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threatens to defeat the purpose of the expedited review unless, as in 1989, the Department temporarily suspends such permits. Importers typically obtain authorization to import firearms in far greater numbers than are actually imported into the United States. However, gun importers could effectively negate the impact of any Department determination by simply importing weapons to the maximum amount allowed by their permits. The public health and safety require that the only firearms allowed into the United States are those that meet the criteria of the statute.

Accordingly, as we discussed, you will:

1) Conduct an immediate expedited review not to exceed 120 days in length to determine whether modified semiautomatic assault-type rifles are properly importable under the statutory sporting purposes test. The results of this review will govern action on pending and future applications for import permits, which shall not be acted upon until the completion of this review.

2) Suspend outstanding permits for importation of modified semiautomatic assault-type rifles for the duration of the 120-day review period. The temporary suspension does not constitute a permanent revocation of any license. Permits will be revoked only if and to the extent that you determine that a particular weapon does not satisfy the statutory test for importation, and only after an affected importer has an opportunity to make its case to the Department.

William J. Clinton

NOTE: This memorandum was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 14 but was embargoed for release until 10:06 a.m., November 15.

The President's Radio Address

November 15, 1997

Good morning. Today I want to talk about the progress we're making in our fight against crime and the steps we're taking to build on that progress. All over our country, crime is dropping. Responsibility and respect for the law are on the rise. But the true measure of our progress is whether our children can play in their front yards, whether they can walk to school in safety, whether our parents can unlock their front doors, whether our grandparents can walk down the streets with confidence, free from the fear of violence.

To give our families that security, we've put in place a comprehensive plan to bring the crime rate down with 100,000 new community police officers, tougher punishment, stronger antigang prevention, the Brady bill. And we've led an unprecedented effort to join the forces of national, State, and local law enforcement to fight crime in every community in America.

In the 3 years since I signed the crime bill into law, we know our strategy is having a real, measurable impact. Crime has dropped now for a record 5 years in a row. Today we have even more dramatic proof of our progress, the Annual National Crime Victimization Survey. It says that in 1996, crime rates fell to their lowest recorded level in nearly 25 years. Property crime is down. Violent crime is down. Since 1993, murder has dropped by 22 percent, 10 percent in 1996 alone. This remarkable drop in the crime rate is no accident. The hard work of people from Washington to every community in the country made it happen.

Community policing is at the center of this success. In only 3 years, we've already funded 65,000 new police officers under the crime bill, and we're close to meeting our goal of putting 100,000 new police officers on our streets.

Our Nation's police officers will tell you that our ongoing effort to ban lethal assault weapons has also been critical to their ability to do a better job. We've banned these guns because you don't need an Uzi to go deer hunting, and everyone knows it.

But as effective as the assault weapons ban has been, we know that some foreign gun manufacturers are getting around the ban by making minor modifications to their weapons that amount to nothing more than cosmetic surgery. Well, we didn't fight as hard as we have to pass the assault weapons in the first place only to let a few gun manufacturers sidestep our laws and undermine our progress. Assault weapons in the hands of civilians exist for no reason but to inspire fear and wreak deadly havoc on our streets. They don't belong on our streets or in our schoolyards, and they shouldn't be aimed at our

children. That's why we banned them 3 years ago and why we're taking action today.

Effective immediately, the Secretary of the Treasury is suspending the importation of all modified assault weapons for 120 days while we study whether they can be permanently blocked from our borders and banned from our streets. We must continue to do everything we can to crack down on illegal firearms and the organized criminals, terrorists, and drug lords who seek them. Yesterday President Zedillo of Mexico and I signed an unprecedented international convention to help fight illegal gun trafficking in our own hemisphere and to strengthen law enforcement's ability to combat this deadly trade.

Working together over the last 5 years, we've proven that we can drive down the crime rate. Now we have to press on, confident that we can take our streets back from crime, take assault weapons and illegal firearms out of the hands of criminals, enact a tough but smart juvenile justice bill, and eventually give our families and our children the real security they deserve.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:30 p.m. on November 14 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on November 15.

Remarks on Arrival in Sacramento, California

November 15, 1997

Good morning. Two years ago, I approved a BRAC recommendation to close McClellan Air Force Base, but only after I was convinced it was feasible for McClellan to privatize and that the prospects of success were strong. Since then, I've had to fight at every turn with the Members of Congress who have resisted our efforts to give the Department of Defense the tools it needs to privatize more of its operations more easily.

This year, the so-called Depot Caucus tried to block the ongoing competition for the Kelly and McClellan workload altogether. I said if they did that, I would veto the entire defense bill. Eventually, Congress reached a compromise to allow the competitions for this important work to go forward. The Secretary of Defense has assured me that although the language in the bill is not ideal, I quote, "the Department of Defense has flexibility to proceed with the remaining public-private competitions at Kelly and McClellan bases in a way that is fair to both sides." For this reason, I have decided to sign the defense bill.

We will continue to do everything we can to help McClellan make the transition. The Vice President and I have met with business and community officials. We have listened to your concerns. Today I am pleased to announce seven steps we are taking.

First, by December 31st, the Air Force will transfer McClellan to Sacramento County at a significantly discounted price to encourage rapid economic development and job creation.

Second, the Coast Guard will remain at McClellan through at least 2004, contributing $2 million a year to support private airfield operations.

Third, the Defense Department will retain liability for the eventual shutdown of McClellan's nuclear reactor, making it possible to support scientific and commercial research here for the next 30 years.

Fourth, the Department recently announced that it will provide an additional $7.2 million to retrain 1,700 civilian workers who face layoffs over the next 2 years.

Fifth, our EPA Administrator, Carol Browner, will visit McClellan early next month to discuss with community leaders a schedule for environmental cleanup to promote redevelopment and job creation.

Sixth, the Defense Department will provide an additional $11.3 million to complete funding of the casting emission reduction program at McClellan to develop environmentally friendly technology for manufacturing.

Finally, we will give high priority to capital improvements at McClellan to promote economic development and job creation.

Today we're also announcing a series of actions we're taking to help San Antonio redevelop the Kelly Air Force Base.

This is the third base conversion challenge this community has taken on. You've done a tremendous job. Your efforts are a model for the Nation. And I will continue to work