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Editor's Note: In order to meet publication and distribution deadlines during the Christmas holiday weekend, the cutoff time for this issue has been advanced to 5 p.m. on Wednesday, December 24, 1997. Documents released after that time will appear in the next issue.

WEEKLY COMPILATION OF

PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

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Remarks in an Outreach Meeting With Conservatives on the Race Initiative

December 19, 1997

The President. First, let me thank you for coming in what must be a busy time for all of you. What I think may be the most productive thing to do, although Governor Kean, since—[*inaudible*]—may interject something here. I think what I'd like to do, to begin is just to hear from you. I'd like to—on the question of, do you believe that race still matters in America and is still a problem in some ways? And if so, instead of our getting into a big fight about affirmative action—although if you want to discuss it, we can—what bothers me is that even I, who think it works in some ways, believe it works only when people who—it works predominantly for people who are at least in a position for it to work. A lot of the people that I care most about are totally unaffected by it one way or the other.

So what I'd like to talk about today is that I thought that we could at least begin by just getting a feel for where you are and do you think it's still a problem, and if so, what do you think we ought to do about it. And if you want to talk about affirmative action—[*inaudible*]—but I'm happy to do that.

[*Ward Connerly, chairman, American Civil Rights Institute, thanked the President and stated that the country has a serious and complex problem, but one which does not lend itself to a Government solution. He indicated that the Nation could not move forward on the race issue without resolving the issue of racial preferences.*]

The President. What do you think we should do? Since there are—since various racial minorities are represented in groups of people that are at least not doing very well in this society, in numbers disproportionate to their numbers in the country as a whole, how should we respond to that?

[*Mr. Connerly stated that school choice, an overhaul of the K–12 system, smaller class size, and other educational initiatives were appropriate responses. Thaddeus Garrett, Jr., associate pastor, Wesley Temple A.M.E. Zion Church, Akron, OH, and former Bush administration adviser, stated that he hoped that the day's discussion would not get bogged down on affirmative action but rather address race and race relations. He indicated that mechanical programs would not change attitudes, and that Americans did not relate well across racial lines. He commended the President for the Akron meeting on race and said that community leaders, beginning with the President, had to provide leadership to address the divide and that affirmative action only served to divide the Nation further.*]

The President. Maybe you can—[*inaudible*]—maybe for discussion's sake, let's assume we abolished them all tomorrow and we just had to start all over. What would you do?

[*Linda Chavez, director, Center for the New American Community, and former Staff Director, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, stated that affirmative action put the Government in the role of picking winners and losers on the basis of race and that under those circumstances the Nation would never get beyond racism. She stressed reaching the disadvantaged in society, citing a University of Maryland program not aimed at race but at students who are the first in their family to attend college. Mr. Connerly stated that in addressing the problem, labels should be left behind and the focus placed on people with something to contribute.*]

The President. Okay. Let me just say this, first of all. I think, if you imagine—forget about—think about what the world would look like 30 years from now if things go

well—that is, if all the threats to our collective security—[*inaudible*]—restrained and trade develops as we hope it should and we develop a decent education system that embraces virtually everybody that will work for it. The fact that the United States is becoming—[*inaudible*]—multiethnic country that at some point in the next generation, in the next 50 years will, for the first time in its history, not have a majority of people of European origin, I think will make it an even more fascinating, even more interesting, and even more prosperous and successful place if we're not consumed or limited or handicapped in some ways because of our racial differences.

So, to me, this is—I'm looking at this through the perspective of the future that I want to see our country make for itself. And I don't think anyone has all the answers about how we should make that future.

If you look at—there is no question that—if you just African-Americans, for example, the middle class is growing and a lot of good things have happened. But there is also no question that there are still pockets where crime is greater, incarceration rates are horrendous, that education systems are not working. And even the people who do have some level of it, who are highly industrious, and are dying to get into business very often don't have access to credit and don't have access to the networks. Affirmative action originally, I think, on the economic side was a kind of networking thing, and on the education side it was designed to do what you—the Maryland program you just described. I think if there was ever a shortcoming in college education—we ought to be focusing on people who are educationally disadvantaged without—[*inaudible*]—it was that they didn't get the preparation and continuing support that they needed. The schools that have done that are much better.

[*Stephan A. Thernstrom, Winthrop professor of history at Harvard and coauthor of "America in Black and White: One Nation Indivisible" with his wife, Abigail, a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute, took issue with two points made by Mr. Connerly. First, he stated that people now know each other better across racial lines than they did a generation ago, and offered some examples. Second, he said he found the Akron meeting troubling and one-sided and gave examples of the lack of dialog. He commented that while most of the discussion was addressed to white racism, recent studies showed that among African-Americans, Asian-Americans, and Hispanic-Americans, each group had stronger negative stereotypes about the other two groups than whites did and that as these populations grew, the problems would become worse, concluding that the issue was not simply one of white racism.*]

The President. But if what you say is true—you say the crime problem is disproportionately African-American; that's like saying the college population is disproportionately white or the business population is disproportionately white. That doesn't justify an affirmative action program to—[*inaudible*]—like Section VIII of the SBA program.

The other day we had a group of African-American journalists in here. Every man in the crowd, to a person—there were, like, 20 of them here—every man in that office, every single, solitary one, had been stopped by the police when he was doing nothing, for no reason other than the fact that he was black. And you say that's because there's a rational fear because of the fact of what occurs in some neighborhoods. Nonetheless, that is a race-based public policy. I'm just saying, it's not as simple as——

Ms. Thernstrom. No, we agree with that. We agree with that. It's unacceptable to me.

Mr. Thernstrom. But doesn't it happen in Detroit, in Atlanta, in other States where——

The President. All I'm saying is it's very difficult to get these things out of our society. And you just made one reason why. Let me give you another example. Because of the—a lot of work that's been done by a lot of people, there's been a dramatic increase in the capacity of the United States to limit the inflow of drugs into the country from the south by land and sea. But the consequence of that—Mexico, which is a big, open country, has had enormous amounts of money invested there to try to undermine what little infrastructure there was to deter the influx of drugs. Five hundred million dollars was spent last year alone trying to bribe Mexican

police. Now, as a result, over half of the cocaine in this country comes across the Mexican border. So, all right, fast forward. What do you do if you're a local police officer with a drug problem? That's what this whole profiling is about—[*inaudible*]—to stop people who are Hispanic if they're driving through town. That's an affirmative action program. That's a race-based affirmative action program. So how do you——

Ms. Chavez. But Mr. President, some of us are opposed to that. I mean, Randall Kennedy has written, I think, very eloquently on exactly that issue. And those of us who oppose race preferences when they benefit groups are also opposed to them when they harm groups.

The President. If you were running a police force and you were trying to figure out how to deal with the drug problem and you had a lot of people who were coming through your town on an interstate and you had a limited amount of resources and you couldn't stop every car, which cars would you stop?

[*Ms. Chavez stated that they should stop every third car and that police should be held to the same standard as business. Representative Charles T. Canady of Florida stated that it was pernicious for the Government to classify people by race because doing so sends a message that people should be judged on that basis, which reinforces prejudice despite the Government's good intentions.*]

The Vice President. Could I ask a question, Mr. President? If you lived in a community that was 50 percent white, 50 percent black and for a variety of historic reasons the level of income, educational attainment, and so forth was lower among the blacks in that community and the police force was 100 percent white, and the problems of the kind that we all deplore took place and other problems took place and the community decided that the police force would be better able to do its job if blacks were much more represented on the police force because then the police force would have a much greater ability to relate to the community effectively and to do its job—under those circumstances, do you think that the community would be justified in making affirmative action efforts to open up a lot more positions on the police force for blacks?

[*Mr. Canady stated that he favors community policing which requires people to live in the neighborhood they police but which doesn't require race-based selection. Vice President Gore emphasized that his example demonstrated a benefit to the whole community. Mr. Canady then noted that the Drug Enforcement Agency had a policy of using African-Americans as undercover agents on the theory that they would be more effective, but was sued for discrimination by African-American agents, concluding that efforts which start out making sense may end up doing harm.*]

The President. Let me ask you this. You don't quarrel with the fact—because I think this is very important. This is something that we really have to deal with all the time. You don't quarrel with the fact that, other things being equal, in cities that are highly racially diverse, it would be a good thing, if it could be done without race preferences, to have a diverse police department.

Mr. Canady. Absolutely. I think we ought to have a police department that can work with——

The President. But you just said that you like this whole idea of—that's what we're doing now at HUD. We're actually encouraging police officers to go back and live in the neighborhoods where they patrol and letting them buy HUD-foreclosed houses—where HUD's got the property, letting them buy houses for half price if they'll serve in the neighborhoods where they live.

I've thought of that, and every time I go to New York or any other big city, I always look at the police and see—so let me just say, I'm Irish—Irish immigrants—[*inaudible*]—many of them, in urban police departments. And many of their children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren are still in urban police departments. And I think—what I think we have to do is to figure out—I think part of this problem will go away if we ask ourselves, are the criteria by which we are making this decision, whatever this decision is, really relevant? Are we really—whether it's college admission—are we keeping score in the right way here?

But it seems to me that we have a vested interest in the objective. If we agree that we need an integrated police department, and that it would be better——

Ms. Thernstrom. We'd like to have an integrated police department.

The President. ——that we would like to have one and that our society would function better if we had one, then we should ask ourselves, ''Okay, how are we going to get there?''

[*Ms. Chavez took exception to the Vice President's example, stating that statistics show significant numbers of African- and Hispanic-American police officers.*]

The Vice President. Partly because of affirmative action.

[*Ms. Chavez stated that, while minority representation was not proportional, it was close and that the issue should be whether or not there was discrimination in a police department, which no one favors. She said that the way to root out discrimination was training and recruitment. Mr. Thernstrom pointed out some of the complexities, stating that white communities are often well served by African-American police officers, who should not be forced to go back to predominantly black communities, and that while Asians do a good job of producing physicists and physicians, they are not very interested in law enforcement careers. He questioned the wisdom of making the police department look like the population. Former New Jersey Governor Thomas Kean, president, Drew University, stated that the amount of immigration requires us to get to know one another. He noted that in his State, the largest college scholarship program was based on poverty, not on race, but still tended to help minorities. He observed that racial groups tended not to mix, but that when there were activities that crossed racial lines, such as athletics, race was less an issue and friendship flourished. Dr. Garrett stressed the need for different racial groups to get to know each other and gave examples. He also indicated that the media were part of the problem, pointing out the contrast in media coverage between the African-American Virginia couple who had six babies and the white Iowa couple who had seven. Ms. Thernstrom stated that all recognized that there was a long way to go on the road to racial equality but asked if we were going in the right direction. She added that the discussion had to focus more on facts and less on emotion, stressing the racial gap in academic performance. She concluded that she thinks the failure of even one child is a national scandal.*]

The President. I do, too. I think what Chicago has done—tells everybody that you've got to go to summer school if you don't measure up and if you don't measure up a second time, you can't go ahead; your self-esteem will be hurt more when you're 50 and you can't read than it will be when you're 16 and you have to stay back another year—I think that's great.

But let me just say, first of all, I think what you generally just said is absolutely right. The reason I wanted you to come here today is that I hope there will be another series of meetings where we'll get an even more diverse group; I mean, diverse by opinion. Because what I'm trying to get to is—here's my theory about this: I think if we could ever get to the point where we would ask ourselves, can we agree on the objective, and then talk about what means will work, and then look at the things we don't like and say, well, did it do any good and what harm did it do?

For example, what I think about affirmative action, a lot of these economic—let's just take the economic affirmative action. What I honestly believe is that it did a profound amount of good for the people who got into the programs who might never have had a chance to be successful business men or women. But I believe the problems with it are twofold. Number one is, once you get in and you start doing it, it's hard to graduate out. This whole theory about graduating out and moving through, going out into the private sector—that theory never really worked very well. And we ought to fess up; those of us who were for it ought to say that's one of the problems that didn't work. The other problem is it doesn't reach the vast majority of the people who have a problem because it doesn't reach down into basically the isolated urban areas with people in the economic underclass.

So if we say, okay—you know, we can all say, ''Okay, here are the facts. It was a pretty good thing, but it didn't do everything it was supposed to do. So should we argue about getting rid of it; should we argue about doing something else; should we argue about what's going to happen to these people?'' I mean, I think there's a lot to be said for that.

Let me go back to what Steve said about the composition of the police force when you got into the tete-a-tete with the Vice President. Let me just mention three things because Governor Kean mentioned this. The seven white septuplets were delivered by two African-American women doctors. Two days later, two black kids were rescued in a Chicago fire by a white fireman. Nobody feels anything but good about that. Why is that? Or why do all these rich white Republicans pay to go down and watch some black guys play basketball at the MCI Center? I would argue there is something that all these things share in common that don't necessarily get answered in the police—[*inaudible*].

One is, in the case of pro basketball, here I am—I don't have a doubt in the world that if I'd been good enough, I could have played pro basketball. I don't; if I'd been good enough, by God, I could have played. I was short, fat, and slow by today's standards. [*Laughter*] I couldn't play. Doesn't have anything to do with my race; I don't have a doubt in the world. If I have a child, I don't have a doubt in the world that my child can play if he or she is good enough. So that's the first threshold. Without regard to race—I think we can all agree with that. In whatever setting, people have to know: if they're good enough, they can play; and if they need a hand up to prepare themselves, that they can get it.

The second thing is, in the case of the black women doctors who delivered the septuplets—which is not always the case in the case of police, which is why I agree with the Vice President—the community, which was of a different race—there was no question about whether they could do their job in a way that would be fair to everybody. In the case of the white fireman who risked his life to go in and get the last two black kids in the Chicago fire, he made a statement that was louder than any words I will ever utter, that he was in tune with the people in that community. He was in tune enough that he was willing to lay his life down to save those two little children. Nobody will ever care again whether that guy is on their fire or sitting idly out in front of the fire station, as I hope he will be.

So there's two criteria. One is, can you play if you're good enough, whatever the thing is? Two is, does everybody in the community have confidence that the people in the positions, whatever they are, have sufficient concern about them, are consistently involved with them, that whatever is supposed to be done is going to get done?

I think in the case of the fireman and the doctors and the basketball players, the answer is yes. I think in the case—huge numbers of urban police departments, huge numbers of the business sector, huge sections of higher education, you can't say that the answer is yes. That's why I'm hung up about it. But I don't think that—I think the reason that I'd get frustrated if the debate is only about affirmative action is, if we win 100 percent of the debate, we're talking about 10 percent of the people. If you win 100 percent of the debate, we're still just talking about 10 percent of the people. What about everybody else?

Ms. Chavez. That has been our argument.

Ms. Thernstrom. But, why don't you have confidence that we can train policemen the way we train firemen so that when a policeman shows up at the door, it doesn't matter what the race of that policeman is?

The President. What I don't have confidence in is that in the police departments where there is not affirmative action that there is a selection process that is not race-based.

Ms. Thernstrom. Why not go after the problem instead. It's like college admissions; instead of going after the problem of the failure of our schools in the K–12 years, we say, ''Okay, we're going to shut our eyes to that problem, and we're going to preferentially admit them and hope something——

The President. What about all the people who are sitting around waiting for that to happen? Are we just going to let them drift away?

[*Elaine Chao, senior fellow at the Heritage Foundation and former Peace Corps Director, commended the President and Vice President for their initiative and leadership in the area of race relations but stated that the debate left out Asian-Americans almost entirely. She related her experience as an immigrant and said that her family got through by knowing they would not always be in that condition. She stated that it was disheartening to find that equal opportunity did not always mean a level playing field and then gave examples of how some affirmative action programs work against Asian-Americans. Mr. Connerly urged that, given the brief time available, the discussion not focus on affirmative action but on the broader subject of race and also suggested that the overall timeframe for the national debate be extended. Ms. Thernstrom stated that the President's Advisory Board on Race was too monolithic, and the group then discussed the diversity of the board.*]

The President. Go ahead. Lynn, you haven't talked enough.

[*Former Representative and former Secretary of Labor Lynn Martin stated that average Americans are really further along than they are given credit for, but that diversity implies differences in perception which people must move beyond. She advocated moving forward with a moderate checklist and reasonable goals.*]

The President. One thing—let me just ask you all to think about this because I agree—one of the things I do agree with what Ward said is that I—before you came in here I was holding my head saying, ''Oh my God, those people are coming in here, and we've got to stay here for 4 hours—[*inaudible*].'' But let me—nearly everybody agrees that the laws that are on the books against discrimination based on race against individuals should be enforced.

Ms. Thernstrom. Everybody agrees with that.

Ms. Chavez. Everybody in this room.

The President. We are grossly under—we have never properly funded the EEOC, but to be fair, we also need to look at—and this may be kind of a bridge between what we've been arguing about and what we agree on—there's a lot of interest—and Chris has given me some information on this—about trying to develop some sort of way the EEOC can get rid of its backlog in part by drawing up consent orders that would go beyond litigation and would change the way people treat their employees, not necessarily on a race—not a race-based treatment but the way you develop, the way you recruit, the way you reach out—and one of the—to go back to Lynn's checklist—one of the things we would like to get everybody to agree to is a certain approach on that, on kind of a comprehensive approach to getting rid of the accumulated backlog of race claims and where you go from there.

The other thing I would like to just say, because I know we're going to have to wrap up pretty soon, is I agree with you, we need a structure for the discussion which permits us to continue to talk, sharply identify in a non-rhetorical way our differences, and ask if there is some way to build on this so we can actually get something done.

I talked to J.C. Watts on the phone—he called me last night, and I was out of pocket, and I called him this morning, and we talked for 20 to 30 minutes because he was—[*inaudible*]—and it was an interesting conversation. I just think, if you're willing, I'm willing to make this not a one-shot deal but to continue to work on this. I really sympathize with how the immigrant—Asian immigrant—particularly first generation Asians feel with the shift in criteria.

Ms. Chao. We're just learning the rules, and goddamn it, they change them on us. [*Laughter*]

The President. The real issue here is, if you go back, there's lot of thought been given in the private schools and universities and Governor Kean, who runs a great one, can talk about it—that a lot of these private universities are thinking, okay, now, what if the colleges—if all the public institutions end affirmative action in their admissions process and they don't really—the State doesn't come up with a comprehensive alternative they'd like, where you've got all the colleges maybe taking over public schools, in effect, in terms of their college prep so you get to—you maintain the diversity of the student

body population with non-race-based policies; then will the private institutions basically have to carry the burden of educating a more diverse student body—or unless we're going to resegregate higher education like we once had.

So there's a reexamination about whether—I'm not saying that what you said is—how you described it, that that's the right way to do it, but there is a genuine, I think, reassessment about whether test scores plus grades should be the only predictor of success in college and success later, the only definer of merit, and whether we can assume that there is somehow an absolute character to that. As a matter of fact, the test scores were—[*inaudible*]—they have been a pretty good rough indicator.

But you know, look at what Texas is doing. It's interesting when you look at Texas, I mean, it's this desperate attempt, I think—I don't mean it's—desperate sounds critical; I'm not being critical. But people are looking around and trying to find a way to honor America, be fair, and still have a society where everybody's got a chance. Keep in mind, go back to basketball and our view of the doctors in Iowa, the people have got to believe everybody had a chance.

[*Ms. Chavez stated that it was not good public policy to have different rules for different groups and that the agreed criteria must be equally applied to every individual.*]

The President. You wouldn't be opposed to affirmative efforts that were not race-based, would you?

Ms. Chavez. That's right. I wouldn't because——

The President. And if they're not race-based, they——

[*Ms. Chavez stated that affirmative efforts that were not raced-based but aimed at educational disadvantage, social disadvantage, or economic disadvantage would be acceptable but should involve more than just letting people in the door. She said she resents the assumption that minorities are incapable of meeting the same standards. The Vice President said that while human nature is vulnerable to prejudice, we have the ability and the national responsibility to overcome this vulnerability and its consequences. He stated that cross-cultural contacts are obviously rewarding, that the opportunity for them should be more available, and that we must keep affirmative efforts going forward. Mr. Canady stated that the conservatives did not want to end the effort but did want to stop classification based on race.*]

The President. Let me ask you a question. One of the things that tickled me about—since I grew up in the South, in addition to being—[*inaudible*]—or the race problems in the country, we were all so obsessed with athletics. One of the things that tickled me about the California affirmative action vote was that there was—preference vote—is that there was an exception made for athletes. So you can give a preference for athletes to get into Berkeley, so Berkeley can have a nice football team and a nice basketball team.

The Vice President. Alumni giving.

The President. But the A student who doesn't get into Berkeley, the Asian A student who doesn't get into Berkeley is just as hurt because he didn't get in so everybody could be tickled at the next basketball game as he would have been hurt if some A student who grew up in a black family in Oakland and didn't go to a good high school and therefore didn't make quite as high a score on the college board—he still loses the opportunity. He just loses it to a basketball player instead of a kid with thick glasses who struggled late at night in Oakland to make good grades but didn't quite make a high enough college board score to get in. What's the difference? Why is it justified? Why is athletic discrimination so wonderful and the race discrimination——

Participant. Well, you can get rid of it. If you want to sign an Executive order——

Participant. And alumni discrimination as well.

Mr. Connerly. Mr. President, I have to say that this has been a great party until now, but just as we're—the clock is ticking, we're ready to go out the door, you ruined my weekend with those very—[*laughter*]——

The President. Is that not true? If it's not true, I don't want to falsely accuse you.

Mr. Connerly. ——very loaded questions, very loaded statements that command far more than the 5 or 10 minutes we have left. Our Founders—they talked for hours

about human nature as the basis of what kind of Government we were going to develop. And it's frightening to me—it is truly frightening to me, at the characterization of human nature, Mr. Vice President, that you portray, because it suggests that we cannot rise above it——

The Vice President. No, I said specifically, we can.

Mr. Connerly. ——unless Government is there demanding, demanding that we be held accountable. The presumption of our people, the presumption of our Nation is that we're good people, that we can be fair, and that we will do the right thing. There are going to be some out there that are going to do wrong, and we'll bring those into line. But it's not that we are prone to do bad. And the whole question here about athletes and alumni, my God, any of us can be athletes or alumni. It has nothing to do with our skin color.

The President. I didn't say anything about alumni.

Mr. Connerly. Well, he did. But there are just certain traits here that we as a society are making a judgment about——

The President. The only point I made—[*laughter*]—don't get our two speeches mixed up. The only point I'm trying to make is, if you ever have any—if you decide what the criteria of academic merit is, and let's say you decide the criteria is the grades plus the college boards—this is the only point, I'm making a narrow point. If you decide the criteria is the grades plus the college boards, and then you decide—you make a decision, which I think you could make a compelling argument is a legitimate decision, that athletics is an important part of university life, that it enriches the lives of all the other students who are there. You can make that argument, but the point is, once you make that argument, that's the argument you could also make for having a racially diverse student body. I was making a very—I'm not making a wholesale assault.

Now, here's my problem with this whole deal—I know we've got to go, so I want to give you a chance to say—what we really said before, which is, how do we give structure to this and what do you think the next step should be? And I'll give anybody else a chance. Look, when I was a Governor, I became the first Governor in the history of the country to sponsor legislation to require—[*inaudible*]—certified. I believe I passed the first law requiring kids in the whole State to have to pass an exam before they could actually go on to high school, because I didn't like the high school graduation—I thought that was closing the barn door after the cattle left. The reason I have consistently supported affirmative action programs—but I really have tried to change them and make them work—is not because—I basically think all that stuff you said is right. I am sick and tired of people telling me poor minority kids who live in desperate circumstances, that they can't make it. I think they should be told they can make it but they have to work harder to make it, and then I think we should give them a hand up to make it. I am tired of that. The reason I have supported affirmative action programs is very different, is I have done it because I didn't want to see all these kids be sacrificed to a principle that I agree with, because the practice of life would not be fixed in time to give them a chance—number one.

And number two, I have had the same feeling about police departments and fire departments and business environments and university admissions that I felt about the athletes—that I really thought that the institutions were better off and the white majority or whoever else, was better off if there was some inter-mixing because of the world they're going to live in.

But I am always—I think we should all be uncomfortable, those of us who support this, for giving something to somebody when we deprive somebody that was otherwise more deserving by the traditional criteria of getting it. But I think on balance, that's why I've been very strongly—but I have never wanted to not have high standards, not be demanding, not do things. I mean, I've paid a pretty good price for this—[*inaudible*]—and I'm not ashamed of having done it. I think that the kids in my State are better off because of it.

But we need to figure out, to recognize that what we'd really like is for people without regard to their race to be able to do the kind of business, go to the kind of schools,

have the kind of public service jobs, and live in the kind of integrated environment that they choose if that is the choice they make, because there would be no differences in traditional measures of merit and how they did, so that people would be making their own choices and having their own choices. I think that's—we all agree that that's the world we want.

So I'd like to know what you think the next step should be. If you want to stay involved in this, you want to keep talking to us, you want to keep working with us, and you want to get some more, different kind of people in here, what do you think we ought to do now?

[*Governor Kean explained that he accepted the invitation to sit on the President's Advisory Board on Race because he believed it was the first time in his life a President was willing to take on this issue and to try to establish a dialog, and he believed it could do some good. He said that initially he believed the board had been to narrow, but that now it was opening up to a broad spectrum of ideas. Ms. Thernstrom said she thought this was a wonderful meeting and that if this continued, it might go somewhere.*]

The President. That's what I think.

Ms. Thernstrom. Yes. We're feeling each other here. We're kind of making—it's a first kind of stiff beginning, but that we might really——

The Vice President. I resemble that remark. [*Laughter*]

The President. If you all are willing to do it and you will help us figure out a way to structure it, I'll do it. Let me just give you—I'll just give you one—outside this door, probably sitting there—I don't know if she's still there—is my diarist for the White House who has lately been in the paper because—[*inaudible*]—[*laughter*]—her name is Janis Kearney. Her daddy was a sharecropper, and her mother was a domestic. And they had 17 children; 13 of them have college degrees, 5 of them are lawyers, and all 17 of them have a first name that starts with the letter "J"—I don't know how they—[*laughter*] Most of them went to school in Arkansas. One of them went all the way to Harvard. And some of them had affirmative action, and some of them didn't, and they all did fine.

Look, somewhere in here there's a way that we can get to where we're trying to do—stop talking past each other and start working together. I cannot believe that 90 percent of the people in this country don't want the same kind of country in terms of racial matters. And I will do my best to find a way for us to move beyond the—[*inaudible*]—honestly and respectfully state our differences and figure out a way to work together. Because it is obvious, if you do not believe that there is any inherent, God-given difference among people based on race, then the differences that we have today must have been rooted in the mistakes that have been made in the past or the breakdown of social institutions or personal institutions like the family, the education system, and the networking of people in business and others. There has to be a way to rebuild those institutions, and we have to do it together.

I think it would be a shame if we didn't try to do this together. I'm trying to put this beyond partisan politics. I'm not trying to use you. I said that deal about the athletics because I might have voted for the athletic thing, too, but I've always been with the race is like athletics and not different from athletics. That's all. So we need to go.

If you have—in addition to your suggestions, which Governor Kean is for, I want to know if you've got process ideas about how we can discipline this debate and to move it forward.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:43 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Christopher Edley, consultant to the President's Advisory Board on Race. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Bosnia-Herzegovina

December 19, 1997

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

In my report to the Congress of June 20, 1997, I provided further information on the

deployment of combat-equipped U.S. Armed Forces to Bosnia and other states in the region in order to participate in and support the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)-led Stabilization Force (SFOR), and on the beginning of the withdrawal of the NATO-led Implementation Force (IFOR), which completed its mission and transferred authority to the SFOR on December 20, 1996. I am providing this supplemental report, consistent with the War Powers Resolution, to help ensure that the Congress is kept fully informed on continued U.S. contributions in support of peacekeeping efforts in the former Yugoslavia.

We continue to work in concert with others in the international community to encourage the parties to fulfill their commitments under the Dayton Peace Agreement and to build on the gains achieved over the last 2 years. It remains in the U.S. national interest to help bring peace to Bosnia, both for humanitarian reasons and to arrest the dangers the fighting in Bosnia represented to security and stability in Europe generally. Through American leadership and in conjunction with our NATO allies and other countries, we have seen real and continued progress toward sustainable peace in Bosnia. We have also made it clear to the former warring parties that they are ultimately responsible for implementing the Peace Agreement.

The United Nations Security Council authorized member states to establish the follow-on force in United Nations Security Council Resolution 1088 of December 12, 1996. The SFOR's tasks are to deter or prevent a resumption of hostilities or new threats to peace, to consolidate IFOR's achievements and to promote a climate in which the civilian-led peace process can go forward. Subject to this primary mission, SFOR has provided support, within its capabilities, to civilian organizations implementing the Dayton Peace Agreement.

During its mission. SFOR has successfully deterred the resumption of hostilities by patrolling the Zone of Separation, inspecting and monitoring heavy weapons cantonment sites, and providing support to civilian agencies. The SFOR has made significant achievements in demining, as well as major progress in efforts to restore road, rail, and air transportation links within Bosnia and Herzegovina. The SFOR has contributed to efforts to bring persons indicted for war crimes into custody in The Hague. The SFOR's support to civilian peace implementation tasks has been significant.

United States force contribution to SFOR in Bosnia remains approximately 8,500. United States forces participating in SFOR are U.S. Army forces that were stationed in Germany and the United States. Other participating U.S. forces include special operations forces, airfield operations support forces, air forces, and reserve component personnel. An amphibious force is normally in strategic reserve in the Mediterranean Sea, and a carrier battle group remains available to provide support for air operations.

All NATO nations and 20 others, including Russia and Ukraine, have provided troops or other support to SFOR. Most U.S. troops are assigned to Multinational Division, North, centered around the city of Tuzla. In addition, approximately 3,000 U.S. troops are deployed to Hungary, Croatia, Italy, and other states in the region in order to provide logistical and other support to SFOR. Since June 1997, U.S. forces have sustained a total of three fatalities, none of which was combat-related.

A U.S. Army contingent remains deployed in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia as part of the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP). This U.N. peacekeeping force observes and monitors conditions along the border with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Albania, effectively contributing to the stability of the region. Several U.S. Army helicopters are also deployed to provide support to U.S. forces and UNPREDEP as required. Most of the approximately 350 U.S. soldiers participating in these missions are assigned to the 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry, 1st Armored Division. The U.N. Security Council voted December 4, 1997, to authorize a final extension of the UNPREDEP mandate through August 31, 1998, at which time UNPREDEP will be terminated.

A small contingent of U.S. military personnel is also serving in Croatia in direct support

of the Transitional Administrator of the United Nations Transitional Administration in Eastern Slovenia (UNTAE). These personnel are expected to be redeployed when UNTAES's mandate expires on January 15, 1998, and a follow-on U.N. civilian police operation continues in the region.

In order to continue the progress we have seen in the last 6 months and to create conditions for a self-sustaining peace, yesterday I announced that the United States would in principal take part in a security prescence in Bosnia when SFOR withdraws this summer.

I have directed the participation of U.S. Armed Forces in these operations pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct U.S. foreign relations and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive, and in accordance with various statutory authorities. I am providing this report as part of my efforts to keep the Congress fully informed about developments in Bosnia and other states in the region. I will continue to consult closely with the Congress regarding our efforts to foster peace and stability in the former Yugoslavia.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Strom Thurmond, President pro tempore of the Senate. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

December 20, 1997

Good morning. In this season of hope and special time for our loved ones, I'd like to share some thoughts on what all Americans can do to strengthen our families. Specifically, I want to talk about our efforts to protect our children from drugs, the most dangerous enemy of childhood. Nothing can cause more pain and heartbreak in a family or cause more harm to a child's future than the use and abuse of drugs.

We should be very proud that drug use among all Americans has fallen by one-half since 1979. But in recent years, teenage drug use was rising. Today I have some good news.

A second major survey on drug use this year has confirmed that for the first time since 1991, our teenagers are beginning to turn away from drugs. In a report I'm a releasing today, the Department of Health and Human Services has found that the increasing rates of teen drug use are leveling off and, in some cases, decreasing. Today's eighth graders are less likely to have used drugs over the past year, and just as important, they are more likely to disapprove of drug use. This change in attitudes represents a glimmer of hope in our efforts to protect our children from drugs. But our work is far from over.

The most effective strategy we have against drugs begins at home. It's a fight that can be won at kitchen tables all across America. This holiday season, as we spend some hard-earned time with our families, I urge all parents to sit down with their children, as Hillary and I have done, and share a simple and important lesson: Drugs are dangerous; drugs are wrong; and drugs can kill you.

But Government can also do its part to help parents keep their children safe from drugs. Over the past 5 years, our administration has put in place a comprehensive national plan to fight drugs at all levels. We're putting 100,000 community police on our streets. We've cracked down on meth dealers and seized their labs. We've expanded mandatory drug testing for parolees and demanded that drug offenders get the treatment they need to live productive lives. We've worked with neighboring countries to prevent drugs from crossing our borders in the first place and built new community coalitions against drugs.

Most importantly, we fought to protect the safe and drug-free schools program that helps to keep drugs out of classrooms and away from children. The historic Balanced Budget Act I signed this summer also includes $195 million for a national youth anti-drug media campaign. Our goal is to make sure that every time a child turns on the TV, listens to the radio, or surfs the Internet, he or she will get the powerful message that drugs can destroy your life.

But we can't ever forget that the best drug enforcement prevention effort still is parents

teaching their children the difference between right and wrong when it comes to drugs. So once again, I call upon our parents to build on the progress we're making by talking frankly to your children about the destructive consequences of trying and using drugs.

As we celebrate the blessings of the year just past, let's all work to ensure that every child can look forward to a safe, healthy, and hopeful new year.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 6 p.m. on December 19 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on December 20.

Remarks to the Community in Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina

December 22, 1997

Thank you very much. Ladies and gentlemen, I think we should give a round of applause to Farouk and to Masha. They did a wonderful job, and I'm very proud of them. [*Applause*]

I thank the Sarajevo Philharmonic, President Izetbegovic, President Zubak, members of the Bosnian Government; to the religious leaders who are here, the representatives of civilian and voluntary agencies from around the world, the members of the American delegation; to Senator and Mrs. Dole, Members of Congress; General Shelton, General Clark, General Shinseki; to the people of Sarajevo and the people of Bosnia.

Let me say that all of us from the United States are very honored to be here, to gather in the dawn after a long darkness. For us this is a season of celebration, and we give thanks that the will for peace has triumphed over the weapons of war. At the edge of the 21st century, we come here to resolve to build a new era, free of the 20th century's worst moments and full of its most brilliant possibilities.

What my family and I and our party have seen in the streets of Sarajevo has been deeply moving to us. Only a little more than 2 years ago, men, women, and children ran the gauntlet of snipers and shells in a desperate search for water. Now they walk in security to work and school. Then, sheets of plastic covered nearly every window. Now there is mostly glass, and plastic is rare. Then, people lived in the rubble of bombed out buildings. Now they have roofs over their heads, heat, electricity, and running water. Then, Sarajevo was mired in a deep freeze of destruction. And now, through your labors, it has begun to thaw and to grow anew in the sunlight of peace. Then, shops were barren and cafes were empty. Now, they are filled with food and alive with conversation.

And my wife and daughter and I just had some of that conversation and some pretty good coffee, I might add. [*Laughter*] We just came from a coffee shop where we were talking to a number of young people who work and study here from all different ethnic backgrounds, people determined to build a common future, to let go of the destructive past. And I went around the table and let every one of them tell me whatever they wanted to say. And then I said, "Now, what is the most important thing the United States could do to help you on your way?" And in unison they said, "Stay for a while longer."

Then the time came for us to come here. And Hillary and Chelsea and I walked outside the coffee shop, and there's a beautiful church just across the street, and in front of the church there were three American soldiers who happened to come from a unit from Richmond, Virginia. And we walked over to shake hands with the soldiers, all enlisted personnel. And one of them said, "We're so happy to be here. These are good people, and it's a good thing we're doing."

We in the United States are proud of our role in Bosnia's new beginning. Look at the group who came here today from our Government: the Secretary of State; three four-star generals; 10 Members of Congress, prominent Members of Congress from both political parties; my distinguished opponent in the last Presidential election, Senator Dole, and Mrs. Dole. Americans care a lot about Bosnia; without regard to their party or their political differences, they care about the people.

We also have distinguished citizens here who have worked with nongovernmental organizations. They are a part of the amazing international force of human endeavor that

we have seen brought to bear in this remarkable land in the last couple of years; people from all around the world waging a day-to-day campaign of renewal with you. We are proud that we played a role in helping you to silence the guns and separate the armies, to rebuild roads and factories, to reunite children with their families and refugees with their homes, to oversee democratic elections and open the airwaves to voices of tolerance, to call to account those accused of war crimes. We are here because you decided to end the suffering and the slaughter and because we rejected the prospect of another needless war spreading in the heart of Europe, and because citizens all over the world were literally heartbroken by your suffering and determined to ease it.

To everyone who has taken part in IFOR and SFOR and civilian projects large and small, I'd like to say a simple thank you. And God bless you all for what you have done and what you will do to change the face and the future of Bosnia.

Most of all I come before you with a message for those in whose hands the future of Bosnia lie, its leaders and its people. For in the end the future is up to you, not to the Americans, not to the Europeans, not to anyone else.

Two years ago in Dayton, Ohio, the leaders of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, and Serbia made a fateful choice for peace. But their responsibility and yours did not end there on that day. In fact, it only began. Your responsibility is to turn the documents signed in Dayton into a living reality, to make good on the pledge to bring Bosnia together as one country, with two multiethnic parts, sharing a common destiny. Those who rise to that responsibility will have the full support of the United States and the international community. Those who shirk it will isolate themselves. The world which continues to invest in your peace rightfully expects that you will do your part. More important, the people of this country expect results and they deserve them.

You have accomplished much, but there is much more to do. You have established the joint institutions of democracy. Now you must work within them sharing power as you share responsibility. You have vowed to welcome back those displaced from their homes by war. Now you must vote for the return program so that they actually can come back with stronger protections for minorities and more job creation. You are working to restore Bosnia's economy. Now you must build up the laws to attract assistance and investment and root out the corruption that undermines confidence in economies.

You have begun to turn the media from an instrument of hate into a force of tolerance and understanding. Now you must raise it to international standards of objectivity and access and allow an independent press the freedom to thrive. You are taking the police out of the hands of warlords. Now you must help to reform, retrain, and reequip a democratic force that fosters security, not fear. You have pledged to isolate and arrest indicted war criminals. Now you must follow through on that commitment, both for the sake of justice and in the serving of lasting peace.

Most of all, the leaders here, you owe it to your country to bring out the best in people, acting in concert, not conflict; overcoming obstacles, not creating them; rising above petty disputes, not fueling them. In the end, leaders in a democracy must bring out the best in people. But in the end, they serve the people who send them to their positions.

And so to the people of Bosnia, I say today, you must make your desire for peace and a common future clear to the leaders of each group. And you must then give leaders the absolute support they need to make the hard decisions for a common future. The people of Bosnia can make it happen. The example that ordinary citizens set among your neighbors, the standards that you demand from your leaders will determine this nation's fate.

After such a hard war, fighting aggressively for peace is difficult. So many have lost mothers and fathers, husbands and wives, sons and daughters. So many wounds are deep and scars still fresh. Energy may be short, at a time when an extraordinary effort of will is required to wrench yourself from the past and to begin to build a future together. How many people who have suffered as Farouk has suffered can stand clearly, unambiguously for the cause of peace and a common future. Many must if you are to succeed. And

many of you are trying to do that in religious and civic settings of all kinds. I thank all of those who are making organized efforts to build a common future, especially those who are mobilizing women, because they know so painfully how important reconciliation and reconstruction are to your families and your children's future.

What I want all of you to believe today is that you can do it. In our time, from Guatemala to South Africa, from El Salvador to Northern Ireland, people are turning from conflict to conciliation. Still, the impulse to divide, if not to actually fight and kill, over ethnic or religious or racial differences, runs deep in human nature across the globe. It seems to be rooted in a fear of those who are different from ourselves and a false sense of superiority and security that separation and striving for supremacy seem to offer.

In America for a long time, one race literally enslaved another. It took the bloodiest war in our history to break the chains of bondage and more than 100 years of effort since then to root out their consequences. And we're still working at it. But we grow always stronger as we let more and more of our fears and prejudices go. The more we recognize that as we live and work and learn together, what we have in common is far more important than our differences. So that across all those differences, together we affirm our devotion to faith and to family. We seek opportunity for all and responsibility from all. We believe we are immeasurably stronger as one America than as a collection of separate, hostile camps. And this is a point of special importance to you. We find that affirming our Union allows us the security to respect, even to celebrate, our differences.

As we in America look ahead to a new century, we have people from over 180 different racial and ethnic groups who now call America home. We have embarked on a great national dialog across those groups about how we can live and prosper together in a new millennium. I would urge all of you to do the same thing here, to find more opportunities at the grassroots; to reach across the lines of division for the sake of your children and your future. I know that especially to the young people here, finding strength in your diversity may seem like an act of faith that requires quite a leap.

Many young people recall little before the war. One teenage Sarajevan said recently, ''It's not just a question of starting again. It's a question of just starting.'' But I think it is important that all of you remember and teach that the war did violence not only to Bosnia's people but also to its history, its own tradition of tolerance. Just minutes from here, standing within yards from one another are a mosque, an Orthodox church, a Catholic church, and a synagogue, reminding us that generations of Muslims, Orthodox Christians, Catholics, and Jews live side by side and enrich the world by their example here, built schools and libraries and wondrous places of worship. Part of that population laid down their tools on Friday, part on Saturday, and part on Sunday. But their lives were woven together by marriage and culture, by work and common language and a shared pride in a place all could call home. That past should be remembered. And you should do everything in your power to make it a prolog. History can be your ally, not your enemy.

I am persuaded, having served in this office for 5 years, that the real differences around the world today are not between Jews and Arabs; Protestants and Catholics; Muslims, Croats, and Serbs. The real differences are between those who embrace peace and those who would destroy it, between those who look to the future and those who cling to the past, between those who open their arms and those who are determined to clench their fists, between those who believe that God made all of us equal and those foolish enough to believe they are superior to others just because of the color of their skin, of the religion of their families, of their ethnic background. This is a very small nation on an increasingly small planet. None of us has the moral standing to look down on another, and we should stop it.

I was thrilled that the Sarajevo symphony played before I was introduced to speak. Its violinist and cellist, percussionist and flutist, played together before the war, stayed together during the war, answered the mortars and shells with the sounds of music. Seven of the members were killed—Muslims,

Croats, and Serbs. Well, they're still here, and they're still Muslims, Croats, and Serbs. And to tell you the truth, I know the tuba players from the violinists, but I can't tell the Muslims from the Croats from the Serbs. The harmony of their disparate voices—the harmony of their disparate voices—is what I hear. It reminds me of Bosnia's best past, and it should be the clarion call to your future.

Here at the dawn of the new millennium, let us recall that the century we are leaving began with the sound of gunfire in Sarajevo. And let us vow to start the new century with the music of peace in Sarajevo.

To the people of Bosnia I say, you have seen what war has wrought; now you know what peace can bring. So seize the chance before you. You can do nothing to change the past, but if you can let it go, you can do everything to build a future. The world is watching, and the world is with you. But the choice is yours. May you make the right one.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:55 a.m. at the National Theater. In his remarks, he referred to Farouk Sabanovic, and Masha Mishdin, who introduced the President; Alija Izetbegovic, Presidency Chairman, and Kresimir Zubak, Presidency Member, National Government, Bosnia-Herzegovina; former Senator Bob Dole and his wife, Elizabeth, president, American Red Cross; Gen. Henry H. Shelton, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff; Gen. Wesley K. Clark, Supreme Allied Commander, Europe; and Gen. Eric K. Shinseki, Commander, U.S. Army, Europe. The President also referred to the NATO-led Implementation Force in Bosnia (IFOR) and the NATO-led Stabilization Force in Bosnia (SFOR).

Remarks to the Troops in Tuzla, Bosnia-Herzegovina

December 22, 1997

The President. Thank you for your laid-back welcome. [*Laughter*] Thank you, General Ellis. Ladies and gentlemen, I have come here with a great delegation of Americans, including the Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Army, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe; many other distinguished military officials and officials from the White House; and a truly astonishing delegation from Congress, of both Democrats and Republicans together.

We have Senator Ted Stevens of Alaska; Senator Joe Biden of Delaware; Senator Joe Lieberman of Connecticut; Senator Dan Coats of Indiana; Representative John Kasich of Ohio; Representative Jack Murtha of Pennsylvania; Representative Ike Skelton of Missouri; Representative Elijah Cummings of Maryland; Representative Mac Collins of Georgia—anybody from Georgia? [*Cheers*] Representative John Boehner of Ohio and Representative Steve Buyer of Indiana—anybody here from Indiana? [*Cheers*] I'm proud of all of them.

And let me say, we came here for two reasons today. We came here, first of all, to say thank you to all of you, to say what you are doing for your country is a good and noble thing. You are doing it well, and we are grateful. We know it's tough to be away from home at Christmas time. We know it's hard to be away from your families. But you are doing something profoundly important.

The second reason we came here was so that we could go to Sarajevo and see the leaders of the Muslims, the Croatians, and the Serbs, and tell them that they made an agreement at Dayton that we are doing our dead-level best to help them enforce, and they promised that they would live and work together and build one country without ethnic prejudice or unfairness to any group, that we would not only end a war, that they would build a peace together, and that we in the United States were determined not only to do our part but we expected them to do theirs. And these good people in Bosnia, these little children, who have suffered so much, they deserve leaders who honor the commitments they made at Dayton and build a better, brighter future.

And we wanted to do that with one voice, without regard to party. So I want to say a special word of thanks to Senator Bob Dole and Mrs. Elizabeth Dole for coming. And I would like to give—Senators talk like this all the time; I don't quite know how to do it, but I think this is called yielding a portion of my time. I'd like for Bob Dole to come up here and say a few words.

[*Former Senator Bob Dole made brief remarks.*]

The President. Thank you, Senator Dole. Thank you for not reading my speech. [*Laughter*] I like the one you gave.

Let me first of all say that I'm delighted to be here with the Iron Soldiers of the 1st Armored Division, with the 2nd Armored Calvary and all of the other units of Task Force Eagle. But I also want the people back home to know, through our friends in the press who are here, that there are a lot of National Guardsmen and Reservists here. And I thank all of you.

Now, Hillary and I, along with the phone time that you all get—I hope you enjoy that hour on the telephone. I know you're all sitting there thinking, am I going to use it all at one time or am I going to divide it up? Am I going to call four people or just one? Decisions, decisions!

We were able to bring some school supplies over here with us, some toys as well. And I know you're going to be able to distribute those to children here who are needy and deserving. I want to thank especially Lieutenant Colonel Mark Little, who started the program to take care of these children who have been so hurt in this war and who's given thousands of Americans the chance to serve through it.

A few moments ago we gave some of those presents to some Bosnian children, and I wish all of you could have been there with me. I wish all of you could have been with Hillary and Chelsea and me earlier today when we sat around a table in a coffee shop in Sarajevo and talked to a dozen young people, Muslims, Serbs, Croats, all from Bosnia. And I said, ''You know, I'm going to see our soldiers today, and if we could do one more thing for your country, what would you like us to do?'' And every one of them, it was like a chorus, they said, ''Stay. Stay just a little longer. We can't—we're not ready yet, but the young people want peace. We don't understand why we're supposed to hate each other. We don't want that kind of future. Please stay.''

And then we walked outside this coffee shop in Sarajevo and there were three American soldiers who happened to be from Virginia across the street, standing in front of a church. And Hillary and Chelsea went over there, and I got out, and I went over and shook hands with them. And they said, ''We are really proud to be here because we are doing a good thing.'' You are doing a good thing, and I hope you are proud to be here. America is proud of you.

I also want to tell you that I have enjoyed sort of sampling your life, walking in the mud—[*laughter*]—imagining what it would be like to spend 6 months in those beautiful tents. [*Laughter*] I like those Kevlar seats in the Humvee. [*Laughter*] I have heard all about the wonderful cuisine. We're going to have dinner, and who knows, maybe I'll even get near-beer and vegetable lasagna. [*Laughter*]

We're having a good time, and we're all cheering. But I want you to be serious with me just for a minute. And when you go to bed tonight, and you wonder what you're doing here, I want you to think about this. These people, for nearly 4 years in this country, fought the bloodiest war in Europe since the end of World War II. Massive numbers of people displaced from their homes, huge number of children made orphans, lots of young people walking around without limbs, horrible things happened to people. And because of what you and our other allies did—our NATO allies and our allies from Russia, from Poland, from other non-NATO countries—you know that the country has stayed on the path of peace instead of going back into bloodshed. Without you, that would not have happened. Without you, the warring parties never would have disengaged, and more than—listen to this—more than 370,000 of them were combatant troops. They've gone back to civilian life now. Without you, there would still be mortars and cannons firing. Now, more than 6,500 heavy weapons have been destroyed and the rest put under international supervision. Because of you, free and fair elections have been held. There is freedom of movement; police reform has begun. A lot of the airwaves now are filled with information instead of vicious, partisan hatred.

Bosnia is no longer the powder keg at the heart of Europe because of you. And I cannot thank you enough. Your children and your grandchildren will look back on this moment

and know that you have done something not only of surpassing importance but something that is profoundly good.

We gave you a mission, and you delivered. So when you go to bed tonight, thank God that you were given the chance to do something like this. A lot of people live their whole lives and never ever, ever are able to give something so profoundly important to others as the gift you have given to the children of Bosnia. Thank you, and God bless you for it.

Let me also say that even though this has been a remarkably nonviolent mission, it has not been free of risks. I was thinking today coming here to Tuzla that in August a couple of years ago, when we were working on the peace process, we lost three remarkable people, Bob Frasure, Joe Kruzel, and Nelson Drew, who were part of our team trying to make a peace agreement. And their vehicle crumbled on a weak road, and they were killed in a horrible accident. We had a couple of other accidents on the road. We lost one soldier who was killed when he walked over to a mine and just kneeled down and started dealing with it.

But the most important thing I was thinking about today, from a purely personal point of view, is that it wasn't so very long ago that my good friend, the Secretary of Commerce, Ron Brown, was here in Tuzla. He spent the last day of his life here before his plane crashed. And I want to tell you, I've seen the pictures. He had a very happy last day because he was here with the men and women of the United States Armed Forces, glorying in and participating in this mission.

I also want to say to you that in spite of all you have done, I think it is imperative that we not stop until the peace here has a life of its own, until it can endure without us. We have worked too hard to let this go.

I thank the Members of Congress from both parties who have come here out of concern for you and your work. I want to say a special work of thanks again to Senator Dole. He said something to me on the phone the other day; he says so many things that are funny and pithy that if I start stealing his lines without attribution, I'll get in trouble. So I want to tell you—he said this to me. We were talking about Bosnia, and he said, "Look, it's worked." He said, "I didn't necessarily agree with everything you did, but on the whole this thing has worked. And this is like being in a football game, and we're ahead. It's the fourth quarter. Who wants to walk off the field and forfeit the game? We ought to stay here, finish the game, and take home the win for the world and for freedom." And that's exactly what I intend to do, thanks to what you have proven that America can stand for and that we can accomplish. And again I say, thank you very, very much.

One other thing, just for my information. How many of you here are on your second tour here? [*Cheers*] I met a young man today, I said, "How long have you been in the Army?" He said, "I've been in the Army 5 years." And he said, "The last time I saw you, I was in Haiti." He said in 5 years he's done two tours in Haiti and one tour in Bosnia. Just sort of laying around, you know. [*Laughter*]

I don't think many Americans understand exactly how deep the burdens are on our men and women in uniform today. Because we have downsized the military in the aftermath of the cold war, when we take on these responsibilities, it is very hard for a lot of people. We rotate these missions a little more rapidly than we would like to. We draw out Reservists and Guardsmen more often than we would like to. But you have always done what you were asked to do. And you have always delivered for America.

So on this Christmas season I ask the American people, who will see this on television tonight or tomorrow, to remember what we owe to the soldiers, the sailors, the airmen, the marines of the Armed Forces at home and around the world, in the Persian Gulf, on the DMZ in Korea, here in Bosnia. Our Nation is at peace and our people are secure because of you. Our country can grow stronger and more prosperous. Our people can live out their dreams. Our children can sleep well because of you. Your sacrifice makes this possible.

I think that one of the things that you may wonder is whether people back home know you're here and appreciate what you're doing. Since you've done it so well, there aren't any visible problems, and you make it look easy.

I got a fascinating letter the other day from the mother of a soldier stationed in Camp Eagle, Specialist Christina Campbell. And the mother said, ''So as you get busy spreading holiday cheer, don't forget the peacekeepers and those they hold dear.'' And Specialist Campbell actually wrote a poem. So I want to tell you, I took just a little bit out of it, because I want you to know that at this Christmas you are in the hearts of the American people. And her words are your words. Listen to these, she says, ''No, this is not our soil, and it's not our own fight. But if you've seen what I have, then you know that it's right.''

God bless you all, and God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:30 p.m. at Club 21. In his remarks, he referred to Maj. Gen. Larry R. Ellis, USA, commander, 1st Armored Division.

Message on the Observance of Christmas, 1997

December 22, 1997

Warm greetings to everyone celebrating Christmas.

At this time of year, when the nights grow longer and often colder, our lives are brightened and our hearts warmed by the lights of Christmas. So much light surrounds our memories and celebration of Christmas: candlelight in the windows, colored lights twinkling on the tree, children's faces lit with a joy that is reflected in their parents' eyes. The beloved Christmas story itself is a story of light, for, as the Gospel of John tells us, Jesus came into the world as ''the true Light'' that illumines all humankind.

Almost 2,000 years later, that Light still shines amid the dark places of our world. It is reflected in the lives of so many quiet and generous people who strive daily to make life better for others—feeding the hungry, caring for the ill and elderly, cherishing and nurturing children. It radiates from the hearts of those who work for peace and justice in their communities, our nation, and the world. It shines in the efforts of men and women striving to break down the walls of fear, ignorance, and prejudice that cast shadows across too many lives and prevent us from becoming the people God intended us to be.

May all who celebrate Christmas this year rejoice in the special gifts of light that it brings: the love that warms our hearts, the faith that lights our journey, and the hope that promises us a bright future. Hillary and I wish you joy and peace during this Christmas season and much happiness in the New Year.

Bill Clinton

Message on the Observance of Kwanzaa, 1997

December 22, 1997

Warm greetings to everyone observing Kwanzaa.

As America embarks on a season of renewal and reconciliation, the principles of Kwanzaa—unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity, and faith—ring true not only for African Americans, but also for all Americans. By emphasizing the importance of family in our lives and the blessings that come with a true commitment to community, opportunity, and responsibility, the celebration of Kwanzaa can help us to enter the future as a stronger nation and a more compassionate and united people.

The symbols and ceremony of Kwanzaa, evoking the rich history and heritage of African Americans, remind us that our nation draws much of its strength from our diversity. As millions of Americans observe Kwanzaa this year, let us renew our commitment to realizing America's promise as a land where all people are free to pursue our common dreams—to live in peace, to provide for our families, and to give our children the opportunity for a better life.

Hillary joins me in sending best wishes for a joyous Kwanzaa.

Bill Clinton

Statement on the Death of Esther Peterson

December 22, 1997

Hillary and I were saddened to learn of the death of Esther Peterson. She was the mother of the modern consumer movement,

a woman who dedicated her life to improving the standard of living for all Americans. In her long career, she was a trusted adviser to President Kennedy, President Johnson, and President Carter. I was grateful for her sage counsel and for her service to this country. As a member of the United States delegation to the United Nations, she was dedicated to promoting American values at home and abroad. She will be greatly missed. Our thoughts and prayers are with her children and grandchildren.

Statement on the Death of Dawn Steel

December 22, 1997

Hillary and I were saddened to learn of the death of Dawn Steel. She was a pioneer in the film industry, blazing a trail for a new generation of young women, and setting a standard of achievement for all. Our lives have been enriched by her talent, and she will be missed. Our thoughts and prayers are with her husband, her daughter, and with all her family.

Remarks in a Celebration of Hanukkah and an Exchange With Reporters

December 23, 1997

The President. Hello, everybody. Before we light the menorah, I'd like to make a brief statement. First of all, I'd like to welcome the Jewish Primary Day School students here and their principal, Susan Koss. I'd like to thank Mayrim Baram, who is not here, who lives in Israel, who did this magnificent, magnificent menorah for us. It's very, very beautiful. Dr. Amatzia Baram, his son, and Mrs. Baram are in the audience today, and through them I'd like to thank his father for this really beautiful menorah. I will treasure it always. And it's been up in the White House during the holiday season, so many people have come in here and have seen it.

This evening I join the rest of the country in wishing you a happy Hanukkah. Tonight Jews across America and the world are celebrating the victory of the Maccabees over their oppressors and the Miracle of Lights that marked their triumph. This joyous holiday also reminds us of our precious right to religious freedom, a right we all hold dear as Americans, a right that is the very first one written into our Bill of Rights. Like the Maccabees, we must vigilantly oppose religious prejudice whenever we find it.

I know that your teachers and rabbis have instilled in you the values of compassion, justice, and tolerance. And if you have courage to follow those values, you can be the Maccabees of our time.

This year we will also celebrate the 50th anniversary of the creation of the modern State of Israel, the land where the miracle of Hanukkah occurred such a long time ago. But our prayers to God this holiday will be for peace in the land of Israel, for the tranquility of its people, for a bright and hopeful future, for all the children of the Middle East, children that are very much like you.

Now as Danny Lew lights the menorah, I wish you all once again a very happy Hanukkah.

Danny.

[*At this point, Danny Lew lit the menorah.*]

Health Care Task Force Civil Case

Q. Mr. President, can we—if we have time for just one question. A Federal judge the other day had some very tough words for Ira Magaziner. But so far there's been no public comment from the White House. It seems like if that accusation was unfair, Mr. Magaziner is entitled to a public defense. And if it was fair, the public is entitled to an explanation of why somebody on the White House staff might mislead a judge.

The President. First of all, it's a fair question, but because of what we've been doing the last few days and because of what we've been—the holiday season, I honestly haven't read the judge's opinion, nor have I asked anyone on the staff for a response to it. So I'd like to ask you to just give me a pass until tomorrow or so. I'll be happy to answer it, but I don't want to give you the wrong answer.

I was a little skeptical when I read the news story because I believe I know what the facts were, so I was quite skeptical when I read the news story. But I think it's a very fair question; we should answer the question.

I just don't think I'm prepared to do it now. And I'll be ready tomorrow. I'll ask someone, and you can ask me tomorrow.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Mr. President, what about the Middle East peace process? Is it going to take—Hanukkah celebrates—is a celebration of miracles—what is it going to take to rekindle the Middle East peace process?

The President. Well, I'm actually quite hopeful. I think, first it takes a reaffirmation to the process of peace, which means that there should be a high level of security associated with the process itself. And I think there's general belief that the Palestinian Authority has redoubled its efforts on security. The Israeli Cabinet has seemed to adopt the position that said that they would be for another withdrawal consistent with the Oslo accords. There appears to be other discussion in Israel over the questions, the long-delayed questions about the airport and the port and the safe transit from the West Bank to Gaza.

So I'm actually quite hopeful that in the coming year we'll have progress not only between the Israelis and Palestinians but also between Israel and Syria. I think the openness is there, and I think that many people are sobered by the consequences of the absence of a viable peace process. So maybe it's just the holiday season, but I'm feeling pretty upbeat about it.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:25 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Mayrim Baram, an Israeli whose son died in the 1973 Yom Kippur War, his surviving son, Amatzia Baram, and his daughter-in-law, Bonnie Baram-Belkin; Susan Koss, director, and Danny Lew, student, Jewish Primary Day School of the Adas Israel Synagogue; and U.S. District Judge Royce C. Lamberth.

Statement on the Death of Sebastian Arcos Bergnes

December 23, 1997

Hillary and I were saddened to learn of the death of Sebastian Arcos Bergnes, a courageous and tireless activist for human rights, democracy, and freedom in Cuba.

Mr. Arcos dedicated his life to peaceful change in his beloved homeland. He was a man of honor and dignity who commanded enormous respect around the world for the sacrifices he made and the good work he did for the people of Cuba. As one of the founders of the human rights movement in Cuba, he blazed a trail which has inspired many others who cherish individual liberties. He was an example to us all and will be missed.

Our thoughts and prayers are with his son and daughter and the rest of the family who will carry on the effort to secure human rights in Cuba.

Statement on the Oklahoma City Bombing Trials

December 23, 1997

Two years ago, I told the families of the 168 innocent men, women, and children who perished in the Murrah Federal Building that they had lost too much, but they had not lost America, and that we would stand by them for as long as it took.

The dedicated team of prosecutors and investigators who brought these cases to a successful conclusion have helped to fulfill that promise. The Nation is deeply in their debt.

I know that no verdict in a court of law can ease the loss of a loved one. But the successful prosecution of Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols should offer a measure of comfort that all Americans stand with the families of Oklahoma City.

Statement on Deferred Enforced Departure for Haitians

December 23, 1997

Today I have directed the Attorney General and the Immigration and Naturalization Service to defer for one year the deportation of Haitians who were paroled into the United States or applied for asylum prior to December 31, 1995. This action implements the commitment I made to address the situation of Haitians when I signed immigration legislation last month offering relief to Central Americans and others. It will shield these Haitians from deportation while we work with Congress to provide them long-term legislative relief.

Haitians deserve the same treatment we sought for Central Americans. Like Central Americans, Haitians for many years were forced to seek the protection of the United States because of oppression, human rights abuses, and civil strife at home. Many of them have established strong ties and made significant contributions to our communities. And, while we have been encouraged by Haiti's progress following the restoration of democratic government in 1994, the situation there remains fragile. Staying the deportation of these Haitians and obtaining for them permanent legislative relief will help support a stable and democratic Haiti—which, in turn, is the best safeguard against a renewed flow of Haitian migrants to the United States.

Memorandum on Deferred Enforced Departure for Haitians

December 23, 1997

Memorandum for the Attorney General

Subject: Deferred Enforced Departure (DED) for Haitians

Over the past several decades, many Haitians have been forced to flee their country because of human rights abuses and civil strife and have sought the protection of the United States. A significant number of these Haitians were brought into the United States from Guantanamo Bay Naval Base by President Bush following the overthrow of President Aristide in 1991. Other Haitians arrived here through other means and were paroled or applied for asylum. Many of these Haitians continue to be without legal status in the United States.

Pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct the foreign relations of the United States, I have determined that it is in the foreign policy interest of the United States to defer for 1 year the deportation of any Haitian national who was paroled into the United States before December 31, 1995, or who filed for asylum before December 31, 1995, and who has been continuously present in the United States since that date.

Accordingly, I now direct you to take the necessary steps to implement for these Haitians:

1. deferral of enforced departure from the United States for 1 year from the date of this memorandum; and
2. authorization for employment for 1 year from the date of this memorandum.

This directive shall not apply to any Haitian national: (1) who has been convicted of an aggravated felony; (2) who is found to be a persecutor of others within the meaning of 8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(42); (3) whose removal you determine is in the interest of the United States; (4) whose presence or activities in the United States the Secretary of State has reasonable ground to believe would have potentially serious adverse foreign policy consequences for the United States; (5) who voluntarily returned or returns to Haiti or his or her country of last habitual residence outside the United States; (6) who was deported, excluded, or removed prior to the date of this memorandum; or (7) who is subject to extradition.

These measures shall be taken as of the date of this memorandum.

William J. Clinton

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on the Comprehensive Trade and Development Policy for Africa

December 23, 1997

Dear Mr. _____:

I am pleased to submit the third of five annual reports on the Administration's Comprehensive Trade and Development Policy for Africa as required by section 134 of the Uruguay Round Agreements Act. This year marks a watershed in our economic and trade relations with the countries of Africa.

On June 17, I announced a new strategy to promote economic growth and opportunity in Africa. The Partnership for Growth and Opportunity in Africa opens the door to real, positive change, as only nations carrying out serious reforms will reap the full benefits. Those that strengthen their democracies, reform their trade regimes, and invest in their people will see their efforts pay off in increased trade that will create new jobs, increase wages, spur growth, and improve the

quality of life for their people. Also this year the United States Congress has had before it the African Growth and Opportunity Act. This legislation and our initiative constitute a collective American effort to help fulfill the promise of a stable, prosperous, and democratic Africa. I urge the Congress to pass quickly the African Growth and Opportunity Act.

Our goal remains the achievement of sustained economic development for Africa and we continue to be guided by the conviction that economic development in Sub-Saharan Africa will benefit both Africans and Americans. African countries continue to make progress toward political and economic reform, but this progress is fragile and must be supported.

The Administration's Partnership for Growth and Opportunity in Africa has five key elements. First, we intend to provide increased access to our markets for African exports. The most committed African reformers will receive the greatest access. In the future, the United States will be prepared to negotiate free trade agreements with these countries. Congressional action is particularly important if we are to implement successfully these elements of the Partnership. This report discusses the steps we are currently taking to ensure improved access for African and American products in our respective markets and to bring about increased mutually beneficial trade.

Second, we will increase technical assistance to enable African countries to take the fullest advantage of these new programs. This report discusses the ways that we are assisting African countries to undertake reforms that will enable them to grow through increased trade and investment.

Third, we are working to increase private investment in Sub-Saharan Africa. Through the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC), we have created a new $150 million equity fund to finance increased private investment, and will create funds up to $500 million for infrastructure investment. We also are undertaking an initiative to strengthen the transportation infrastructure in Africa.

Fourth, we will work to eliminate bilateral debt for the poorest of the reforming nations, and maintain our leadership in the effort to reduce their debts to the multilateral institutions. This report highlights the progress we have made working with our Economic Summit Partners and with the international financial institutions to ensure that we have a coordinated approach to reducing African debt and its adverse impacts on African economic reform and development.

Fifth, the United States will hold annual economic meetings at the ministerial level with all reforming African nations. In the last 6 months we have held more discussion with African leaders on trade and investment matters than ever before, and we expect this dialogue will intensify in the future.

The Administration will continue working with the Congress, the U.S. private sector, the countries of Africa, and our trading partners, to implement policies that promote reforms and result in increased trade, investment, and development in Africa.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Jesse Helms, chairman, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., ranking member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; Bill Archer, chairman, and Charles B. Rangel, ranking member, House Committee on Ways and Means; William Roth, chairman, and Daniel Patrick Moynihan, ranking member, Senate Committee on Finance; Benjamin A. Gilman, chairman, and Lee H. Hamilton, ranking member, House Committee on International Relations.

Statement on Assistance for the Homeless

December 24, 1997

Today—on the eve of Christmas and the first day of Hanukkah—it is important for all Americans to come together as one community and remember those who are less fortunate, particularly our fellow citizens without the warmth and security of a home. I applaud the many Americans who dedicate their lives—and the hundreds and thousands of volunteers who work tirelessly—to help provide shelter, food, and dignity to homeless men, women, and children.

As long as there are children waking up in America on Christmas morning without the comfort of a warm home, we have more

work to do. Religious and community organizations are doing their part to help alleviate homelessness. The Federal Government must do its share too.

That is why I have asked Secretary Cuomo to announce today that my next budget will provide an additional $327 million for homeless assistance—if enacted, one of the largest dollar increases ever. My new budget will request $1.15 billion to help move the homeless from the streets to self sufficiency—a 40-percent increase over this year. This amount includes 34,000 vouchers to help individuals and families who are [1] now homeless celebrate future holidays in a place they can call "home." These funds will help create safer places for our children to grow up, more stable families, and a stronger American community. I look forward to working with Congress to achieve this needed assistance for the homeless.

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.

December 21

In the afternoon, the President and Hillary Clinton traveled to Aviano, Italy, arriving the following morning.

December 22

In the morning, the President and Hillary Clinton traveled to Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Shortly after his arrival, the President met with the representatives of the National Government Tripartite Presidency of Bosnia-Herzegovina in Room A of the National Museum of Sarajevo. The Presidency consists of Alija Izetbegovic, Presidency Chairman (Muslim); Momcilo Krajisnik, Presidency Member (Serb); and Kresimir Zubak, Presidency Member (Croat).

In the afternoon, the President met with President Biljana Plavsic of the Serb Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina at the National Theater.

In the evening, the President and Hillary Clinton went to Tuzla Airfield and had dinner with American troops in the dining hall at "Tent City." Later, they traveled to Aviano, Italy, and then returned to Washington, DC, arriving the following morning.

The President announced his intention to appoint Lorenzo H. Aguilar-Melancon, Robert D. Dinerstein, Ann Forts, Ruth Luckasson, Tom E.C. Smith, Deborah Spitalnik, and Cathy Ficker Terrill as members of the President's Committee on Mental Retardation.

The President announced the appointment of Steven S. Honigman as Special Adviser to the President.

December 23

The President announced his intention to appoint Janice R. Lachance to serve as Chair and member of the National Partnership Council.

The White House announced that the President will travel to New York City and McAllen, Brownsville, and Houston, TX, on January 8 and 9 to highlight the importance of equal access to education for all Americans.

December 24

The White House announced that the President declared a major disaster in the Northern Mariana Islands and ordered Federal aid to supplement Commonwealth and local recovery efforts in the area struck by Typhoon Paka and associated torrential rains, high winds, high surf, and tidal surges on December 16 and continuing.

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

NOTE: No nominations were submitted to the Senate during the period covered by this issue.

[1] White House correction.

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 December 22

Transcript of remarks by the First Lady and Senator Robert Dole to the troops in Tuzla, Bosnia-Herzegovina

Transcript of a press briefing by Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and National Security Adviser Samuel Berger on the President's visit to Bosnia-Herzegovina

Released December 23

Statement by the Press Secretary: Travel to New York and Texas

Fact sheet: Deferred Enforcement Departure (DED) for Haitians

Announcement: President Clinton Lights the 1997 Hanukkah Menorah

Released December 24

Statement by the Press Secretary on the massacre of civilians in the Mexican State of Chiapas

Acts Approved by the President

NOTE: No acts approved by the President were received by the Office of the Federal Register during the period covered by this issue.