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our country for the 21st century and will we have the discipline, strength, and courage to take advantage of this unique moment in history—it really comes down to two questions: What does America mean, and what does it mean to be an American?

America must always be a nation becoming. We're never there. We're always becoming: becoming a more perfect union, full of new promise for our own people and new hopes for the world. And what does it mean to be an American? We're the ones who have to make that happen.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:20 a.m. at the Maryland State House. In his remarks, he referred to Casper R. Taylor, Jr., speaker, Maryland House of Delegates, and Thomas V. Miller, Jr., president, Maryland State Senate; Gov. Parris N. Glendening, Attorney General J. Joseph Curran, Jr., Treasurer Thomas N. Dixon, and Comptroller Louis L. Goldstein of Maryland.

Message to the Congress on Canadian Whaling Activities

February 10, 1997

To the Congress of the United States:

On December 12, 1996, Secretary of Commerce Michael Kantor certified under section 8 of the Fishermen's Protective Act of 1967, as amended (the "Pelly Amendment") (22 U.S.C. 1978), that Canada has conducted whaling activities that diminish the effectiveness of a conservation program of the International Whaling Commission (IWC). The certification was based on the issuance of whaling licenses by the Government of Canada in 1996 and the subsequent killing of two bowhead whales under those licenses. This message constitutes my report to the Congress pursuant to subsection (b) of the Pelly Amendment.

In 1991, Canadian natives took a bowhead whale from the western Arctic stock, under a Canadian permit. In 1994, Canadian natives took another bowhead whale from one of the eastern Arctic stocks, without a permit.

In 1996, under Canadian permits, one bowhead whale was taken in the western Canadian Arctic on July 24 and one bowhead whale was taken in the eastern Canadian Arctic on August 17. The whale in the eastern Arctic was taken from a highly endangered stock. The IWC has expressed particular concern about whaling on this stock, which is not known to be recovering.

None of the Canadian whale hunts described above was authorized by the IWC. Canada withdrew from the IWC in 1982. In those instances where Canada issued whaling licenses, it did so without consulting the IWC. In fact, Canada's 1996 actions were directly contrary to IWC advice. At the 1996 Annual Meeting, the IWC passed a resolution encouraging Canada to refrain from issuing whaling licenses and to rejoin the IWC. However, Canada has recently advised the United States that it has no plans to rejoin the IWC and that it intends to continue granting licenses for the taking of endangered bowhead whales.

Canada's unilateral decision to authorize whaling outside of the IWC is unacceptable. Canada's conduct jeopardizes the international effort that has allowed whale stocks to begin to recover from the devastating effects of historic whaling.

I understand the importance of maintaining traditional native cultures, and I support aboriginal whaling that is managed through the IWC. The Canadian hunt, however, is problematic for two reasons.

First, the whaling took place outside the IWC. International law, as reflected in the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, obligates countries to work through the appropriate international organization for the conservation and management of whales. Second, whaling in the eastern Canadian Arctic poses a particular conservation risk, and the decision to take this risk should not have been made unilaterally.

I believe that Canadian whaling on endangered whales warrants action at this time.

Accordingly, I have instructed the Department of State to oppose Canadian efforts to address takings of marine mammals within the newly formed Arctic Council. I have further instructed the Department of State to oppose Canadian efforts to address trade in marine mammal products within the Arctic Council. These actions grow from our concern about Canada's efforts to move whaling issues to fora other than the IWC and, more

generally, about the taking of marine mammals in ways that are inconsistent with sound conservation practices.

Second, I have instructed the Department of Commerce, in implementing the Marine Mammal Protection Act, to withhold consideration of any Canadian requests for waivers to the existing moratorium on the importation of seals and/or seal products into the United States.

Finally, the United States will continue to urge Canada to reconsider its unilateral decision to authorize whaling on endangered stocks and to authorize whaling outside the IWC.

I believe the foregoing measures are more appropriate in addressing the problem of Canadian whaling than the imposition of import prohibitions at this time.

I have asked the Departments of Commerce and State to keep this situation under close review.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
February 10, 1997.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 11.

Message to the Congress Reporting Budget Rescissions and Deferrals

February 10, 1997

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974, I herewith report nine proposed rescissions of budgetary resources, totaling $397 million, and one revised deferral, totaling $7 million.

The proposed rescissions affect the Departments of Agriculture, Defense-Military, Energy, Housing and Urban Development, and Justice, and the General Services Administration. The deferral affects the Social Security Administration.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
February 10, 1997.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 11.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Congressional Cosponsors of Campaign Finance Reform Legislation and an Exchange With Reporters

February 11, 1997

The President. In the State of the Union Address I asked the Congress to pass bipartisan campaign finance reform by July the Fourth, and I pointed out that delay would mean the death of reform, as it has in the last several years. I am very pleased to welcome to the White House today this bipartisan group of House Members who are now all cosponsors of the Shays-Meehan legislation. They are coming together in a bipartisan way to limit the influence of money in our campaigns for Congress and in financing the political parties and to level the playing field.

And I feel very, very strongly that they have done a good thing for our country. I am supporting their efforts very strongly, and I want to do whatever I can to work with them to help this legislation pass.

As soon as I leave here I'm going up to the Hill to a meeting of the bipartisan leadership of Congress, to which the Speaker and Senator Lott invited me after the State of the Union. And this is one of the issues I intend to raise there. I'm very encouraged by what I've heard here today, and we're determined to go forward.

Mr. Vice President.

[*At this point, the Vice President, Representative Chris Shays, and Representative Marty Meehan made brief remarks.*]

The President. Thank you all.

Q. Isn't this blocking the barn after the horse has gone?

The President. No. How can you say that? There will be a whole set of new elections up. There are elections in '98; there are elections in 2000; there are elections in 2002. I hope there will be elections 200 years from now.

Q. Is this all a product of lessons learned from the last campaign?

The President. No. Most of these people have wanted to do this for many years. Keep in mind, we had—in each of the last 4 years