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Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:07 p.m. in the Main Conference Room at the Wye River Conference Center. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu of Israel and Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority.

Proclamation 7140—White Cane Safety Day, 1998

October 15, 1998

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

The white cane is both a simple tool and a powerful symbol. For people who are blind or visually impaired, it can be the key to greater mobility, giving them information about their surroundings and allowing them to travel safely whether crossing the street or crossing the country. For those who are sighted, the white cane shows that blind or visually impaired people have the ability, the desire, and the right to participate in every aspect of our national life. It is also a reminder that, whether as pedestrians or drivers, we should respond with care and courtesy to people using a white cane. And for all of us, the white cane symbolizes the independence every citizen needs and deserves if he or she is to contribute fully to society.

Our annual observance of White Cane Safety Day gives us the opportunity not only to celebrate the accomplishments of those who use the white cane, but also to renew our commitment to removing those barriers, both physical and attitudinal, that prevent people with disabilities from reaching their full potential. Since passage of the Rehabilitation Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the Fair Housing Amendments Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the Telecommunications Act, we have made great progress in our efforts to ensure that all people with disabilities enjoy equal access to employment opportunities, education, public accommodations, housing, transportation, telecommunications, emerging technologies, and other aspects of our society.

We still have a long way to go, however, before we achieve the full inclusion, empowerment, and independence of all Americans with disabilities. The public and private sectors must work in partnership to raise awareness of the rights protected by the ADA and other laws, as well as the responsibilities and obligations these laws mandate. It is crucial that we pursue a comprehensive strategy to enable people with all types of disabilities to obtain and sustain competitive employment in our Nation's thriving economy. Men and women with disabilities have much to offer, and their energy, creativity, and hard work can greatly strengthen our Nation and our economy. As we observe White Cane Safety Day and acknowledge the importance of the white cane as an instrument of personal freedom, let us reaffirm our determination to ensure equal opportunity for every American, including people who are blind or visually impaired.

To honor the many achievements of blind and visually impaired citizens and to recognize the white cane's significance in advancing independence, the Congress, by joint resolution approved October 6, 1964, has designated October 15 of each year as ''White Cane Safety Day.''

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim October 15, 1998, as White Cane Safety Day. I call upon the people of the United States, government officials, educators, and business leaders to observe this day with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this fifteenth day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-third.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., October 19, 1998]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on October 20.

Remarks on the Budget Agreement

October 16, 1998

Good morning. Please be seated. I am delighted to be here with the Vice President and Senator Daschle, Congressman Gephardt, Mr. Bowles, who's got a great closing act here—[*laughter*]—the terrific representation from Congress and the administration, especially our economic team, and all of you.

Northern Ireland Recipients of Nobel Peace Prize

Before I make some remarks on the budget, I'd like to first say how very pleased I was, personally and as President, that the Nobel Prize Committee has awarded the courage and the people of Northern Ireland by giving the Nobel Peace Prize to John Hume and to David Trimble today. I am very grateful for that.

For 30 years, John Hume has been committed to achieving peace through negotiations, not confrontation and violence. He has been an inspiration to the nationalist community, to all the people of Northern Ireland and, indeed, all around the world. David Trimble, as Unionist leader, took up the challenge of peace with rare courage, negotiating and beginning to implement the Good Friday accord. Both have earned this award.

But I believe there are others, too, who deserve credit for their indispensable roles, beginning with Gerry Adams, the Sinn Fein leader, without whom there would have been no peace. Prime Minister Ahern, Prime Minister Blair, Mo Mowlam, their predecessors, without whom there would have been no peace. Other Irish leaders, like Seamus Mallon, and I would like to say a special word of thanks to Senator George Mitchell for his role in the peace talks. The American people appreciate the recognition the Nobel committee gave our Nation in the citation, and we thank all these people for their continuing work for peace.

Budget Agreement

Yesterday our administration and the Democrats in Congress reached agreement with the Republican leadership on a fiscally responsible balanced budget that seizes this moment of prosperity and wisely invests it in the future. By standing together, we were able to achieve historic victories for the American people.

We fought for and won vital new investments, especially for our children. By hiring 100,000 new teachers, we will reduce class size in the early grades to an average of 18. We will enhance individual attention, increase student learning and, as we learned yesterday at the school violence conference, find more kids who are in trouble and need help early, and prevent more bad things from happening while more good things happen.

We're also making very important investments in child literacy, college mentoring, after-school programs, and summer jobs, all of them at risk until the people behind me stood firm and united. We fought for and won emergency relief for our hard-pressed farmers and ranchers who are suffering not only from the collapse of world markets but from crop diseases and drought and floods. And we fought for and won an impressive package to deal with this emergency only because the people behind me were willing to sustain my veto of the first bill, and I thank them for that very much.

We fought for and won a substantial increase in funding for our clean water initiative to help restore the 40 percent of our lakes and rivers still too polluted for fishing and swimming. We won substantial increases in funding to head off the threat of global climate change which disrupted weather patterns in America—have warned us about in the last couple of years. We fought for and won the ability to protect precious lands in America, and we struck down the worst of the anti-environmental provisions the Republicans had put into the budget bill because of the people who are standing behind me.

And we worked and worked and worked for 8 long months until, finally, we were able to persuade the Republican majority to join with us in funding America's responsibility to the International Monetary Fund so that we can protect the American economy and fulfill our responsibility to stabilize the global economy. It is a critically important thing to our future; it could not have happened if the people behind us hadn't stood strong and united for months and months.