions in which peace could occur, and then we were morally obligated—and in terms of our interests—obligated to minimize the risks for peace. I still believe that. But I've already said what I have to say about the present situation, and I think it's pretty clear.

#### **EU-U.S. Anticrime Efforts**

**Q.** Taoiseach and Mr. President, could you surmise what kind of financial outlay might be involved in the crime and drugs package you're talking about, put a bit more flesh on the joint action that will be taken by the two governments, by Europe and the U.S.?

**Prime Minister Bruton.** Well, the bulk of this will be within existing budgets, where people will cooperate on agreed standards. One of the areas where already the United States is very active in Europe is in police training. The United States has set up an institute in Budapest, which is helping the Eastern European countries to engage in police training, to bring their police levels up to a sophisticated standard capable of dealing with the modern crime as we know it in the West, unfortunately.

We can see more cooperation in that area. The fact that we will conclude a customs agreement, for example, very shortly will mean that our customs authorities will cooperate much more effectively, within existing budgets, on sharing information in order to stop crime moving from—or stop drugs moving from one jurisdiction to another.

The European Union will be preparing a major report on organized crime as a whole, which is in a sense a new phenomenon on its present scale, by the end of April. And we would hope to see the United States assisting us and participating with us in that study—that we will go forward, if you like, with the next wave of legal changes and also the devotion of resources to back those legal changes up on a transatlantic basis.

#### **Greece and Turkey**

**Q.** Did you talk about the problems between Greece and Turkey and the crisis in the Aegean and the problems of Cyprus within the context of the accession of Cyprus to the European Union?

**President Santer.** Yes, of course, we discussed it.

**President Clinton.** I'll be glad to comment, but since you mentioned the European Union, I think I should let them reply.

**President Santer.** You know, the position of the European Union in this respect is very clear. We defined it in a package on the 6th of March, 1995, in which package we developed the ideas that we would establish a customs union with Turkey. It is in force from the first of January 1996 and is benefiting from the European Union, and also third countries are benefiting from it. Unfortunately, the second deal is not yet realized, achieved, because of the financial protocol, because of the blockade of Greece, you know, because the difference they have with some islands in the Aegean Sea. And the third element of this package is also the development of human rights, the promotion of human rights. And we are stressing also these problems with the Turkish Government. And in the financial provisions through our program MIDA, we are providing some programs to Turkey to strengthen the human rights situation in Turkey and also to assist the civil society and also the needs of the population in the southeast, in the poorest part of Turkey.

That is what we are doing for Turkey at this moment. We hope that there would be also some evolution in the human rights situation and that we can deal also with the differences between Turkey and Greece on the basis of the resolution the European Council—not the European Council but the Council of Ministers of the European Union took on the 15th of July to go to the international core to deal with all these legal institutional problems.

For Cyprus, we didn't change our policy, not at all, because Cyprus is a candidate to become a member of the European Union. And we clearly defined on the 6th of March, 1995, that negotiations for enlargement with Cyprus would start 6 months after the con-

clusion of the intergovernmental conference. And this conclusion, we hope, would be finished under the Dutch Presidency in June 1997. So we are starting with the negotiation at the beginning of 1998.

**President Clinton.** Let me make two general comments. Number one, the United States believes that an integrated and democratic and prosperous Europe is very much in our interest, therefore we support the expansion of the European Union. But we recognize that it is for the Europeans to decide the terms and the parties and the timetable of that expansion. But in general, we welcome the strengthening and the broadening of the Union.

Secondly, we have spent a lot of time since I've been in office trying to minimize tensions and resolve difficulties between Greece and Turkey. And in particular, I have made an effort to try to resolve the problems over Cyprus. I believe that the future of the European Union and the future of the United States will be much brighter and much less troublesome if these things can be resolved.

I believe that Greece and Turkey are two great nations that have an enormous commonality of interest, whether in NATO, whether in their interest in European integration, whether in their interest in minimizing chaos in the vicinity in which they both live—if they could simply resolve these long-standing difficulties between them. And I can only say for my part that I intend to do whatever I can in these next 4 years the American people have given me to try to help work out the situation in Cyprus and work out the problems generally between Greece and Turkey.

They are both our allies, and they're both very, very important to a stable 21st century. And I intend to invest an enormous amount of effort in trying to succeed there. And I ask them to reexamine their positions and try to reach out to one another. They plainly have more in common looking to the future than they do which divides them. It is only the past which continues to bedevil them.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President's 133d news conference began at 2:20 p.m. in Room 450 of the Old Executive Office Building. The President met with Prime Minister John Bruton in his capacity as

President of the European Council and President Jacques Santer of the European Commission. In his remarks, the President referred to Stuart E. Eizenstat, Special Representative of the President and Secretary of State for the Promotion of Democracy in Cuba.

### **Remarks Prior to Discussions With Prime Minister John Bruton of Ireland and an Exchange With Reporters**

*December 17, 1996*

#### **Irish Peace Process**

**The President.** Let me say I'm delighted to have Prime Minister Bruton here again today, along with the members of his government, and we're going to talk about Northern Ireland today. And I want to reiterate my call for the IRA to institute a cease-fire in words as well as deeds. If they do that, I am convinced that Sinn Fein will be invited to participate in the talks, and we believe that substantive and inclusive peace talks are the only way to resolve this.

Meanwhile, the talks go on. Senator Mitchell is doing a terrific job. And I want to say also a word of appreciation to the Loyalists for holding the cease-fire. I think that's a very good thing. We can't make peace until we end violence, and that's what we're going to talk about today, how we can keep working on that.

**Q.** Do they await the British elections, I mean, the question of movement and progress?

**The President.** Maybe the Prime Minister ought to answer that.

**Prime Minister Bruton.** I would like to say that I completely endorse what the President just said. On the contrary, I think an immediate cease-fire would have advantages that a postponed cease-fire wouldn't necessarily carry. I think it would set a policy position in regard to Sinn Fein's participation in talks in place before an election, which would carry through into the next British Parliament in a much more durable way, whereas a postponed cease-fire after the election would go into the term of office of a new government, with perhaps a new opposition, and there would be much less certainty about the response.

So I agree entirely with what the President has said. I think from every point of view, the point of view of their own movement, from the point of view of maximum opportunity, from the point of view of maximum durability of inclusive talks—a cease-fire now is the right choice for the Republican movement to make. And I'm very, very heartened that the President has said that again in such clear terms.

**The President.** The British and the Irish Governments have made enormous efforts here, but we can't succeed—or they can't succeed unless there is a cease-fire, an end to the violence, and we ultimately have inclusive talks. And I'm convinced that will happen if there is a cease-fire.

#### **Legal Defense Fund**

**Q.** Mr. President, let me ask you about a domestic issue, sir. Is Charles Trie a friend of yours, and do you agree with the decision to return the money he attempted to deliver to your legal defense fund?

**The President.** Yes, and yes.

**Q.** Were you aware he was raising money for your legal defense fund?

**The President.** Not till it came in. But I supported the decision. I was aware of the decision to return the money because—and I think in all these fundraising endeavors, the rules should be that all the checks should be checked to make sure that not only the fact but any even appearance of impropriety should be removed. And Mr. Cardozo was interested in the appearance of that, so was I, and that's why the decision was made. That's what our campaign did, and as the Democratic Party's people have said, that's what they should have done. But the campaign did it, the legal defense fund did it, and I think it was handled appropriately.

**Q.** Is he a close friend of yours?

**The President.** I've known him a long time. I knew him when he and his family came over and started a little restaurant about a mile from my home 20 years ago. And I saw them start with nothing and build up their family enterprise. They've worked very hard in this country, and they've done well.

**Q.** Now we'll get a real story, when the Irish press comes in.

**The President.** This will be like a Jesuitical examination. [Laughter]

[At this point, one group of reporters left the room, and another group entered.]

#### **Irish Peace Process**

**Q.** When you meet with Mr. Bruton today, do you think—there has been a lot of discussion over just what Sinn Fein has to do in order to get to the table, but is there anything else that Britain can also do to encourage Sinn Fein to get to the table at this point?

**The President.** Well, that's what—we're going to discuss all of that. I just want to say again that first I appreciate what the Irish and British Governments have done to date. Secondly, I still believe the IRA should immediately call a cease-fire, in words as well as deeds. I'm convinced that Sinn Fein will be invited to participate in the talks if that happens. And I think inclusive talks are the only way to make peace.

The talks will go on. Senator Mitchell, I think is doing a fine job, though Loyalists should be commended for holding the cease-fire. But peace will not come in the presence of violence; it must come with the absence of violence. I'm convinced of that. That's what we're going to talk about today.

**Q.** Mr. President, in the event of an Irish cease-fire, do you believe—personally believe that Sinn Fein should get immediate and automatic access to the talks process?

**The President.** Well, I believe that Sinn Fein would be invited to participate in the talks fairly soon thereafter. That's what I believe. But we have to talk about the details, you know. The Prime Minister has to keep me educated here. The texture of the Irish peace struggle is rather complex.

**Q.** Mr. President, with all your foreign policy challenges in the second term, will Ireland still be a priority as it was in the first term?

**The President.** Yes.

**Q.** Mr. President, what was your reaction to this attempt to smear Martha Pope in some of the British newspapers?

**The President.** She's a fine woman and a friend of mine. And I understand that the charge has been retracted. And if that's true, that's good. It should have been. We ought

to have more false charges retracted in this world, and I'm pleased by that.

**Q.** Do you know anything about a possible cease-fire that would inject new life into the peace talks?

**The President.** I know nothing more than you do probably about that. We're going to talk about it. I know we're working for it, and we'll keep working for it.

**Q.** Mr. President, there is a perception that the talks in Northern Ireland are going nowhere at the moment, that an agreement on decommissioning which looked close this week is not now likely in the immediate term. Are you as pessimistic as some people are in Northern Ireland?

**The President.** No, we can't afford pessimism. I mean, after all, if you just look at the whole sweep of events in the last 3 years or so and compare that to the previous 25 years, I still think that things are moving right along here. We're in a rough patch, but if we just keep at it, I think it will come out all right.

**Prime Minister Bruton.** Exactly.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:05 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Charles Yah Lin Trie, CEO, Diahatsu International Trading Co.; Michael H. Cardozo, executive director of the Presidential Legal Expense Trust; and Martha Pope, Deputy to the Special Adviser to the President and Secretary of State for Economic Initiatives in Ireland. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

### **Statement on Receiving the National AIDS Strategy**

*December 17, 1996*

I am pleased today to receive the first-ever National AIDS Strategy. In the 15 years of this epidemic, we have never had such a unified strategy. This strategy represents an important milestone in the history of the fight to defeat this epidemic.

The National Strategy reiterates our administration's and our Nation's commitment to winning the battle against AIDS. It establishes six major goals for our national efforts: to find a cure and a vaccine; to reduce new HIV infections; to assure people living with HIV and AIDS access to high-quality care;

to fight AIDS-related discrimination at every turn; to lead the global fight to end AIDS; and to translate our research advances into treatment as quickly as possible.

These goals will help to guide our work in the coming term, and more specifically in the coming year. We have made significant progress in the last 4 years. Researchers working toward a cure and a vaccine are reporting encouraging news and giving us hope. New treatments, approved by the FDA in record time, are producing some very encouraging results in terms of the quality of people's lives and the potential for extending the length of life.

This progress results from more than a decade of investment in AIDS research, prevention, and care. I am very proud that in the four budgets my administration has produced, funding for AIDS programs has increased by 55 percent. We have also strengthened the Office of AIDS Research at NIH and tripled funding for AIDS drug assistance programs.

Despite this progress, we must recognize that the AIDS epidemic is not over. Far too many of our sons and daughters are still losing their lives to this epidemic every day. Far too many are still becoming infected. We will win the battle against HIV, but to do so we must stand shoulder to shoulder in the fight and we must build on the strides we have made. I am confident that my administration will do its part and that we have taken yet another step forward in that battle today.

### **Statement on Approval of the New Stabilization Force in Bosnia**

*December 17, 1996*

I have formally approved NATO's new operation plan for the Stabilization Force (SFOR) that will succeed the NATO-led Implementation Force (IFOR) in Bosnia after December 20. I welcome NATO's decision yesterday to approve formally the new operation plan and today to approve the Activation Order that will authorize the start of SFOR's mission.

SFOR's limited and focused mission is to consolidate the peace that IFOR successfully established and maintained. During the past

12 months, IFOR separated and ensured the demobilization of former warring factions. It provided the secure conditions in which democratic elections could be held and the reconstruction of Bosnia's shattered economy could begin. IFOR succeeded in bringing an end to a war that threatened stability in Europe. Now, by preventing the parties from sliding back into armed conflict and providing more breathing space for political and economic efforts to take hold, SFOR will help Bosnians assume full responsibility for their future—a future without an outside military presence.

As the leader of NATO and the principal architect of the Dayton peace, the United States must continue to lead in this new mission to consolidate the peace in Bosnia. At the same time, our European allies are sharing the responsibility for building long-term stability. The European Union is the leading donor to the economic reconstruction effort and shoulders the burden of helping Bosnia's refugees. Europe will also contribute a greater share of the troops for SFOR than it did for IFOR, with the U.S. providing less than half of what we provided for IFOR.

SFOR's mission will last 18 months. Every 6 months we will review and consult with Congress on whether stability can be maintained with fewer forces. By helping the Bosnian people build a peace that is self-sustaining, SFOR will also help advance our fundamental goal of building a Europe that is peaceful, undivided, and democratic.

### **Remarks Following a Briefing on the Television Rating System and an Exchange With Reporters**

*December 19, 1996*

**The President.** Let me begin by saying that, as all of you know, that the Vice President and Secretary Riley and members of the White House staff and I have just met with Jack Valenti and Eddie Fritts and Decker Anstrom.

I want to thank the industry leaders for the television rating system which they have proposed today. Earlier this year, in February, I asked them to do this. They said that they would and that they would do it by Janu-

ary 1st. They are on time, and they have done what they said they would do. And they are going to give America's families more help in choosing appropriate television programming for their children.

Now, it is now appropriate to say that it is the personal responsibility of the family, first of all, to make use of this system. In a year, you know, the new televisions will have these V-chips, but for right now there will be other ways that the industry will work to make available the information to parents. They have to use it. They have to evaluate it, and then they have to communicate back to the industry how they feel: Do they like it; do they not like it; where is it inadequate; what suggestions they have for changes? As this system is implemented, the ball will plainly be in the court of the parents of America to make the most of this and to actually give feedback about it.

I would also like to say that at the request of the Vice President, the industry has agreed to make a systematic effort to get the continuous parental input and evaluation so that they will know how this system is going down, to what extent it's being used, and how it's being received by the parents of this country.

So I feel that this is a very important step forward. Over the next several months the industry has agreed that they will review their findings and the reactions to what they're doing. I think that's a very positive thing. And I want to thank the Vice President for what he has done and ask him to say a word or two. And then if you have any questions, we'll try to answer them.

*[At this point, the Vice President made brief remarks.]*

### **Television Rating System**

**Q.** Mr. President, are you then leaving open the possibility that at some future time the administration might agree with the parents groups who want this rated by content?

**The President.** No, what I—let me reformulate the question in a way—what I'm saying is, and I don't think the industry disputes this, I have no idea if this is the very best system that could be devised. I do believe it's a huge step forward over what we have now, which is nothing. And this issue has been debated, as I said the other day, for

years and years and years. Now finally something significant has been done.

You know what the argument is. The argument is, should these rating systems be age-related or should they be content-specific? If you think about the literally hundreds and hundreds, maybe thousands and thousands of programs that are on all the stations available, on all the cable channels, as well as all the networks every week, it seems to me that organizing them by age and then letting parents use the system and seeing how it works and giving feedback—if the consensus is reached down the road that there ought to be more content in the rating system, it will be a lot easier to do and to know what the content indicators mean once you group these programs in an age-based way.

So that's what—it was not for me to do. We've been very circumspect here in believing that this is not a Government function; this is a private function. And that's what we mean by—it's not up to—in my view, the only thing that I would condemn would have been bad faith. There has been no bad faith here; there's been an extraordinary effort.

The only point I'm making is, I don't have any idea if we can make it better; we might be able to make it better. The parents group, the advocacy groups deserve to be heard and considered, but we are now doing what I think ought to be done. The industry kind of put the ball in the parents' court, and then it's going to systematically, rigorously ask them what they think.

So really I would say this is a great day for the parents of America, because what most parents want is more freedom to raise their children according to their own values and to balance the demand of work and childrearing. And this is a big step forward in helping them do that. Now they have to seize the opportunity. They have to give the industry feedback. And if we get strong feedback that something more could be done, I think it will be a lot easier to take the next step, because in the first instance these programs are going to be grouped in this way. So let's see what happens.

### **Hostage Crisis in Peru**

**Q.** Mr. President, could you give us your evaluation of the hostage crisis in Peru at the moment?

**The President.** Well, obviously, we are keeping up with it very closely, and we're very concerned about it. We're concerned about all those who are held hostage. But it's been my experience in matters like this that—first of all, the Peruvian Government is doing its best and the President, too, to manage this difficult situation in an appropriate way. We are having communications with them. And I think the less any of us around the world say beyond that, the better, because we don't want to do or say anything that would complicate what is already a very difficult undertaking that we obviously hope will have a good outcome.

### **Second Term Transition**

**Q.** Do you expect to wrap up your Cabinet announcements tomorrow?

**The President.** Well, we have I think four more announcements to make, and I think we will be making them in a timely fashion. But I don't want to go beyond that. We're working very hard on that, you know, every day we're working on it, and there's more to come.

**Q.** That means not tomorrow?

**Q.** You want to wrap up the week with some announcements, don't you? [Laughter]

**The President.** Like I said before, you know, this is a partnership between us. It's Christmas; it's down time. I need to give you something else to do and help you do your job, and it will help me do mine to get it out of the way. So I'm working on it. I want to do it as quickly as I can, but I don't want to tie my hands. You understand how this appointments process has developed over the last several years and all the things that have to be done before you can nail down these decisions. But we're working very hard on it, and I'll do my best not to disappoint you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:53 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Jack Valenti, president, Motion Picture Association of America; Edward O. Fritts,

president and chief executive officer, National Association of Broadcasters; and Decker Anstrom, president and chief executive officer, National Cable Television Association. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

### **Remarks Announcing the Second Term Domestic Policy Team and an Exchange With Reporters**

*December 20, 1996*

**The President.** Thank you very much. Please be seated.

I thought the era of big Government was over, and then I saw all of these people here. [Laughter]

Let me say as we move into my second term, we have the obligation to continue the progress we have made and to build on it to prepare America for the 21st century with a Government that is smaller but works hard not to abandon people but, instead, to give them the tools they need to make the most of their own lives and to build strong families and strong communities and a strong America.

Today I want to announce the members of my domestic policy team who will make this happen. Today, the Labor Department is more critical than ever, as we work to make job training available to all who need it and make sure that employee rights are secure and our workplaces are safe. I am very sorry to lose the services of my old friend Secretary Reich, who has truly made this a Department of the American work force. But I am proud to nominate as Secretary of Labor one of my closest advisers, a talented leader, Alexis Herman, who got her start as a social worker for Catholic Charities on the Mississippi Delta. I first met her in the 1970's, when she was Director of the Women's Bureau at the Department of Labor, pioneering efforts to give women training and economic opportunity.

She has been a successful businesswoman and a leader in efforts to bring minorities into the economic mainstream. And for the past 4 years, as Director of the White House Office of Public Liaison, she has been my eyes and ears, working to connect the Amer-

ican people, business and labor, individuals and communities, with their Government.

I said throughout the campaign that we have to help parents succeed at home and at work and give working people the training they need to succeed in the new economy. For years now, I have been trying to prevail upon the Congress to consolidate training programs and pass the "GI bill" for America's workers. All these things we must do in the next 4 years. As Secretary of Labor, Alexis Herman will be a true national leader in this mission on behalf of working families.

Let me also say that I considered a number of superbly qualified people for this position. I'd like to mention two in particular and thank them for their willingness to be considered: first, to Congressman Esteban Torres and second, the Director of the Corporation for National Service, Harris Wofford, who has done a wonderful job in heading AmeriCorps, which has now enabled 70,000 young people to serve in their communities all across America and which will play a vital role in the next 4 years.

Over the last 4 years, Henry Cisneros led a revolution of ideas at the Department of Housing and Urban Development. He and his team have spent every day questioning old approaches and searching for new answers. He is my friend, my adviser, someone who has poured his heart into making the American dream of owning a home a reality for all people. Today a smaller and smarter HUD brings more hope and greater opportunities to American communities than ever before, not only in housing but in developing economic opportunities in ways that had not before even been imagined. I think it is not too much to say that he is clearly the finest HUD Secretary who has ever held the position. I will miss him greatly and will continue to rely upon him for his advice and counsel.

I believe that the best person in this country who is today suited to lead HUD into the 21st century is Andrew Cuomo. He has lived and breathed housing and economic development for more than a decade, first at the grassroots as a community housing developer and then as our Assistant Secretary for Community Planning and Development.

[At this point, Housing and Urban Development-designate Andrew Cuomo's baby daughter Cara cried.]

Relax, this is a pro-family administration. [Laughter]

He is a passionate believer in doing what's right, and he is a determined leader who gets it done. His test is never soft sentiments, but hard results.

The empowerment zones effort he has led so well is a perfect example of the new HUD. Instead of big solutions imposed by Washington, it creates a partnership between Government, business, and private citizens to help communities lift themselves up. This is Andrew Cuomo's vision, and it is why I expect him to be a very strong voice for America's cities and a great HUD Secretary.

The Department of Energy has many missions, ranging from producing nuclear fuels and managing nuclear wastes to widening the frontiers of science at our national laboratories, to promoting energy efficiency and environmental technology. Hazel O'Leary has made huge strides with that Department and has done this while bringing unprecedented openness to the agency. I mention obviously the reports that the Energy Department has done on radiation experiments and the groundbreaking work that the Energy Department did to lead us to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

To manage this diverse and sprawling operation, a Secretary of Energy must be an experienced leader and manager who understands the demands of a large Government agency, who will demand peak performance from Government contractors, who knows why we must reinvent Government and how to do it.

As Secretary of Transportation, Federico Peña has proven himself a talented leader of a large and complex Government agency. He found ways to encourage new technologies, promote safety, protect the environment. I am happy to announce today that I will nominate him to be our new Secretary of Energy. He will continue to streamline and reinvent the Energy Department. He will build on its unprecedented commitment to openness. He will oversee the urgent cleanup of our nuclear stockpiles, and he will work with the energy industry to create eco-

nomic opportunity by using energy in a way that does not hurt our environment. I am very happy that he has agreed to remain in the Cabinet in this new and ever-changing role, and very grateful for the service he rendered at the Department of Transportation.

To replace him, I am proud to nominate the Federal Highway Administrator, Rodney Slater. First as the chair of the State highway commission in our home State and then as Federal Highway Administrator, Rodney Slater has managed large programs with skill and high standards. He has rebuilt and expanded our Nation's highways and linked isolated communities to jobs and opportunities. He has built bridges both of steel and of good will to bring people closer together.

When the North ridge earthquake struck California with such deadly force, Rodney led our effort to rebuild vital highways in record time. He is the right person to help us meet the many transportation needs and challenges we face as we enter the 21st century. He has been my friend and adviser for many years. Along with his own family, I have watched with pride as he has built his own road to success.

I can say that he was recommended by more people from more places in more ways for this job than any person for any position I have ever seen. [Laughter] And in spite of that—[laughter]—I am confident that he will be a superb and successful Secretary of Transportation.

Over the past 4 years, first with Erskine Bowles' leadership and then Phil Lader's, we have worked hard to revitalize and broaden the mission and increase the impact of the Small Business Administration. SBA has doubled the number of loans to small businesses, tripled the loans to women-owned businesses, even as its staff has been cut by 25 percent. Phil Lader told me several months ago that he wanted to return to private life after the election. However, I have asked him to serve in another senior role in my administration, and he will be considering this over the holidays. I hope he and his family agree to accept my offer. I can only stand so many of these people leaving. [Laughter]

To replace Phil Lader, I will nominate Aida Alvarez. She has been an award-winning journalist and investment banker. For the

past 3½ years she has been the Director of the Office of Federal Housing Enterprise Oversight, responsible for the safety and soundness of \$1.4 trillion in housing finance institutions. She combines business savvy with a dedication to public service. I have known her for many years and have been very proud to have her as a part of this administration. I am also proud that this is the first time a person born in Puerto Rico has been appointed to a President's Cabinet.

To complete our economic team, I will nominate Janet Yellen to be Chair of the Council of Economic Advisers. Since it was created by President Truman 50 years ago, the CEA has provided objective and rigorous economic advice to the President. Under Laura Tyson and then Joe Stiglitz, the CEA has been unflinchingly honest, and our economic policy has had hard work—hard-won credibility. As we work together to balance the budget in a way that reflects our values and will continue to grow our economy, the CEA's role will be more important than ever. Janet Yellen will provide the leadership and experience to get the job done. She is currently a member of the Federal Reserve Board of Directors. She had been a professor of economics at the University of California Berkeley and at Harvard, where she taught, among others, the Deputy Secretary of the Treasury Larry Summers who said that his grade was sufficiently high for her to be recommended for the job. [Laughter] She is an esteemed writer and thinker who will serve our country well.

The Domestic Policy Council coordinates the work of our domestic policy agendas—agencies. It finds innovative ways to use our most enduring values to meet our newest challenges. Today I am proud to appoint Bruce Reed as Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy and Director of the Domestic Policy Council, replacing Carol Rasco about whom I will say more in a moment.

Bruce is an original thinker, someone who long ago rejected the easy answers from any part of the political spectrum, and no one has had a greater impact on the thinking of the administration or the President. He combines a unique practical knowledge with a real powerful concern for the welfare of ordinary Americans. He has been at my side from

the day I announced my candidacy for President in 1991. He was an architect of welfare reform. He has been a driving force behind our efforts to shrink Government, expand educational opportunity, and fight crime.

For the past year, as Assistant to the President for Policy Planning, he has worked to hone our goals for the next 4 years, and now he will have a chance to make that agenda happen. He is the intellectual core of the vital center. Under his leadership, the Domestic Policy Council will be a place where dynamic ideas are turned into actions that will make a difference in the lives of our people. He is a person of the highest integrity, a good friend, and I am proud that he will be by my side as we complete the work of preparing our country for the next century.

Finally, I have prevailed upon my friend of long standing, Mack McLarty, to stay on for a second term as Counsel to the President, remaining as a member of the National Economic Council. In addition, Mack will take on new responsibilities as Special Envoy to the President and the Secretary of State for Latin America. With this new role, I expect him to deepen and broaden his portfolio as he helps to coordinate and strengthen our policies toward Latin America. He is well suited to carry out this important role because of his business experience and his broad understanding of the new global economy. His perspective was clear when he served as one of the principal architects of our economic strategy and played a key role in passing our deficit reduction plan in 1993.

Throughout this administration he has been central to our efforts to build our relationships with our neighbors in our hemisphere. His leadership was instrumental in passing NAFTA and he led our efforts, along with Vice President Gore, to host the Summit of the Americas in Miami and the 1996 Atlanta Olympics. The 1994 summit was a historic meeting and will require significant follow up as we move forward to the second Summit of the Americas in Santiago. He will head the United States delegation to the signing of the Guatemala peace accords later this month. And this new assignment for Mack should underscore the importance that we in this administration and I personally

place upon Latin America as we move forward.

The other members of my domestic policy team are here with us today. Attorney General Reno has led our crusade to put police on our streets and take guns off our streets. Donna Shalala has worked tirelessly and well to give our people quality health care, to move millions from welfare to work, to care for our children and their future. Dick Riley has succeeded in reforming the student loan program and lowering its costs and making it more available to millions of people. He has challenged our schools to reach even higher standards. We have expanded educational opportunity, enhanced reform, and we will do much, much more of this in the next 4 years. As I said in the campaign this year, education must now be our highest priority, and I am pleased that Secretary Riley will continue to lead our efforts.

Earlier this week, I announced that one of my oldest and closest advisers, Domestic Policy Adviser Carol Rasco, will join the Education Department as Senior Adviser to the Secretary and Director of the America Reads Challenge. The importance of this initiative to me should be underscored by my asking someone this close to me to act on my behalf.

If you will remember in the campaign, I talked a lot about the importance of mobilizing one million volunteer tutors all across America to work with parents and teachers, to make sure that by the year 2000 every 8-year-old in this country can read independently. If every third-grader can read independently, when 40 percent of them are not reading at grade level today, it will dramatically alter the future of America's landscape for the better.

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jesse Brown has been a strong and effective voice for our veterans. He will continue to ensure that they have the health care and the services they deserve.

Federal Emergency Management Administrator James Lee Witt has transformed that agency into a model for disaster assistance and helped communities all across our country to rebuild. In community after community, from the southeast to the middle west to the west, he has made the term "Federal

bureaucrat" a positive, not a negative appellation.

General Barry McCaffrey will stay on as the Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy. We need his vigorous leadership, and he is in the process of doing something that Presidents for more than 30 years have wanted to do but never succeeded in doing, actually developing a coordinated, disciplined, long-term approach to dealing with the drug problems and reducing drug abuse in America, particularly among our youth.

Secretary Babbitt has been a wise steward for our precious natural resources and has helped us to solve some of the thorniest challenges facing America in this regard. He sent me a letter right after the election saying that in one way or another we have protected over 20 million acres of America's precious land in the last 4 years, a legacy of conservation equaled only in the two Roosevelts' administrations, and I thank him for that.

Secretary Glickman has worked to keep our food the safest and most plentiful in the world, as we have overhauled our food safety standards for the first time in decades and decades. And I thank him also for finding ways to promote agriculture and protect the environment.

As EPA Administrator, Carol Browner has cut redtape and curbed pollution. She has brought common sense back to the task of protecting our environment, enlisted more allies, and will lead the way in the next 4 years to making sure we do close those hundreds of toxic waste dumps that keep our children from growing up next to parks, not poison.

All these leaders have done a remarkable job. I am delighted they have agreed to stay in their positions. And now I'd like to ask the new appointees to come up and make some statements, beginning with the next Secretary of Labor, Alexis Herman.

*[At this point, Secretary of Labor-designate Alexis Herman, Secretary of Housing and Urban Development-designate Andrew Cuomo, Secretary of Energy-designate Federico Peña, Secretary of Transportation-designate Rodney Slater, Small Business Administrator-designate Aida Alvarez, Council of Economic Advisers Chair Janet Yellen, Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy*

*Bruce Reed, and Special Envoy to the President and the Secretary of State for Latin America Thomas F. (Mack) McLarty each made brief remarks.]*

**The President.** Thank you. Who is first? I'll take a couple of questions. It's almost Christmas. [*Laughter*]

#### **Access to the White House**

**Q.** Mr. President, as you move forward into your new term, questions continue to be asked about the first 4 years, especially in the area of campaign fundraising. Last February at the request of a friend of yours in Little Rock and the Democratic National Committee, an arms dealer from China was invited to a private event with you inside your residence at the White House. Four months later, this man's company was implicated in U.S. gun-smuggling. What do you remember about your contact with this man at this meeting? Does it concern you that he was perhaps not adequately screened in order to gain access to the White House? And do you feel in any respect that in situations like this you were taken advantage of?

**The President.** Well, first of all, I'm disappointed that it happened. It was clearly inappropriate. And I think what is obviously called for and what I have instructed to be done is to establish some sort of better screening provisions that are tighter to minimize this. Thousands of people come in and out of the larger White House office complex all the time, but we have to develop some way of screening them. I am disappointed. It was inappropriate. We must have a better screening system. We will have.

I remember literally nothing about it. I'm not sure that the gentleman ever said anything at this coffee. I asked my staff to let me see the records of it when this story broke, and there were disparate people from different walks of life from all over the country there, and normally what would happen in one of those conversations is I would talk for 5 or 10 minutes and then we would either go around the table and let people say whatever they wanted to say. And as I said there were all different kinds of people from all different walks of life always. I'm not sure that—I have no recollection of meeting him. I'm not sure he ever said anything. And I

can tell you for sure nothing inappropriate came from it in terms of any governmental action on my part.

But we have to do a better job of screening people who come in and out of here.

Helen [Helen Thomas, United Press International], go ahead.

#### **Investigations**

**Q.** Mr. President, do you have a sense of *deja vu* all over again—4 years of Whitewater, now new investigations—

**The President.** No.

**Q.** —on the Hill, Justice Department?

**The President.** No.

**Q.** What does this bode for the next administration and how do you cope?

**The President.** I show up for work every day. The American people ought to feel good about me. They spent \$30 million or something, and there has been not a single solitary shred of evidence of any wrongdoing on my part. I feel good about it.

I think it's unfortunate for democracy, and I think, as I said, this special counsel thing ought to be reviewed in light of what Archibald Cox and others have said, because the costs outweigh the benefits.

But on the other issue, any questions that are raised about contributions ought to be answered and any records that are needed ought to be provided. That's no different than what happened in Senator Dole's campaign when one of his officials was charged with money laundering and had to plead guilty and pay the biggest fine in FEC history. That didn't reflect on everybody else in the campaign. Those things happen. So if any—if there's any question about what happened, the evidence, the information should be provided, and we ought to determine whether anyone did anything wrong.

**Q.** Well, how are you coping?

**The President.** That's not a—how am I coping? [*Laughter*] It's not a problem. If you haven't done anything wrong and a problem comes up, you fix it, and you go on. I cope by thinking about the 11 million jobs we created and the millions more we have to create. I think about the millions of people that have a better deal going to college and the millions of more that will have. I cope by thinking about what the American people hired me

to do and the questions they ask me when I see them.

Yes, Gwen [Gwen Ifill, NBC News].

### **Second Term Transition and Diversity**

**Q.** Mr. President, your spokesman said earlier today that you've been very displeased with these events of the last couple days. I wonder if you could characterize your displeasure? And also, 4 years ago when you appointed your first Cabinet, you said very much up front that you wanted a Cabinet that looked like America. It took some juggling and you weren't as public about it this time, but it looks like you've assembled that. Did you feel like you were under any special pressure from special interest groups?

**The President.** No, the pressure was pressure I put on myself. I believe that one of my jobs at this moment in history is to demonstrate by the team I put together that no group of people should be excluded from service to our country and that all people are capable of serving. So I have striven to achieve both excellence and diversity. The same thing is true about the Federal judges I've appointed. It's the most diverse Federal bench of appointees in history. It also has the highest rating from the American Bar Association since the bar started rating judges.

So I'm very proud of the first Cabinet that I appointed. I am very proud of this Cabinet. I am proud that they are diverse, but I would not have appointed a single one of them because of their gender or their racial or ethnic background had I not thought that they could succeed. And if you look at the comparative record in department after department after department of the people who served in the first 4 years and compare the results they achieved, the work they did, I think that the evidence will indicate that.

And it goes back to something you asked me. You know, what we do, we all show up for work every day, and we create a team and work like crazy for the American people, we have goals, we have objectives, we hold ourselves to timetables, and we keep score about what we're doing for other people. And if that is your focus, which is what people hire us to do, that's what you worry about,

and that's what you do. So I feel good about it.

Now, this is——

### **Campaign Financing and White House Access**

**Q.** [Inaudible]—feel pressure——

**The President.** Well, my feelings are that, in the areas where we had more direct control—our campaign and the legal defense fund—as far as I know, the proper decisions were made because the proper scrutiny was applied. The Democratic Party officials have already admitted that they did not apply the proper review, and I am very displeased about it because 99 percent-plus of all the contributors did not do anything wrong, and over 98 percent of the money appears to be perfectly in order, and the other 1 percent got all the publicity and, thereby, disserving the Democrats around the country, the people who gave, and everything else. That is wrong.

And all they have to do is to institute a simple review system. Now, from time to time, mistakes may be made. If you have over a million contributors as both parties do now, that may happen from time to time, but common sense and strict review are the order of the day.

I feel the same way about this. I realize that Secret Service and others are reluctant to be too burdensome with all the thousands and tens of thousands of people that come in the White House complex every year, but I'm confident that if they put their minds to it they can come up with a better screening procedure so that things like this don't happen.

It's not a press conference. We've been here a long time. We'll have another press conference early next year. Merry Christmas. I'll see you early next year.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:32 p.m. in Room 450 of the Old Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Chinese businessman Wang Jun, chairman, Poly Technologies. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

## Remarks at a White House Children's Christmas Party

December 20, 1996

**The President.** Thank you. Give them a hand. Weren't they great? [Applause] Hello.

**Children.** Hello. Hi, Bill Clinton.

**The President.** Thank you, Antonio. Welcome to the White House. We're very glad to have you here. Every year, the First Lady and I love to meet with some children about this time and read the night before Christmas story, because Christmas is really a time for children, isn't it?

**Children.** Yes.

**The President.** And a time when we give gifts to each other and to our children to say how important you are. And it's a very special time for us. You know, Hillary wrote a book about children and families, and just today she gave a great gift—she gave the money that came in from the book to children's hospitals all across the country and to other things for children.

And one of the things that we hope will come out of this is that not only all of you here but all the children all over our country will feel very special; and as Christmas celebrates the birth of baby Jesus, that all the little children in our country will feel that they are very, very special.

So I want you to listen carefully to this story. A lot of you know this story, don't you?

**Children.** Yes.

**The President.** Do you?

**The First Lady.** You can chime in?

**The President.** So you can chime in. If you know—if you know any of the lines when I read it, in this wonderful book—see the pictures, can you see it—you say the lines, too. Okay? Okay, here we go. "The Visit of St. Nicholas."

[At this point, the President read the story.]

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:47 p.m. in the East Room at the White House.

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## Digest of Other White House Announcements

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The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

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### December 15

In the evening, the President and Hillary Clinton attended the production of "Christmas in Washington" at the National Building Museum. The show was taped for broadcast on NBC television December 18.

### December 16

The President named the 60 recipients of the first annual Presidential Early Career Awards for Scientists and Engineers.

### December 17

The President announced that Carol H. Rasco will be Senior Adviser to the Secretary and Director of the America Reads Challenge at the Department of Education.

In the evening, the President had a teleconference with newly elected United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan and outgoing U.N. Ambassador Madeleine K. Albright concerning Mr. Annan's acceptance speech before the General Assembly and the future of the United Nations.

### December 18

In the afternoon, the President met with a bipartisan group of mayors in the Roosevelt Room to discuss urban policy and the upcoming budgetary process.

### December 19

In the morning, the President met with Minister Liu Huaquiu of China in the Oval Office.

The President announced his intention to appoint Kathleen Stevens Dougherty and Ruth E. Roitenberg to the Advisory Committee on the Arts of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

### December 20

In the afternoon, the President met with former Senator Bob Dole in the Oval Office.

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**Nominations  
Submitted to the Senate**

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NOTE: No nominations were submitted to the Senate during the period covered by this issue.

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**Checklist  
of White House Press Releases**

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The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as items nor covered by entries in the Digest of Other White House Announcements.

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***Released December 16***

Fact sheet on the Mutual Recognition Agreements

***Released December 17***

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Mike McCurry and Deputy Press Secretary Dave Johnson

Statement by Press Secretary Mike McCurry on the murder of six Red Cross delegates in Chechnya

***Released December 18***

Transcript of a press briefing by Chief of Staff-designate Erskine Bowles on the second term transition

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Mike McCurry

***Released December 19***

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Mike McCurry

***Released December 20***

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Mike McCurry

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**Acts Approved  
by the President**

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NOTE: No acts approved by the President were received by the Office of the Federal Register during the period covered by this issue.

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