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Contents

Addresses and Remarks

Budget team, meeting—1109
Childhood immunization initiative—1113
Climate change, discussion—1116
Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee reception—1113
Radio address—1107
Virginia, National Association of Elementary School Principals in Arlington—1121

Appointments and Nominations

White House Office, Special Counselor to the President, statement—1119

Communications to Congress

"Immigration Reform Transition Act of 1997," message transmitting proposed legislation—1120
Mongolia, most-favored-nation trade status, message transmitting report—1108

Executive Orders

Further Amendment to Executive Order 13017, Advisory Commission on Consumer Protection and Quality in the Health Care Industry—1109

Interviews With the News Media

Exchange with reporters in the Cabinet Room—1109

Joint Statements

Republic of Georgia-United States relations—1105

Meetings With Foreign Leaders

President Shevardnadze of the Republic of Georgia—1105

Proclamations

Captive Nations Week—1106
Death of William J. Brennan, Jr.—1118
National Korean War Veterans Armistice Day, 1997—1125
Parents' Day, 1997—1125

Statements by the President

See also Appointments and nominations
Boeing-McDonnell Douglas merger, European Union approval—1116
Fast track legislation, coordination—1119
"Immigration Reform Transition Act of 1997"—1119
Northern Ireland, cease-fire—1108
Religous freedom report—1112
White House Conference on Child Care, announcement—1116

Supplementary Materials

Acts approved by the President—1129
Checklist of White House press releases—1128
Digest of other White House announcements—1126
Nominations submitted to the Senate—1127

WEEKLY COMPILATION OF

PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

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Joint Statement on Republic of Georgia-United States Relations

July 18, 1997

During their July 18, 1997 meeting in Washington, Presidents Clinton and Shevardnadze underscored the special importance they attach to the close and productive relationship between the United States and Georgia. They committed to work together actively to expand cooperation throughout the foreign policy, security, economic and commercial spheres. The Presidents noted that the growing U.S.-Georgia partnership is firmly based on common goals and values and reflects the national interests of both states.

President Clinton praised President Shevardnadze's staunch leadership in vigorously implementing democratic and free-market principles, which has made Georgia a model of political and economic reform among the new independent states. President Clinton underscored the full support of the United States for the efforts of the Georgian government and parliament in pursuing reform in recent years. Georgia's continued commitment to democratization and respect for human rights will only further strengthen the warm ties between the two states and peoples.

The two Presidents noted positively the contribution to Georgia's reform efforts made by U.S. technical and humanitarian assistance. President Clinton pledged continued robust support for Georgia's reforms.

The Presidents called for expanded cooperation, both bilateral and multilateral, to promote Georgia's further integration into emerging European security structures. They expressed satisfaction with the entry into force on May 15, 1997 of the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) Flank Document. President Clinton encouraged Georgia's active involvement in NATO's new Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC). He also expressed strong commitment to assisting Georgia's efforts to address non-proliferation and export control concerns and to develop a modern military under civilian control and a viable border guard.

President Clinton reaffirmed U.S. support for Georgia's territorial integrity and a peaceful settlement to the tragic conflict in Abkhazia. The United States and Georgia support the early resumption of negotiations on Abkhazia, under the aegis of the UN, with Russia as facilitator and the participation of the OSCE and the other Friends of Georgia countries—France, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States.

The two Presidents agreed on the need to expand commercial relations between the United States and Georgia, including higher levels of trade and investment. In support of these goals, the instruments of ratification for the U.S.-Georgia Bilateral Investment Treaty were exchanged during the visit. The two sides agree to continue close cooperation in support of Georgia's rapid accession to the World Trade Organization on commercial terms generally applied to newly acceding members, which will further Georgia's integration into the global economy.

President Clinton praised Georgia's efforts to strengthen regional cooperation in the Caucasus, including its strong support for the Eurasian transport corridor. The Presidents agreed that this project is vitally important to the economic future not only of Georgia, but the region as a whole.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Proclamation 7012—Captive Nations Week, 1997

July 18, 1997

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

From its earliest days as a Nation, America has been a champion of freedom and human dignity. Our Declaration of Independence was a ringing cry against ''the establishment of an absolute tyranny over these States'' and affirmed the revolutionary concept that governments derive their powers from the free consent of those they govern. For more than two centuries our Bill of Rights has guaranteed such basic human rights as freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and freedom from arbitrary arrest. With such a history and heritage, we can feel only outrage that millions of people around the world still suffer beneath the shadow of oppression, their rights routinely violated by their own governments and leaders.

Almost four decades ago, our Nation observed the first Captive Nations Week to express formally our solidarity with the oppressed peoples of the world. Since that time, thanks to our steadfast advocacy for democratic reform and universal human rights, and the courage and determination of countless men and women around the globe, the world's political landscape has undergone a remarkable transformation. Nations once dominated by the Soviet Union and its satellite governments have blossomed into new democracies, establishing free market economies and free societies that respect individual rights. Families and countrymen once divided by walls and barbed wire, now walk together in the fresh air of liberty. The unprecedented gathering of 44 countries at the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council meeting earlier this month in Madrid symbolizes how far we have come in building a stable, democratic, and undivided Europe.

Yet while countries like Poland, Romania, and Estonia are no longer among the ranks of captive nations, too many others are still held hostage by tyranny, and new nations still fall victim to the scourge of oppression. Tragically, even as the wave of freedom and democratic reform sweeps across Eastern and Central Europe, former Soviet bloc countries, and nations in South America, Asia, and Africa, there are still governments that derive their strength, not from the consent of their citizens, but from terror, repression, and exploitation. Too many leaders still fuel the fires of racial, ethnic, and religious hatred; too many people still suffer from ignorance, prejudice, and brutality.

As we observe Captive Nations Week this year, let us reaffirm our commitment to the American ideals of freedom and justice. Let us strengthen our resolve to promote respect for human rights and self-determination for women and men of every nationality, creed, and race. Let us continue to speak out for those who have no voice. It is our Nation's obligation to do so, as the world's best hope for lasting peace and freedom and as a source of enduring inspiration to oppressed peoples everywhere.

The Congress, by Joint Resolution approved July 17, 1959 (73 Stat. 212), has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation designating the third week in July of each year as ''Captive Nations Week.''

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim July 20 through July 26, 1997, as Captive Nations Week. I call upon the people of the United States to observe this week with appropriate ceremonies and activities and to rededicate ourselves to supporting the cause of human rights, liberty, peace, and self-determination for all the peoples of the world.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this eighteenth day of July, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-second.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 10:38 a.m., July 21, 1997]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on July 22. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

July 19, 1997

Good morning. Today I want to talk about the important progress we're making in our efforts to get guns out of the hands of violent juveniles.

Our administration has put in place a tough, smart anticrime strategy, relying on more community police, stricter punishment, and better afterschool prevention efforts. This strategy is working. For 5 years in a row, we've seen serious crime drop nationwide. Last year, we saw the largest one-year decline in violent crime and murder in 35 years. Our most recent figures even show a slight decline in juvenile crime. But we all know that juvenile crime and violence are still significant problems in our country. We know that children are still killing children for shoes, for jackets, for turf. We know that too many of our young people are drawn to guns and violence as a way of life.

One fact stands out and demands our attention. Over the past decades, the number of gun murders by juveniles has skyrocketed by 300 percent. This is simply unacceptable. We know we must break this deadly trend. Some of our cities are beginning to do it. In Boston, thanks to a comprehensive effort by prosecutors, police, probation officers, community leaders, and ordinary citizens, not a single juvenile murder has been committed with a gun in 2 full years. Boston police commissioner Paul Evans should be commended for his leadership role in this outstanding effort, and I'm very glad that he's joined me here today.

A year ago, I looked at Boston's approach, and it was clear that tracing guns seized from young criminals was a key to the city's success. So I directed the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms to launch a national initiative in 17 cities to replicate Boston's effort and trace all the guns used in crimes. A year later, the first results are in. Police departments in these 17 cities submitted for tracing nearly twice as many guns used in crimes as they did the year before. We found that almost half of all guns used in crimes came from young people. More importantly, for the first time, we know where the juveniles are getting these guns, how they are getting them, and what kinds of guns they are using.

One crucial fact is now clear, that guns are finding their way quickly from legitimate retail stores to black markets through a network of gun traffickers and corrupt gun dealers. Make no mistake: Gun traffickers are funneling guns to lawless youth. We know how they operate, and we intend to shut them down.

In Milwaukee, thanks to our youth gun-tracing initiative, police officers were able to find a pattern. Several guns used in drive-by shootings and armed robberies had originally been purchased by one man, a security guard named Larry Shikes. Police investigators quickly discovered that Shikes was selling brand new semiautomatic weapons from the trunk of his car. Police swept in and arrested him in April. He pled guilty to trafficking charges, and he will be sentenced next month.

Our youth gun-tracing initiative has been so effective that I'm pleased to announce we will expand our efforts to 10 more cities, including Philadelphia and Los Angeles. I want to thank the ATF and all the people who have worked on this initiative, especially Under Secretary of Treasury Ray Kelly, who is also with me today. We will work with Congress to hire more ATF agents to work with local police officers and prosecutors to pursue traffickers based on the leads we're generating now every day.

We also have a chance to build on our progress by passing a smart, tough juvenile justice bill that cracks down on guns and gangs. We need to provide for more prosecutors, tougher penalties, and better after-school gang prevention programs. We should require that every new gun sold in America has a child safety lock. And we should prohibit violent teenagers from buying guns once they become adults.

Last week, I was disappointed that a Senate committee considering a juvenile crime bill voted against requiring Federal firearms dealers to provide child safety locks. I urge the full Senate to reconsider this action.

A juvenile crime bill must be comprehensive. Of course, it must get tough on violent juvenile offenders, but it also must cut off their access to guns. That's one big reason

why Boston's program works. To keep guns away from crime-committing youth, we must also continue to perform background checks on gun-buying adults. The Brady law has already stopped more than 250,000 fugitives, felons, and stalkers from buying handguns. The Supreme Court recently struck down a portion of the Brady law that requires local officials to perform these checks. But in a meeting this week with law enforcement officials from around the country, Attorney General Reno and Treasury Secretary Rubin confirmed that the overwhelming majority of police departments are continuing to do the responsible thing, to perform these background checks voluntarily because they work.

Now that we're making every effort to keep criminals from getting guns through the front door of a gun shop, we're turning our attention to locking the back door, too. We have started to crack the code of the black market in illegal weapons. We are tracing the guns, targeting the traffickers, taking more of our children out of harm's way. Cities like Boston have shown us great results. And if we'll all work together, there is no reason why every community in America can't expect and achieve the same success.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:48 p.m. on July 18 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on July 19.

Statement on the Cease-Fire in Northern Ireland

July 19, 1997

On behalf of the American people, I welcome the cease-fire declared by the IRA on July 19. This declaration, which we expect to be implemented unequivocally and permanently, can open the door to inclusive negotiations to achieve a just and lasting settlement of the conflict in Northern Ireland, a settlement that will heal age-old divisions and create an environment in which both vibrant traditions can flourish and prosper.

This is a moment of great possibility. As Northern Ireland's political leaders begin to shape their future, I urge them to do so on the basis of the principles of fairness and compromise that underpin all democratic systems. These negotiations must be based on a commitment to bringing about positive change and respecting the eventual settlement, even though it will not fulfill all the desires of any one party or community. The negotiations must ensure equality, justice, and respect for both cultures. As I have said many times, such negotiations can only take place free from the shadow of the violence or the threat of violence. That is why we look to Sinn Fein, like the other parties participating in the talks, to give their full commitment to the Mitchell principles.

Many men and women have taken great risks to bring about a peaceful resolution of this conflict. I commend the leaders of Sinn Fein who have helped bring about the cease-fire, as I commend the loyalist leaders who have sought to maintain their own cease-fire through many difficult months. The possibilities opened by today's announcement are also a tribute to those political leaders who have steadfastly condemned violence and worked to forge a democratically negotiated settlement. I particularly appreciate the efforts of the Governments of Great Britain and Ireland, who have dedicated themselves to pursuing peace and a democratically negotiated settlement that will benefit all the people.

The United States will work closely with the two governments and the political parties to build on this historic opportunity. On the basis of this cease-fire, implemented unequivocally, my administration will work with Sinn Fein as with the other political parties. The United States will strongly support those who take the risks of principled compromise as they seek a peaceful and prosperous future for themselves and their children.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on Most-Favored-Nation Trade Status for Mongolia

July 18, 1997

To the Congress of the United States:

On September 4, 1996, I determined and reported to the Congress that Mongolia is in full compliance with the freedom of emigration criteria of sections 402 and 409 of

the Trade Act of 1974. This action allowed for the continuation of most-favored-nation (MFN) status for Mongolia and certain other activities without the requirement of an annual waiver.

As required by law, I am submitting an updated report to the Congress concerning the emigration laws and policies of Mongolia. You will find that the report indicates continued Mongolian compliance with U.S. and international standards in the area of emigration.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
July 18, 1997.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 21.

Executive Order 13056—Further Amendment to Executive Order 13017, Advisory Commission on Consumer Protection and Quality in the Health Care Industry

July 21, 1997

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, and in order to add an additional two members to the Advisory Commission on Consumer Protection and Quality in the Health Care Industry, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1(a) of Executive Order 13017, as amended, is further amended by deleting the number "32" in the second sentence and inserting the number "34" in lieu thereof.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
July 21, 1997.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., July 22, 1997]

NOTE: This Executive order was published in the *Federal Register* on July 23.

Remarks Following a Meeting With the Budget Team and an Exchange With Reporters

July 22, 1997

Budget Negotiations

The President. I'd like to make a brief statement, and then I'll be glad to answer some questions.

I've just finished a meeting with my budget team, reviewing where we are on the budget negotiations. We have worked very hard to pursue an economic strategy of reducing the deficit, cutting where we could, then investing more in education, in the future of this country, and selling more American products and services overseas. And it's working. I believe it's very important now to complete the job and get a balanced budget agreement that will continue to invest in our country and enable us to grow.

This agreement—let me say again what this agreement does. I think it's important. It has $900 billion in savings over the next 10 years. It reforms the Medicare program and preserves the Trust Fund for another 10 years. It also contains the biggest expansion in health care for children since 1965—5 million; the biggest expansion in investment in education from the national level since 1965; the biggest increase in access to higher education since the G.I. bill passed 50 years ago; and billions of dollars to put people on welfare in the work force, as well as special incentives to help the distressed areas of this country get some jobs and participate in this recovery. That's what this agreement does. Now, there are those who say that we'd be better off without an agreement; none of these things will happen without an agreement.

As to the tax cut, my priorities are clear. I want to help children, I want to support education, I want to make sure that we give appropriate relief to middle income families. I do not believe it is right to deprive teachers, police officers, firefighters, nurses who have children in the home and who have only one earner and therefore earn less than $30,000 a year, of the benefits of this tax cut. And we believe we have found a way to get around the objection that some Republicans

have made of having the IRS collect it as a tax payment. We think we can avoid that.

But on the other hand, we don't want to—that's on the Medicare premiums—we don't—let me back up and say, we believe, first of all, that the tax cut is a tax cut even if it's a refund. Secondly, on the Medicare premiums for higher income people, I strongly support that. I said as soon as I got back from Europe that I would be disappointed if it were not in the bill. There is a dispute about exactly how we should collect the premiums. We think we have found a way to meet the Republican objective that it shouldn't look like a tax payment and still collect the premiums. If you're going to have a collection on upper income people, it's not fair to have some people pay it and some people not. So we think we've gotten around that.

Now, let me finally say that I am still quite optimistic that we will get an agreement that is consistent with our principles. We've had good bipartisan cooperation throughout this process, and I expect it will continue. Our budget team is going up to the Hill again shortly, and we expect that we'll keep working until we get success.

Q. Since you're that optimistic, what's the stumbling block? What's holding it up?

The President. We still have some differences of opinion. Let me go back through them. On the upper income premiums for Medicare, we have some differences in how we think it should be structured, but the main stumbling block seems to have been that the Republicans don't want it to look like an IRS tax payment. They don't want it to look like a tax increase, even though it wouldn't be.

Our problem is if HHS collected these upper income premiums, they'd have to set up a whole new bureaucracy, and our people estimate that half the money would be lost. And we don't want another big problem of fraud and abuse here. So we've come up with an idea that we think would allow Treasury to collect the money but to have it go directly to the Medicare Trust Fund so there would be no question of a tax payment. And we think that would ease a lot of the Republican and, frankly, some of the Democratic concerns that it wouldn't look like a tax increase. But if we're going to collect the upper income premiums, surely, all Americans would say we shouldn't give away $12 billion. And you can't expect the really honest person to go out of his or her way to pay it and then half the people not pay it, and there would be a lot of disillusionment there. So we think we've solved that problem. That's a stumbling block.

And we still have a difference over this refundability. We're going to try to work through that. But I think we can get it, but we—I offered a tax plan, as you know, right before I left for Europe, to show good faith in working with the Republicans. And I think we'll keep working through it until we get something that we can both live with.

The Vatican and Nazi Gold

Q. Mr. President, are you concerned about the revelations overnight that the Vatican may have been involved in stashing Nazi-era gold? And have you been in touch with the Vatican government over this?

The President. Well, let me say, I have talked to the—all I know is that there was apparently some suggestion that maybe there is a document here, somewhere in the Government Archives, which would shed some light on that question.

As you know, the United States has taken the lead on this. We've worked very hard. I well remember the first time I heard about it when Mr. Bronfman talked to the First Lady about it. And we've worked very hard on this. And the Treasury Department has assured me that they have historians combing the records, and we will reveal whatever information we have and let the facts take us where they lead us. But we'll keep working on this until we do everything we can to make it right.

Boeing-McDonnell Douglas Merger

Q. Mr. President, on Boeing, besides talking to Italian Prime Minister Prodi, what other European leaders have you talked to? And having made some phone calls, what is your sense? Do you get a feeling that there is a chance that the European Commission will not block the Boeing-McDonnell merger?

The President. I'd like to see a resolution of this. This merger—the Federal Trade Commission, which, as you know, is independent under our law, has ruled that this is clearly not a violation of our laws because there is only room for two big commercial manufacturers. And indeed, the commercial side of the McDonnell Douglas business has suffered with the rise of the European company, Airbus.

The European antitrust laws are slightly different. Boeing has offered a good-faith resolution of this; they're trying to work through it. Our main concern is that only the antitrust considerations play a role in this decision and that we do everything we can to avoid a more political decision which would lead to an unfortunate trade conflict between the United States and Europe. And we're working hard to avoid that, and I've done quite a bit of work on it over the last 3 days and will continue to do so. I think there is a way to work this out, and I'm hopeful that by Wednesday when the Commission meets that an agreement will have been reached.

Medicare

Q. Two questions on the tax budget deal. Number one, one of the criticisms, vis-a-vis Medicare, was whether you had sent a strong enough signal that you wanted these higher Medicare premiums. Is that the signal that you're now trying to send? And number two——

The President. No. If you will remember, I think it was—as soon as I got back from Europe, I said that I would be—publicly—that I would be quite disappointed if we did not have an upper income premium as a part of the agreement. I believe that that was a public statement I made the minute I got off the plane, practically.

Secondly, our negotiating team has made it very clear to the House and Senate negotiators for a long time that we thought it was an appropriate thing to do, that our only concerns were: number one, if we were going to do it, we wanted it to be collectible, we wanted it to be real; and number two, we did not want upper income recipients to receive absolutely no discount at all because that would encourage them to get out of the program all together, number one, and number two, because in the '93 agreement to reach our $500 billion deficit target, which we greatly exceeded, but we took the cap off of the payroll tax that pays into Medicare. So upper income people now are paying a very high percentage—or much more money into the program than they will ever draw out anyway. So, for those two reasons, we thought that we should not charge 100 percent of the value.

Now, I think we can work those two things out. As I said, I understand why a lot of the Members of Congress say, "Well, we don't want the—if the IRS collects this, it will look like a tax payment, and we don't want it to look like a tax increase." And we agree with that. So we've now come back and offered them another way to do this, which I am very hopeful will break the impasse and enable us to go forward and have this. I think it's an important principle.

Most of the savings in the first 5-year period, indeed, most of the savings in the 10-year period, will come from the structural reforms that we've offered in Medicare: more competition, more choices, more managed care. But still I believe when you look well down the road at the time when the baby boomers will retire, it's good to put this principle in place now, and I'm very hopeful that we can get it.

And let me say, I saw some stories today about people worried about the political repercussions of this. My best judgment is that a big majority of the American people will support this. They understand how big the baby boom retirement generation is. They understand how large the subsidy is on Medicare. And I would be happy to defend the vote of any Member of Congress, Democrat or Republican, who votes for this.

Q. The second part of the question, if I may——

Nomination of William F. Weld as Ambassador to Mexico

Q. How about Weld? Are you sending him up——

The President. Yes.

Bipartisan Cooperation

Q. Hold on, the second part of the question, if I may. One of the issues on the budget

deal is how much is it complicated by Republican infighting. Can you talk about that a little bit?

The President. Well, my best judgment is that we should do what we've been doing. I think—I have seen in the last year a spirit of bipartisan cooperation which did not prevail in the previous period. And I think that it will continue to prevail. I think it is so clearly in the interest of the country. And I don't have any comment about what's going on among the Republicans, except that I don't believe it will interfere with our ability to reach an agreement. I don't think that they will permit it to do so. I think it is in the interests of the country, and I think that's what we'll do.

Analysis of Drug Sentencing

Q. Mr. President, can you comment on Attorney General Reno's suggestions on crack cocaine?

The President. Yes. Attorney General Reno and General McCaffrey have sent me their recommendations. I have accepted it, and I have urged them now to go to work immediately with the Congress to try to reach an acceptable resolution of this. They did a lot of work on it. They deserve a lot of credit for the exhaustive analysis that they applied to this problem, and I've accepted it. And that's our position, and we're going to try to work with Congress now to achieve a resolution.

Nomination of William F. Weld as Ambassador to Mexico

Q. Today or tomorrow—are you going to be able to pass by Helms, or are you going to fight him, or what?

The President. Well, I'm going to nominate him, and we're going to work hard to see if we can confirm him and we'll see what happens. We're going to do what we can.

Q. Do you think it's possible? Albright's using her wiles. [*Laughter*]

The President. I don't know. That's better than I could have said it. [*Laughter*]

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:25 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Edgar Bronfman, president, World Jewish Congress; and Barry R. McCaffrey, Director, Office of National Drug Control Policy.

Statement on the Report on Religious Freedom

July 22, 1997

I welcome today's release of the Secretary of State's report on United States Policies in Support of Religious Freedom. Promoting religious freedom around the world is a key part of our human rights policy and an important focus of our diplomacy.

Today's report will help shine a spotlight on the serious problem of religious intolerance and persecution. It also underscores the importance of concerted actions by the United States and other like-minded nations to promote religious freedom.

The report fulfills a congressional request for a summary of U.S. policies to reduce and eliminate persecution against Christians around the world. It also describes our efforts to address religious persecution more broadly, which have included defending the rights of Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, Baha'is, and others to practice their faiths freely. Religious freedom is a fundamental human right, and the United States vigorously condemns persecution against any believer and all faiths.

Our Nation was founded by men and women seeking refuge from religious persecution. Religious freedom is the first freedom guaranteed in our Bill of Rights. I am pleased that our Nation has been a leader in promoting religious rights, including through the establishment last year of the Secretary's Advisory Committee on Religious Freedom Abroad, through our willingness to press for religious liberty at the United Nations and in our relations with other nations, and through our determination to report fairly and accurately on these issues around the world. Today's report is part of America's larger commitment to help people of all faiths to live free of persecution and to worship in the freedom that is their birthright.

Remarks at a Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee Reception

July 22, 1997

Thank you very much. Ladies and gentlemen, one of the things that I really want before I leave this office in 3½ years is to be able to stand here with Dick Gephardt and have him introduce me and have me say, ''Thank you, Mr. Speaker.'' And your presence here tonight makes that more likely.

I thank Martin Frost for his tireless efforts, often thankless efforts. Some of you he has doubtless almost irritated asking for help. [*Laughter*] But we are working hard to bring back the House of Representatives to our party in the 1998 elections. And let me assure you that it can be done. I know that it can be done, but what I want you to understand is that it should be done. And I will just give you—just think about two or three things.

Number one, as Congressman Gephardt said, in 1993, with only votes from Members of our party, we passed an economic plan which exceeded all of our expectations. The deficit is now 77 percent lower than it was in 1993—with only votes from our party—and it helped to grow this economy.

We also passed in 1993 and 1994, with only a handful of votes from the other side, the family and medical leave bill, the Brady bill, the crime bill, which is putting 100,000 police on our streets. We've now had the biggest drop in crime, for the last 5 years, we've seen in a very long time, and last year the biggest drop in violent crime in over 35 years, thanks to the support I received from Democrats.

Then in 1995 and '96, when our friends in the Republican Party won the majority, if it had not been for the staunch, strong, steely determination of the Members of our party in the House of Representatives and in the Senate, we would not have been able to stand against the tide of the Contract With America. They made it possible. My veto pen was not worth a flip without their support, and don't ever forget it. They deserve every bit as much support.

Now, in 1997, we are actually on the verge of getting a budget agreement which includes not only a balanced budget and $900 billion worth of savings and 10 years of life on the Medicare Trust Fund but, in this Congress, the biggest increase in child health since 1965, the biggest increase in aid to education since 1965, the biggest increase in aid to help people go to college since the G.I. bill 50 years ago. Why? Because the Democrats have stood in there with us, and they know that the President's veto pen is good, so we can work together to do things that are right for America.

Now, if we balance the budget, if crime is coming down, if the welfare rolls are dropping, if our foreign policy is strong and our defense policy is strong—if you look ahead to the 21st century, what do we have to do? We have to deal with the health care problems of American children; we have to deal with the continuing crisis in our cities; we have to make our education the best in the world; we have to prove we can grow the economy while we preserve and improve the environment. Who should be doing that? The Democratic Party of the 21st century, the Democratic Party that you are going to help to elect.

Thank you, and God bless you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:05 p.m. at the Mayflower Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Representative Martin Frost, chairman, Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee.

Remarks on the Childhood Immunization Initiative

July 23, 1997

Thank you very much. Thank you, Dr. Guerra. Senator Kennedy, Senator and Mrs. Bumpers, Secretary Shalala; to all the childhood immunization advocates, the State and local officials, all of you who have worked in this garden for so long, we welcome you here.

Hillary and I were the first—part of the first generation of Americans to receive the polio vaccine. Some of you, perhaps, are in our age group, and you were also. I remember when I got the polio vaccine. I remember being a child and having seen the pictures of all the children who were afflicted with polio. And I remember being very conscious that some enormous burden was being lifted

off of my life, that I was being given a chance that people just a little older than me didn't have. And it made me grateful in an incredibly personal way for immunizations, I think in a way that nothing else ever could have, although, to be sure, my mother saw that I got all my other shots, and I screamed and squalled with the best of children. But I was old enough to know what I was doing when I got my first polio vaccine.

And I'll never forget—I think Betty Bumpers was the first person who ever talked to me about this whole immunization issue, and I just never could figure out what the problem was. To be honest, I didn't understand—even 20 years later, I'm not sure I fully understand why it has been as hard as it has been. But I now know what all the elements of this endeavor have been, and I cannot thank those of you who have labored as long as you have to make this day come to pass.

The American people will never know that countless number of people who have harbored the dream that every child could be immunized, have labored to break down all the barriers, have struggled against all the problems so that we could come here today and say that the new statistics released by the Centers for Disease Control tell us that more than 90 percent of our 2-year-olds have actually received the critical doses of routinely recommended vaccines. But you know what it means and America is in your debt and we thank you.

Now record numbers of our children, our youngest and most vulnerable children, are actually safe from potentially deadly diseases, such as diphtheria, tetanus, measles, polio, and meningitis. We set a goal, and we're meeting it. And all of you who have been part of it deserve a lot of the credit. I want to join what Hillary said and again thank Dale and Betty Bumpers for what they've done and for their personal inspiration to us. And I thank you, Dr. David Satcher, for all you've done as head of CDC, for your personal inspiration to so many.

Today, we have to look ahead to see what challenges are left for our children and their health. Almost a million children under the age of 2 are missing one or more of their recommended shots still. Too many children across America continue to fall ill with diseases that a simple immunization could have prevented. We have to make sure that every child now is safe from every vaccine-preventable disease. We're taking two steps to help close the gap.

As parents move from place to place, they often leave their children's immunization records behind. Their new doctors often cannot get access to these records. So I'm directing Secretary Shalala to start working with the States on an integrated immunization registry system. That's the kind of thing most people can't remember, but it may have something to do with whether their children live or die. And we have to do it and do it right.

We're also requiring that all children in federally subsidized child care centers be immunized. Since so many of our youngest children spend at least part of their days in child care outside the home, this, too, can be an important step in our efforts to reach some of the children still falling through the cracks.

The progress we've made in immunization is one of our proudest achievements, and we have the opportunity this summer and fall to take even bolder steps. But let us remember, we have to finish this job. We are celebrating a milestone today, but we have not completed the job. Let me also say that we are on the verge, as Hillary said, of enacting the single largest investment in health care for children since Medicaid was passed in 1965. Today, 10 million of our children have no health insurance.

The balanced budget agreement that we reached with the leaders of Congress and that passed both Houses with large majorities takes dramatic and concrete steps to right this wrong. Originally it included $16 billion for child health care. Then in the United States Senate, a strong bipartisan majority passed a 20-cent-per-pack increase in the cigarette tax to add $8 billion more for a total of $24 billion. That will clearly give us enough money to cover another 5 million children. That is the right thing to do. I regret that some now believe they should back away from it. It would be a mistake. I intend to fight to keep that money in the budget and fight for our children. And I want to thank Senator Kennedy for his leadership

and ask all of you to join us. Thank you. [*Applause*]

Let me say that in some ways, as many of you understand, this is a problem not unlike the immunization problem, because there is more than money involved. That is, What does it mean to provide health care coverage to 5 million more children? How can we make sure that there are 5 million kids who don't have insurance now and not just children that are being dropped from insurance and picked up on a public program? And what kind of insurance should they have anyway?

The Congress has some very challenging, substantive policy issues before it. But I think in the end the goal ought to be pretty simple: We want the children without health insurance to have the kind of health care we want for our own children. This means everything from regular checkups to surgery. Some in Congress want a very watered-down package of benefits at a level well below that now provided by Medicaid and Federal employee health plans. I think that would be a big mistake. It is not necessary, and we shouldn't do it. I am also determined that this money be invested wisely, truly providing new medical insurance and not simply replacing benefits already covered.

Finally, let me say that this 20-cent increase in the cigarette tax not only will provide necessary resources to protect and improve children's health; by raising the price of cigarettes, it will discourage children from starting to smoke in the first place. It is the right thing to do.

This is the opportunity of a generation. It has literally been a generation since we did anything this much for children's health insurance. We mustn't waste it. The balanced budget plan, the tax cut, all these things we have to keep in mind putting our children first. In the days to come, as we try to hammer out the details, a breakthrough for children's health should be at the heart of our objectives.

We also ought to make sure that the tax cut we pass is good for our children. I have proposed a plan that focuses on the needs of families, to help them raise their children and send them to college. It is responsible; it is affordable. We don't want to return to the days when, under the guise of helping people, we gave them endless exploding deficits. Fiscal responsibility helped to produce a strong economy and fiscal irresponsibility would surely weaken it. We can have the right kind of tax cut plan, but we ought to keep the children in mind there, too.

Finally, let me say that, as I said earlier, one of the things we expect to do that will really help us close the remaining gaps in immunization, is to require children in federally subsidized child care centers to be immunized. I'm convinced the next great frontier we have to cross to really, truly enable American families to reconcile the demands that they face in the workplace and the demands they face at home is to make sure we have quality, affordable, available child care for all the American people who need it.

One of the reasons I've supported this children's tax credit and one of the reasons I want it to be given to people of modest means who are working hard out there for salaries of less than $30,000, is I want to help people pay for the right kind of child care. This is very important.

On October 23d, the First Lady and I will convene the first-ever White House Conference on Child Care, to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the present system in America and to try to find ways to translate that discussion into action to achieve our goal, just as we have achieved this goal today.

Immunization, health care, child care, all these reflect our faith in the potential of every child and honor our obligation to every family. For all the work you have done to help make this remarkable day come to pass, I thank you, your fellow citizens thank you, and I hope someday the American people will truly understand the magnitude of the endeavors that so many of you in this room have undertaken for the next generation of our children.

Thank you all, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:20 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Fernando Guerra, director of health, San Antonio Metropolitan Health District.

Statement Announcing the White House Conference on Child Care

July 23, 1997

Today the First Lady and I are pleased to announce that on October 23, 1997, we will host the White House Conference on Child Care. The conference, which will take place at the White House, will examine the strengths and weaknesses of child care in America and explore how our Nation can better respond to the needs of working families for affordable, high quality child care.

Over the past decade, the number of American families with working parents has expanded dramatically. Making high quality child care more affordable and accessible is critical to the strength of our families and to healthy child development and learning. It is also good for the economy and central to a productive American work force.

This Nation can and should do better. Each of us—from businesses to religious leaders to policymakers and elected officials—has a responsibility and an important stake in making sure that children of all ages have the best possible care available to them. From infancy through adolescence, in child care settings and afterschool programs, children can learn and thrive with the right care, attention, and education.

I hope that this conference will be the beginning of a national dialog about how best to care for all of America's children and will make a valuable contribution to our effort to improve child care in this country.

Statement on European Union Approval of the Boeing-McDonnell Douglas Merger

July 23, 1997

I am pleased that Boeing and the EU have resolved their differences and that the EU has agreed in principle to approve Boeing's merger with McDonnell Douglas. The Boeing-McDonnell Douglas merger will promote consolidation and efficiency in the U.S. defense industry and preserve the jobs of 14,000 workers at Douglas Aircraft Co. Our own independent Federal Trade Commission determined that the merger would not harm competition. We hope that the EU will give the merger final approval expeditiously.

Remarks During a Discussion on Climate Change

July 24, 1997

The President. Thank you. Ladies and gentlemen, first let me thank you for being here—members of the administration and concerned members of the public, the scientists, and other experts that are here.

I would also like to say a special word of thanks to the Vice President. In one of our earliest meetings together—we meet once a week and have lunch—he went over the whole history of greenhouse gas emissions and climatic change. And I became convinced first that he was convinced that something was wrong. [*Laughter*] Then I became convinced something was wrong. And it's been a great help to me and I believe to the people of the United States to have him in the position that he's in not only with the convictions that he has, but with the knowledge that he has. And I'm very grateful to him for what he has done to help me come to grips with this issue.

To me, we have to see this whole issue of climate change in terms of our deepest obligations to future generations. I have spent most of my time in the last 4½ years trying to prepare the American people for a new century and a new millennium. It is also very important that we protect the Earth for that new millennium, to make sure that people will be able to take advantage of all the things we are trying to do, the opportunities we are trying to create, the problems we are trying to solve.

It is obvious that we cannot fulfill our responsibilities to future generations unless we deal responsibly with the challenge of climate change. Whenever the security of our country has been threatened, we have led the world to a better resolution. That is what is at stake here. And the scientists have come here to explain why.

As the Vice President said, the overwhelming balance of evidence and scientific opinion is that it is no longer a theory but now a fact that global warming is for real. The world

scientists believe that if we don't cut our emissions of greenhouse gases, we will disrupt the global climate. In fact, there is ample evidence that human activities are already disrupting the global climate and that if we stay on our current course, the average global temperatures may rise 2 to 6 degrees Fahrenheit during the next century. To put that in some context, the difference in average temperature between the last ice age, which was 10,000 to 12,000 years ago—10,000 to 12,000 years ago—and today, is about 9 degrees Fahrenheit. So we could have two-thirds of that change in 100 years unless we do something.

If we fail to act, scientists expect that our seas will rise 1 to 3 feet, and thousands of square miles here in the United States, in Florida, Louisiana, and other coastal areas will be flooded. Infectious diseases will spread to new regions. Severe heat waves will claim lives. Agriculture will suffer. Severe droughts and floods will be more common. These are the things that are reasonably predictable.

In the face of this, the United States must confront a challenge that in some ways is the most difficult of all democracy's challenges to face. That is, we have evidence, we see the train coming, but most ordinary Americans in their day-to-day lives can't hear the whistle blowing. Unless they have lived in a place where they have experienced severe and unusual and completely atypical weather disruptions in the last 5 years or so, the degree of the challenge is inconsistent with the actual perceived experience of most ordinary Americans. And this is true, indeed, throughout the world. And that presents us our challenge.

A democracy is premised on the proposition that if the American people, or any people in any democracy, know what the facts are and believe them, way more than half the time they will do the right thing. And so what we are doing today is beginning a process in which we ask the American people to listen to the evidence, to measure it against their own experience, but not to discount the weight of scientific authority if their own experience does not yet confirm what the overwhelming percentage of scientists believe to be fact today. This is a great exercise and a great test for our democracy.

I do want to say that I am convinced that when the nations of the world meet in Kyoto, Japan, in December on this issue, the United States has got to be committed to realistic and binding limits on our emissions of greenhouse gases. Between now and then, we have to work with the American people to get them to share that commitment. We have to emphasize flexible market-based approaches. We have to embrace research and development efforts in technology that will help us to improve the economy—improve the environment while permitting our economy to grow. We have to ask all nations, both industrial and developing, to participate in this process.

But if we do this together, we can defuse this threat. And we can make the 21st century what it ought to be, not only for our children but for all the children of the world. I believe the science demands that we face this challenge now. I'm positive that we owe it to our children. And I hope that we can find the wisdom and the skill to do democracy's work in the next few months, to build the consensus necessary to actually make action, as opposed to rhetoric, possible. And for all of you for your commitment to that, I thank you.

And now I'd like to ask Dr. Rowland to be the first of our distinguished scientists to lead off.

Doctor.

[*At this point, the discussion proceeded.*]

The President. Let me, again, thank you all for your patience and your interest. I think we should give our panelists and scientists another hand. [*Applause*] I wish every American could hear what we've heard today. But thanks to our friends in the media, a good number of them will hear at least a portion of what we have heard today. And this is the beginning of a consistent long-term effort that we all have to make to involve the people of this country in this decision. And I thank you all for the points you've made because in different ways each of them will resonate with citizens of this country in a way that I believe will give us the support we need to take the action that has to be taken.

In the weeks and months ahead, the Vice President, the Cabinet, other members of the administration, and I will be out in the country discussing this. We'll be working with the American people. We'll be talking about solutions as well as problems. The truth is, it's like anything else—the quicker you get—another answer Dr. Holdren might have given is that the quicker you get after this the less extreme the remedy you have to embrace to have a measurable effect to avoid an undesirable outcome. And the longer you wait, the more disruptive the ultimate resolution will be. So that's another thing that I'd like to emphasize.

Before we close I hope you will permit me to make a brief statement. Just before I came in here to this meeting I learned that today, and not very long ago, retired Supreme Court Justice William Brennan passed away. He was a remarkable human being, one of the finest and most influential jurists in our Nation's history. He served on the Supreme Court for 34 years. He was perhaps during that period the staunchest, most effective defender of individual freedom against Government intrusion. His devotion to the Bill of Rights inspired millions of Americans and countless young law students, including myself. And one of the great honors I have had as President was to be able to award him the Presidential Medal of Freedom in my first year in office.

He once said the role of the Constitution is the protection of the dignity of every human being and the recognition that every individual has fundamental rights which Government cannot deny. He spent a lifetime upholding those rights, and he authored some of the most enduring constitutional decisions of this century, including *Baker* v. *Carr* on one person, one vote; *The New York Times* v. *Sullivan*, which brought the free speech doctrine into the latter half of the 20th century. The force of his ideas, the strength of his leadership, and his character have safeguarded freedom and widened the circle of quality for every single one of us.

We will miss him greatly. And I know you join me in sending our best wishes and our prayers to his family and friends, and our gratitude for his life.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:57 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to discussion participants F. Sherwood Rowland, professor, University of California at Irvine, and John Holdren, professor, Harvard University.

Proclamation 7013—Death of William J. Brennan, Jr.

July 24, 1997

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

As a mark of respect for the memory of William J. Brennan, Jr., former Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, I hereby order, by the authority vested in me as President of the United States of America by section 175 of title 36 of the United States Code, that the flag of the United States shall be flown at half-staff upon all public buildings and grounds, at all military posts and naval stations, and on all naval vessels of the Federal Government in the District of Columbia and throughout the United States and its Territories and possessions until sunset on the day of interment. I also direct that the flag shall be flown at half-staff for the same period at all United States embassies, legations, consular offices, and other facilities abroad, including all military facilities and naval vessels and stations.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-fourth day of July, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-second.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., July 28, 1997]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on July 29.

Statement on Coordination of Fast Track Legislation

July 24, 1997

I am pleased to announce the appointment of Jason S. Berman to serve as Special Counselor to the President and coordinate the administration's effort to pass fast track legislation.

During his tenure at the White House, Mr. Berman will take a leave of absence from his current position as chairman of the Recording Industry Association of America. I am grateful to him for setting aside this work to join our team. Mr. Berman's extensive knowledge of trade policy and unparalleled experience on the Hill will be invaluable to our effort.

I am also pleased to announce that I have asked Victoria L. Radd, an outstanding member of my staff, to join Mr. Berman in coordinating this effort. Ms. Radd is an Assistant to the President and Chief of Staff to Erskine Bowles. During the past 4 years, she has also served as Associate Counsel to the President and as Deputy Director of Communications. Prior to joining the White House, she was a partner in the law firm of Williams & Connolly.

The economic strategy of my administration, based on reducing the deficit, investing in the education and skills of our people, and opening markets, has helped produce the strongest economy in the world. I am calling on the Congress to enact fast track legislation so we can continue our aggressive drive to open markets to our goods and services and create more high skilled jobs for the American people. Every President, Republican and Democrat, in the past two decades has had this vital tool to maintain effective American leadership in the global economy. Fast track authority is in the national interest of the United States, and my appointment of Jay Berman makes clear my determination to fight for passage of this important legislation.

Statement on the Proposed "Immigration Reform Transition Act of 1997"

July 24, 1997

I am pleased to transmit to the Congress today the "Immigration Reform Transition Act of 1997." This proposal reflects my commitment to balance firm controls against illegal immigration with common sense and compassion. It would provide a needed transition for individuals who apply for a form of immigration relief called suspension of deportation and who had immigration cases pending before the 1996 immigration law took effect. It would prevent the inherent unfairness of applying new rules to old cases.

This legislation also addresses the special circumstances of Central Americans who came to our country because of civil war and upheaval. Today, the remarkable progress in that region means that many of those people can return home. But as I assured the leaders of Central America when I visited the region in May, we want that to occur in a manner that avoids destabilizing the nations and economies of Central America, or imposing undue hardships on families. We also want to make sure that people who sought refuge in our country and who have contributed greatly to their local communities here in the United States are treated with fairness and dignity. To meet that commitment, this proposal ensures that certain groups of Central Americans whose cases were pending before the new immigration law took effect would be eligible to apply for suspension of deportation under the prior rules.

I am determined to do all I can to preserve our Nation's tradition of generous legal immigration. But just as we are a nation of immigrants, we also are a nation of laws. To uphold the tradition of generous legal immigration and to do right by legal immigrants, we need to continue working to stop illegal immigration. The bill I am submitting today in no way diminishes the important enforcement objectives of the 1996 immigration bill, nor is it an amnesty or waiver program. Rath-

er, it eases the transition to the new law for individuals who have put down deep roots in the United States—and it advances our Nation's strategic interest in promoting peace, prosperity, and stability in Central America.

Message to the Congress on the Proposed "Immigration Reform Transition Act of 1997"

July 24, 1997

To the Congress of the United States:

I am pleased to submit for your immediate consideration and enactment the "Immigration Reform Transition Act of 1997," which is accompanied by a section-by-section analysis. This legislative proposal is designed to ensure that the complete transition to the new "cancellation of removal" (formerly "suspension of deportation") provisions of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (IIRIRA; Public Law 104–208) can be accomplished in a fair and equitable manner consistent with our law enforcement needs and foreign policy interests.

This legislative proposal would aid the transition to IIRIRA's new cancellation of removal rules and prevent the unfairness of applying those rules to cases pending before April 1, 1997, the effective date of the new rules. It would also recognize the special circumstances of certain Central Americans who entered the United States in the 1980s in response to civil war and political persecution. The Nicaraguan Review Program, under successive Administrations from 1985 to 1995, protected roughly 40,000 Nicaraguans from deportation while their cases were under review. During this time the *American Baptists Churches v. Thornburgh* (ABC) litigation resulted in a 1990 court settlement, which protected roughly 190,000 Salvadorans and 50,000 Guatemalans. Other Central Americans have been unable to obtain a decision on their asylum applications for many years. Absent this legislative proposal, many of these individuals would be denied protection from deportation under IIRIRA's new cancellation of removal rules. Such a result would unduly harm stable families and communities here in the United States and undermine our strong interests in facilitating the development of peace and democracy in Central America.

This legislative proposal would delay the effect of IIRIRA's new provisions so that immigration cases pending before April 1, 1997, will continue to be considered and decided under the old suspension of deportation rules as they existed prior to that date. IIRIRA's new cancellation of removal rules would generally apply to cases commenced on or after April 1, 1997. This proposal dictates no particular outcome of any case. Every application for suspension of deportation or cancellation of removal must still be considered on a case-by-case basis. The proposal simply restores a fair opportunity to those whose cases have long been in the system or have other demonstrable equities.

In addition to continuing to apply the old standards to old cases, this legislative proposal would exempt such cases from IIRIRA's annual cap of 4,000 cancellations of removal. It would also exempt from the cap cases of battered spouses and children who otherwise receive such cancellation.

The proposal also guarantees that the cancellation of removal proceedings of certain individuals covered by the 1990 ABC litigation settlement and certain other Central Americans with long-pending asylum claims will be governed by the pre-IIRIRA substantive standard of 7 years continuous physical presence and extreme hardship. It would further exempt those same individuals from IIRIRA's cap. Finally, individuals affected by the legislation whose time has lapsed for reopening their cases following a removal order would be granted 180 days in which to do so.

My Administration is committed to working with the Congress to enact this legislation. If, however, we are unsuccessful in this goal, I am prepared to examine any available administrative options for granting relief to this class of immigrants. These options could include a grant of Deferred Enforced Departure for certain classes of individuals who would qualify for relief from deportation under this legislative proposal. Prompt legislative action on my proposal would ensure a smooth transition to the full implementa-

tion of IIRIRA and prevent harsh and avoidable results.

I urge the Congress to give this legislative proposal prompt and favorable consideration.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
July 24, 1997.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 25.

Remarks to the National Association of Elementary School Principals in Arlington, Virginia

July 25, 1997

Thank you very much, Superintendent Paz, President Allen, my longtime friend Sam Sava. Thank you, Secretary Riley. I believe the record will reflect when your tenure is over that you have done more for the children of America than any Secretary of Education who ever served, and I thank you.

I want to say, we are joined today by a number of other distinguished education leaders, other superintendents from cities around our country, along with Bob Chase, the president of the NEA; Sandra Feldman, the president of the AFT; Michael Casserley, the executive director of the Council of Great City Schools; and Anne Bryant, the executive director of the National School Board Association; and my good friend Mayor Beverly O'Neill from Long Beach, California. And a lot of superintendents are here. I thank you for joining the elementary school principals and for your support for better education for our children.

I want to begin by thanking the elementary principals for what they do for America's children. Like every parent, I remember very well the first time I sent my child off to school, putting her in the hands of a principal I did not know but whom I came to know and like very well. [*Laughter*] Every year hundreds of thousands of children arrive on your doorstep, entrusted to you by their parents. And every year you prove their trust is well-placed.

When I was the Governor of Arkansas, I had the opportunity to cochair a national task force on school leadership for the education commission of the States. And we found about a decade ago what you have always known, that when it comes to the quality of education in the school it is the principal who makes all the difference.

As school enrollments reach record levels—up to 54 million by the year 2006—and as we move into the 21st century's knowledge economy where learning for a lifetime will be essential to success, your leadership will be more important than ever. And your ability to inspire people and to make them believe that we can achieve educational excellence will be more important than ever. Beginning with our Nation's elementary schools, we have to demand excellence from every school, every teacher, every student. We have to repair and rebuild our schools. We have to make sure they take advantage of the newest technologies. We have to make sure that they are safe and drug free. We have to make sure that we are supporting promising reforms like charter schools and other initiatives under way in many of your districts. But I believe the single most important thing we can do to give our children world-class education is to insist on high national standards, so that we make sure that we've done everything we can to see that every single child learns what he or she knows to succeed in the exciting world of the 21st century. For too long we've been unwilling to insist on that as a Nation, perhaps for fear that some of our children could not reach those standards, perhaps out of a misguided notion that such standards would lead to too much Federal Government involvement or too much loss of local control.

I believe a lot of Americans have always feared that children from disadvantaged backgrounds and struggling communities just might not be able to hold their own. I believe that too many Americans have thought that with so much diversity and poverty and family difficulties among our young students, American children would simply always lag behind other countries that had more homogenous, less disruptive cultures, and perhaps longer school years. Still, for more than a decade now, at least since the issuance of "A Nation At Risk" report in 1983 and, indeed, going back some years before, Americans have been working hard, led by their

educators and reform-minded public servants, to improve our schools, and it is making a difference.

As Secretary Riley said, last month we learned that our fears were wrong when America's fourth graders finished second only to Korea in science in the international math and science tests. They scored well above the average on the annual math tests. Six years earlier, our fourth graders had scored well below the international average. These tests, of course, are not of all of our fourth graders, but they are of a rather large and representative sample of them. And they tested enough of them to prove that we don't have to settle for second-class expectations or second-class goals for any of our children.

They also show, frankly, that by the time our students reach the eighth grade, the high test scores drop back below the international average. I think we all know that the problems our children face are aggravated in those middle school years when they move into adolescence, and that in many of our communities the structure and organization of the middle school was more adequate to a previous time when a lot of those problems did not exist.

Nonetheless, the fourth grade test proved, number one, that you're doing a good job and, number two, that our kids can do it. And that is, after all, the most important thing. Therefore, I believe it is imperative now to take action and to begin the movement to high national standards for all of our children. When we don't expect or encourage our children to learn we indirectly encourage them to fail. When we set high standards and when we insist on them, there's no end to what our kids can do. You see that every day; you know that better than anyone.

In my State of the Union Address I challenged every State and every school to adopt high national standards and by 1999 to actually test all our fourth graders in reading and all our eighth graders in math to make sure the standards are being met. Not Federal standards but national ones—standards that every child can meet in every city and State in America, and standards that every child must meet if we want every child to be able to live out his or her dreams. After all, national standards are defensible because reading is reading and math is math in Appalachia and in Alaska and all points in between.

Since I issued that call, education leaders or Governors or both in seven States—California, North Carolina, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Kentucky, and West Virginia—along with our Department of Defense schools all over the world have announced their support for national standards and their desire to participate in the testing program as soon as it becomes available in 1999.

Today I am pleased to make an announcement that would have been literally unthinkable just a couple of years ago. Fifteen of our largest school districts, including schools in six of the seven largest cities in the United States, have committed to meet these standards and to participate in the tests to measure the progress of their students against them.

Now, I don't know how much news this will be tonight on the news or tomorrow in the papers, but every one of us who has been involved in education—if I had told you 5 years ago that the leaders of the school districts in New York; Philadelphia; Atlanta; Broward County, Florida; Cincinnati; Detroit; Chicago; Houston; San Antonio; El Paso; Omaha; Los Angeles; Long Beach; Fresno; and Seattle—that the leaders of these school districts have asked that their students be held to and measured against the same standards in reading and math that we expect our children to meet to have a world-class education, no one would have believed that. Educators know this is an historic, astonishing, wonderful moment in American education. And I thank them for doing that.

This commitment means that 3½ million more children, one out of every 14 public school children in America, will be held to these world-class education standards in the basics. And it means after the test is given all of them will get better education because we'll all learn from the test results and keep working until we get the results we want in every one of those districts.

I would like to ask the representatives of those 15 school districts who are here to stand up and be recognized: the superintendents, the teachers, the principals. Thank you very much. [*Applause*]

And let me say, the Secretary of Education and I are about to leave to go out to Las Vegas to meet with the Governors. Now, if this event had gone on in 1979 or 1980 or 1983 or 1984, the Governors would have been the first group out there. And they've been dragging their feet, and don't you believe for a moment that Dick Riley and I aren't going to tell them what we saw at the elementary school principals convention.

When we get these results, they ought to be incorporated into school and school district report cards, so that parents and taxpayers can see how our kids are doing but can also measure their progress. Keep in mind—you all know this, and we have to explain this to the citizens and the parents—these tests are not graded on the curve. If you make the highest grade in the class and it's not high enough, you don't know enough. If you make the lowest grade in the class and you're over the bar, you're at least qualified to do well in the world you will live in. It is very important that we get that message across to our people: We are measuring what is required to succeed in the world our children will live in.

We in the National Government will continue to do our part. The balanced budget agreement we reached with Congress, that was voted for overwhelmingly in both Houses, by Members of both parties, takes Head Start the next step toward our goal of a million children. It will fund the Technology Literacy Challenge to help us participate with the private sector in hooking up every classroom and library to the Internet by the year 2000. It will help to fund America Reads, our program to get a million trained reading tutors available to give extra help to children who need it most, to make sure that all of our 8-year-olds can read independently. I urge Congress to act to implement this program. All told, you should know that if this balanced budget agreement passes, the increase in education funding, Federal support for education, will be the largest since 1965.

I also want to emphasize that we know that one of the challenges especially that a lot of our big-city schools will face is a looming teacher shortage, that we're going to have more students coming in and more teachers retiring. Just last week I offered a new initiative to provide extra scholarship money modeled on the Federal Health Service Corps, where we pay for medical school costs for doctors who will go out to underserved areas, to pay for the education costs of young people who will agree to teach for 3 years in areas that are especially challenging. And I hope Congress will pass that as well.

Finally, let me mention in regard to the budget that in addition to the support for education from Head Start through high school graduation, this budget takes another huge step toward opening the doors of college education to all Americans. The agreement provided for a tax credit for the first 2 years of college that would be sufficient to virtually guarantee universal access at least to community college for every high school graduate in the United States and for every adult who needs to go back to school. In addition, it provides tax relief for the 3d and 4th years of college and for graduate school. And that's what we're working on now in these budget negotiations. The agreement provided for that. The tax plan that the Republicans released a couple of days ago falls far short of the commitment in the agreement.

Now, let me say again, I believe we should have a tax cut. We can afford it and still balance the budget, because the budget is now going to finish this year over 80 percent below what it was when I took office. We've already done over 80 percent of the work in balancing the budget. But the tax cut has to, first of all, put middle class families who need the relief most at the heart of its objectives. It should help families to pay for all 4 years of college and for graduate education. It should help working people get training throughout a lifetime. It should help middle class parents to raise their children. And equally important, it should keep us within the limits of balancing this budget and keeping it balanced and not having it explode in the out-years.

We have been handicapped severely for years and years and years because we went on a binge of deficit spending in the early eighties that we couldn't break. Now we have done it. You see the results in our economy: When we have fiscal discipline you have lower interest rates, you have more invest-

ment, you have a growing economy. And it's required us to show some restraint here over the last few years, but it's also helped to swell the coffers of State and local government, which fund our schools, primarily because we have a healthy economy. So all of this has to be observed.

I have to tell you that even though there are differences which are clearly and publicly stated between the White House and the Republican leaders and, to some extent, also clearly stated between the Democrats in Congress and others, I think we're going to get this agreement. The negotiators are working even as we speak. And I think we all know that this is a remarkable moment in American history, and we have an obligation to balance the budget for the first time since 1969, to keep this economic growth going, and to do it in a way that gives us the biggest investment in education in over 30 years, and I might add also, the biggest investment in expanding health coverage to our children since 1965. And this is important. That will also help you do your jobs better. And I want to emphasize that if we pass college benefit provisions as contemplated by the budget agreement, it will be the biggest increase in access to college, federally supported access to college, since the GI bill passed in 1945. This is a very good agreement.

So this is a day that we celebrate these 15 school districts stepping forward, representing so many of our children, putting the lie to the notion that our children can't meet the high standards because they're from immigrant families or because they're from poor families or because they live in difficult circumstances. We can all make excuses until the cows come home, but in the end, these kids have to get up and live their lives. And we've got to give them a chance to live their lives in the best way possible. And we have done that. We celebrate that. We live in the expectation of a successful conclusion of these budget negotiations.

But the thing I want to close with is that when you go back to your school, I want you to know that I know that you are leading the fight for the future of our children. More than anybody else, you have to have the conviction that every child can learn to high standards. You have to have the conviction that your teachers can do what they have to do. You have to have the convictions that you can establish the alliances with your parents and your communities that you have to establish. You have to believe that if you demand high standards and have high expectations that our kids can meet them. You have to believe that we actually can succeed in giving our children the tools they need to make the most of their own lives and to keep our country the great beacon of hope and freedom and opportunity in the 21st century.

Pearl Buck once said that if our American way of life fails the child, it fails us all. It follows that if our American way of life supports, ennobles, lifts up our children, it does that for all of us. That is what you do, and I am very grateful.

Thank you, and God bless you.

[*At this point, Samuel G. Sava, executive director, National Association of Elementary School Principals, presented the President with a gift.*]

The President. Well, I may use this in unconventional ways. Thank you very much, Sam. This means more to me than you know.

The young man you mentioned, Michael Morrison, is a wheelchair-bound young man, raised by a single mother, who became my friend. On that cold November Tuesday in 1992, when it was really cold in New Hampshire, Michael Morrison got up to go to the polls to work for me, and his car was broken down, his family car. His mother couldn't take him. And so he wheeled his wheelchair alongside an icy highway for more than 2 miles to reach the polling place. He is now a college honor student. Don't ever forget what you do makes a difference.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:19 a.m. at the Crystal Gateway Marriott Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Stanley Paz, superintendent, El Paso Independent School District; and Yvonne Allen, president, National Association of Elementary School Principals.

Proclamation 7014—National Korean War Veterans Armistice Day, 1997

July 25, 1997

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

On July 27, 1953, a negotiated cease-fire brought an end to the Korean War and to some of the most savage fighting in the history of America's Armed Forces. More than 54,000 Americans lost their lives, more than 103,000 were wounded, and thousands more were listed as missing in action. To a nation still recovering from the terrors and hardships of World War II, this conflict was a harsh reminder that freedom still had enemies at large in the world.

But the Korean War taught us that free nations could work together in partnership through the United Nations, standing firm against tyranny and in defense of liberty. We were reminded once again of the skill, courage, and indomitable spirit of our men and women in uniform. We learned that the American people were tough enough and determined enough to prevail in the long struggle of the Cold War.

Our victory in that struggle had its roots in the Korean War, and we owe our veterans of that conflict a profound debt of gratitude. Many of them were still scarred from the battles of World War II when they answered the call to duty in Korea. They fought a different kind of war in an unfamiliar land, facing a new and fiercely determined enemy. There they proved to all the enemies of freedom, and to the world, that America's commitment to liberty, democracy, and human rights was not only one of words, but also one of deeds.

Etched into the eastern wall of the Korean War Veterans Memorial in our Nation's Capital is the simple sentence, ''Freedom Is Not Free.'' On this day we honor those who recognized the truth of that inscription and were willing to pay freedom's price with their own lives. We salute our men and women in uniform who served so valiantly in the Korean War, and we remember with sorrow and with pride all those who never came home.

The Congress, by Public Law 104–19 (36 U.S.C. 169m), has designated July 27, 1997, as ''National Korean War Veterans Armistice Day'' and has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this day.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim July 27, 1997, as National Korean War Veterans Armistice Day. I call upon all Americans to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities that honor and give thanks to our Nation's distinguished Korean War veterans. I also ask Federal departments and agencies, interested groups, organizations, and individuals to fly the American flag at half-staff on July 27, 1997, in memory of the Americans who died as a result of their service in Korea.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-fifth day of July, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-second.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:30 a.m., July 28, 1997]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on July 29.

Proclamation 7015—Parents' Day, 1997

July 25, 1997

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

There are few experiences in life more challenging or more rewarding than being a parent. Holding their child for the first time, parents suddenly realize that they are totally responsible for this small person entrusted to their care. On Parents' Day, we pay tribute to these quiet heroes among us—the mothers and fathers who make a lifetime commitment to their children.

Parents work hard to meet their children's need for food, shelter, clothing, and protection; but more important, they give their

daughters and sons the deep and abiding love, guidance, attention, and encouragement that empowers them with the values and self-esteem to succeed in life. Parents love their children as they are, yet still help them to dream big dreams about who they can become.

The more we learn about our children, the more we realize the importance of good parenting. As we learned at the recent White House Conference on Early Childhood Development and Learning the first few years of life are crucial to a child's emotional, social, and intellectual development. As their children's first and most influential teachers, parents play an immeasurably important role in helping their sons and daughters grow into happy and healthy adulthood.

The responsibilities of parenthood have become even more challenging in today's complex world. In many American families, both parents must work, struggling to balance the demands of job, home, and family. This balancing act is even harder for single parents, who must face the challenge of raising their children alone. In our mobile society, parents are often less able to rely on an extended family to help them provide the care and attention their children need. And today's mothers and fathers must protect their children from the ever-present threats of drugs, gangs, guns, violence, and unhealthy influences in the media and on the Internet.

Recognizing that good parents are the foundation of our society, my administration has strived for the past 4 years to give parents the help they need to meet their responsibilities. I signed into law the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993, and we are now proposing an expansion of that legislation to allow workers up to 24 hours of unpaid leave each year to meet family obligations. We are fighting to make our neighborhoods safer and drug-free and to reduce juvenile crime. We have expanded and improved Head Start to help parents prepare their young children to enter school ready to learn, and we have created an Early Head Start Program for children age 3 and under. We succeeded in requiring the installation of the V-chip and in helping to develop a voluntary ratings system on television so that parents can better protect their children from inappropriate material. And we are working with the computer industry to provide family-friendly controls that will give parents similar tools to use on the Internet.

As we observe Parents' Day this year, I urge all Americans to join me in paying tribute to the millions of mothers and fathers—biological and adoptive, foster parents and stepparents—whose boundless love and selfless efforts are building a better life for their children and for our nation. Let us repay that love and effort by striving, in our neighborhoods, schools, businesses, community and church organizations, and in government at every level, to help parents fulfill their awesome responsibilities and create a brighter future for America.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States and consistent with Public Law 103–362, do hereby proclaim Sunday, July 27, 1997, as Parents' Day. I invite the States, communities, and the people of the United States to join together in observing this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities to honor our Nation's parents.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-fifth day of July, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-second.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:30 a.m., July 28, 1997]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on July 29.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

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.

July 21

The President announced his intention to nominate Lt. Gen. John A. Gordon, USAF, as Deputy Director of the Central Intelligence Agency.

The President declared a major disaster in Washington State and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by snowmelt and flooding on April 10 and continuing through June 30.

July 22

The President announced his intention to nominate Philip Lader as Ambassador to the United Kingdom.

The President amended the major disaster declaration of June 13 for Idaho to include assistance to affected individuals in the area struck by severe storms, snowmelt, land and mud slides, and flooding on March 14 and continuing through June 30.

July 23

In the morning, the President met with President Olafur Grimsson of Iceland in the Oval Office.

The President announced his intention to nominate Gov. William F. Weld of Massachusetts as Ambassador to Mexico.

The President announced his intention to appoint Cathryn Buford Slater as Chair and member of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

The President announced his nomination of Shirley Robinson Watkins and August Schumacher as members of the Board of Directors of the Commodity Credit Corporation.

July 24

In the morning, the President met with President Roman Herzog of Germany in the Oval Office.

July 25

In the morning, the President traveled to Arlington, VA, and in the afternoon, he returned to Washington, DC.

In the evening, the President addressed members of Boys Nation in the East Room.

The President announced his intention to appoint Joyce A. Savocchio to serve as Vice-Chair and member of the Christopher Columbus Fellowship Foundation.

The President declared a major disaster in Montana and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms, ice jams, snowmelt, flooding, and extreme soil saturation on March 1 and continuing.

The President declared a major disaster in Vermont and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by excessive rainfall, high winds, and flooding on July 15–17.

The President declared a major disaster in Alabama and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms, flooding, and high winds associated with Hurricane Danny on July 17–22.

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

The following list does not include promotions of members of the Uniformed Services, nominations to the Service Academies, or nominations of Foreign Service officers.

Submitted July 21

Raymond C. Fisher,
of California, to be Associate Attorney General, vice John R. Schmidt, resigned.

Bill Lann Lee,
of California, to be an Assistant Attorney General, vice Deval L. Patrick, resigned.

Harold C. Pachios,
of Maine, to be a member of the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy for a term expiring July 1, 1999 (reappointment).

Submitted July 22

Philip Lader,
of South Carolina, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Submitted July 23

William F. Weld,
of Massachusetts, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Mexico.

Rita D. Hayes,
of South Carolina, to be Deputy U.S. Trade Representative, with the rank of Ambassador, vice William Booth Gardner, resigned.

Submitted July 24

Charles R. Breyer,
of California, to be U.S. District Judge for the Northern District of California, vice D. Lowell Jensen, retired.

Frank C. Damrell, Jr.,
of California, to be U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of California, vice Edward J. Garcia, retired.

Martin J. Jenkins,
of California, to be U.S. District Judge for the Northern District of California, vice Eugene F. Lynch, retired.

Jorge C. Rangel,
of Texas, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Fifth Circuit, vice William L. Garwood, retired.

Checklist of White House Press Releases

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

Released July 21

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Mike McCurry

Released July 22

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Mike McCurry

Released July 23

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Mike McCurry and National Security Council Senior Director for Defense Policy and Arms Control Robert Bell on the negotiations on conventional forces in Europe

Statement by Press Secretary Mike McCurry on the President's meeting with President Olafur Grimsson of Iceland

Released July 24

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Mike McCurry

Statement by Press Secretary Mike McCurry on the President's meeting with President Roman Herzog of Germany

Transcript of a press briefing by Council on Environmental Quality Chair Kathleen McGinty, NOAA Aeronomy Lab Director Dan Albritton, and Office of Science and Technology Policy Associate Director for Environment Jerry Melillo on global climate change

Announcement of nominations for judges on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, Texas; the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of California; and the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California

Released July 25

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Mike McCurry

Statement by Press Secretary Mike McCurry on the President's approval of implementation of the privatization plan for the U.S. Enrichment Corporation

Statement by Press Secretary Mike McCurry on the selection of William D. Ruckelshaus to resolve a dispute with Canada over the Pacific Salmon Treaty

Statement by Press Secretary Mike McCurry on the appointment of William Harrison Courtney as Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Russia, Ukraine, and Eurasian Affairs

Fact sheet: "Immigration Reform Transition Act of 1997"

Acts Approved by the President

Approved July 18 [1]

H.R. 173 / Public Law 105–27
To amend the Federal Property and Administrative Service Act of 1949 to authorize donation of Federal law enforcement canines that are no longer needed for official purposes to individuals with experience handling canines in the performance of law enforcement duties

H.R. 649 / Public Law 105–28
Department of Energy Standardization Act of 1997

[1] These acts were not received in time for inclusion in the appropriate issue.

Approved July 24

S.J. Res. 29 / Public Law 105–29
To direct the Secretary of the Interior to design and construct a permanent addition to the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial in Washington, D.C., and for other purposes

Approved July 25

H.R. 1901 / Public Law 105–30
To clarify that the protections of the Federal Tort Claims Act apply to the members and personnel of the National Gambling Impact Study Commission

H.R. 2018 / Public Law 105–31
To waive temporarily the Medicaid enrollment composition rule for the Better Health Plan of Amherst, New York

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