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The Agreement was concluded in June 1993 and entered into force in August 1995. Nearly every nation—except the United States—that has participated in SPREP and in the negotiation of the Agreement is now party to the Agreement. As a result, SPREP now enjoys a formal institutional status that allows it to deal more effectively with the pressing environmental concerns of the region. The United States and its territories can only participate in its activities as official observers.

The Agreement improves the ability of SPREP to serve the interests of American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and Guam. Its ratification is supported by our territories and will demonstrate continued United States commitment to, and concern for, the South Pacific region.

Under its terms, the Agreement entered into force on August 31, 1995. To date, Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, France, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Western Samoa have become parties to the Agreement.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to the Agreement and give its advice and consent to ratification.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
November 7, 1997.

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

The President's Radio Address

November 8, 1997

Good morning. This weekend the United States House of Representatives will decide whether America will continue to move forward with confidence on the road to continued prosperity or give in to fear and fail to seize all the opportunities of the 21st century. There's a lot at stake.

Over the past 5 years, our economic strategy has worked to make the new economy work for all Americans. We're balancing the budget, investing in our people through education and health care, and expanding exports through tough trade deals.

Yesterday, we learned again that this strategy is succeeding: Unemployment is at 4.7 percent—that's the lowest in 24 years—a quarter million new jobs in October alone, and 13½ million since I took office; inflation in check; exports booming. And after dragging for decades, incomes for American workers are rising strongly, up $2,200 after inflation since 1993.

Now, wages are rising in part because more American jobs are high-paying, export-related jobs. And if exports keep expanding, that will help to keep wages rising. We must press forward with this economic strategy. That's why I'm asking Congress to renew the so-called fast-track authority that enables America to negotiate new trade agreements. A strong bipartisan majority in the Senate backs this bill, which simply gives me the same authority to lower barriers to American products that Presidents of both parties have had for more than 20 years. That's why Presidents Bush, Carter, and Ford support this measure. Now it's up to the Members of the House of Representatives to decide.

A yes vote means America stays in the lead in fighting for new markets. That's now at risk. Just this week, Canada gained an advantage on us by signing a comprehensive agreement with Argentina, Brazil, and others. That means their products will sell in those countries at lower prices than ours because we'll still have to pay tariffs they don't. Now, that's a strategy of America last, not America first.

A yes vote means that America helps to write the rules for the new global economy. That's the only way to make sure that it works for the American people. We already have lower barriers in our country on foreign products than most countries. Other countries have higher barriers on the sale of our products and services.

A yes vote means that we can also address labor protections and environmental concerns around the world as part of our trade negotiations. This is the very first time this has been a part of the President's negotiating authority. Walking away from this will not create a single job or clean up a single toxic

waste site, here or in any other country around the world.

Finally, and perhaps most important, a yes vote means that American leadership in this hemisphere and elsewhere, not only on trade but in fighting drugs and terrorism and dealing with our other security problems will be strengthened.

In the post-cold-war world, national security requires economic strength and economic leadership. If America, with the world's strongest economy, withdraws from nations who want to be our economic partners, they're much less likely to be our partners in fighting crime and drugs and terrorism and the proliferation of dangerous weapons.

A yes vote is a vote for confidence in the world's strongest economy. But a no vote says, "We don't want our country to negotiate lower trade barriers. We're pulling back. We're afraid we can't compete, and we're willing to walk away from our unique world leadership at this moment."

Other countries look at us and ask, "With 4.7 percent unemployment and 13½ million new jobs, what could America be afraid of?" No other country has an economy so strong with so much promise.

Now, will some people be hurt if we lower our already low trade barriers more? Yes. Though most of our job losses have come because of technological changes and changes in consumer buying habits, trade does cause some. But overall, we're way ahead in the last 5 years.

The answer is to help the people who lose their jobs, for whatever reason, get good new ones and to do it more quickly. We've got a plan to do that. And we're already spending more than twice as much as we were when I took office helping dislocated workers.

By expanding trade, we expand opportunity for working families and give more and more of them a shot at the American dream. It's working. Why in the world would we turn back now?

I ask every Member of Congress, Republican and Democrat alike, to look to the future. Cast the vote you know is right. If we move to seize the opportunities of this new time and to help the people in the communities who need an extra push to get ahead, then our country will enter the 21st century stronger than ever before.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 6:48 p.m. on November 7 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on November 8.

Statement on the Special Report of the Presidential Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses

November 8, 1997

Our administration has made it a priority to care for and compensate Gulf war veterans who have fallen ill. The First Lady and I were both troubled by the pain and frustration these veterans felt. We have been determined to find out why they are sick, to make public the facts as we learned them, and to apply the lessons of the Gulf war for the future. In May 1995, I asked some of America's best doctors and scientists, as well as Gulf war veterans, to undertake an independent and open review of the Government's response to our veterans' health care concerns. Now, the Presidential Advisory Committee I established has delivered its Special Report. I thank its Chairman, Dr. Joyce Lashof, and the other members for their outstanding work and for extending their efforts 10 months beyond their original mandate. Based on their recommendations, I am taking the following actions:

First, to better care for and compensate our veterans: We will work to establish a new benefits system that will ensure that Gulf war veterans receive treatment and compensation for all illnesses linked to service in the Gulf even if we cannot identify the direct cause. We will ask the National Academy of Sciences to review the ongoing scientific research regarding the connections between all reported illnesses and Gulf war service so we have the fullest understanding of the health consequences of that service. In addition, we will work with Congress on legislation to guarantee that this system of benefits is maintained in all administrations to come.

Second, to deepen our understanding of why Gulf war veterans might have gotten sick: We will dedicate $13.2 million for new