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When the international community came together in Beijing in 1995 for the Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women, rural women made their voices heard by world leaders, and their hard work and sacrifice were at last recognized by people across the globe. Next year, when the United States hosts the Second World Conference on Women in Agriculture, we will continue to focus on the status of rural women and their contributions to our world.

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, do hereby proclaim October 15, 1997, as International Rural Women's Day in the United States. I call upon the American people to observe this day with appropriate programs and activities in recognition of the extraordinary contributions rural women make to the quality of our lives, both in America and around the world.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this fifteenth day of October, 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, 11:12 a.m., October 16, 1997]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on October 17.

Remarks at a Wreath-Laying Ceremony in Buenos Aires, Argentina

October 16, 1997

Mr. President, Mr. Mayor, distinguished members of the Argentine Government, to the people of Argentina. It is a great honor for me, distinguished members of our Cabinet and the United States Congress, to stand on behalf of the American people before the tomb of a true hero of the Americas, General Jose Francisco de San Martin.

I thank you, Mr. President, and all the people here for the warm welcome we have received. Mr. Mayor, I thank you for the key to the city. And I thank our friends in the press corps for showing me how to hold the key to the city. [*Laughter*]

Before the monument to San Martin, it is well to remember that as we enter a new era and a new century, all our nations have become so far, began with courageous visionaries, who dared to dream of independence at the dawn of our national histories. General San Martin often has been compared to George Washington, our first President and the commander of our forces in the Revolutionary War. Each man rose to the defense of his native land, though the risks were great and the odds of success were long. Both inspired confidence with their simple manners, modesty, and quiet but unbending determination. Both fought for liberty, not conquest. And after their victories breathed life into our fragile new nations, they refused the temptation of despotic rule, preferring instead to embrace the role of citizen.

In 1819 a United States diplomat wrote to his superior of San Martin, ''I think him the greatest man I have seen in South America.'' General San Martin was a proud Argentinean but also a citizen of the world, who gladly lent his aid to other nations, seeking their freedom as well, and thus he became liberator and captain general of the Republic of Chile, generalissimo of the Republic of Peru. Even when he retired to France, the Belgians sought his leadership in their quest for independence.

Today, at long last, the democracies of the Americas are living up to the legacy of San Martin. They respect each other's independence, stand ready to help each other and other countries beyond the hemisphere to prevent war, preserve peace, and prosper. In these endeavors, Argentina stands out. As guarantor of the Rio protocol, you are joining Chile, Brazil, and the United States in helping Ecuador and Peru pursue lasting peace. Your sons and daughters in the Argentine armed forces take on some of the most demanding missions of good will, helping war-torn lands around the world turn from conflict to cooperation. As close to home as Guatemala and Haiti, as far away as Bosnia, Cyprus, and Mozambique, Argentina has answered the call to peace. Some of your peacekeepers are with us here today. The United

States, others who have worked with you, and most of all, the people you have helped around the world are in your debt, and on all their behalf, I thank you. In recognition of your country's extraordinary contributions to international peacekeeping, I have notified our Congress of my intention to designate Argentina as a major non-NATO ally under our laws.

Our alliance of values goes beyond our efforts against threats to peace and security, but it begins there. It also includes a commitment to freedom and democracy, a conviction that open markets are engines for progress, a determination to give all our people a chance to contribute and be rewarded for their efforts in the future we are building, a passionate belief in the potential of every child and the right of all children to a good education, a profound concern for the environment that we hold in trust for future generations.

Near the end of his long life, General San Martin said, "All progress is the child of time." Here at his final resting place, I say to you, I believe he would applaud the progress Argentina and all the Americas have made and the direction we are taking toward a new era of peace and prosperity. But I also believe he would remind us of the work still undone, the challenges still unmet. He would urge us to press on to make progress the child of this time.

Clearly, we have the chance and the responsibility to redeem the promise of San Martin, beyond even his visionary dreams. And so, Mr. President, with high hopes, strong resolve, and generous spirits, let us take our chance and do our duty together.

Thank you, and God bless the people of Argentina and the United States.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 9:20 a.m. in the Plaza San Martin. In his remarks, he referred to President Carlos Saul Menem of Argentina and Mayor Fernando de la Rua of Buenos Aires.

Statement on a Line Item Veto of the Treasury and General Government Appropriations Act, 1998

October 16, 1997

I have used my line item veto authority today to cancel a provision of the 1998 Treasury and General Government Appropriations Act that provides an open season for certain Federal employees to switch retirement systems.

This line item veto will save $854 million over 5 years by preventing a hastily conceived, undebated provision from becoming law. In addition, my action will keep agencies from having to reallocate another $1.3 billion in limited discretionary resources to pay higher retirement benefits, rather than spend it on other priorities, such as pay increases, or essential agency needs.

I did not propose this provision in my 1998 budget, it was not the subject of public hearings, and it was not considered by either the House or the Senate. Instead, it was added at the end of the legislative process, in a House-Senate conference committee. I believe that by canceling this provision, I am using my line item veto authority in an appropriate manner.

I am committed to ensure that the Federal Government can recruit and retain the quality individuals we need to administer Federal programs. I will work with Congress to ensure that our Federal civil servants are compensated fairly for the essential work they do for the American people.

NOTE: The reports detailing the cancellations were published in the *Federal Register* on October 17. H.R. 2378, approved October 10, was assigned Public Law No. 105–61.