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the Gaza Strip in accordance with the Interim Agreement.

This Memorandum will enter into force ten days from the date of signature.

Done at Washington, D.C this 23d day of October 1998.

B. Netanyahu
For the Government of the State of Israel

Y. Arafat
For the PLO

Witnessed by: William J. Clinton
The United States of America

NOTE: The joint memorandum was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary but was not issued as a White House press release. The joint memorandum was accompanied by a timeline attachment. On October 28, a press release version of the memorandum was made available on the White House Internet site. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Statement on Signing the Federal Employees Health Care Protection Act of 1998

October 23, 1998

The Federal Employees Health Care Protection Act of 1998, H.R. 1836, that I have signed into law makes several critical improvements to the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP). For example, it gives the Office of Personnel Management's Inspector General critical new debarment authority to crack down on fraudulent providers and, when necessary, to debar those who defraud the program; it contains essential new provisions to maintain and improve consumer choice, the hallmark of FEHBP, by allowing fee-for-service plans to rejoin FEHBP; it makes health care more affordable for certain Federal employees and retirees of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation and the Federal Reserve Board by allowing them to participate in the FEHBP; and finally, it ensures that certain Federal physicians who provide high quality services will receive appropriate compensation for their services, which is critical to attracting and maintaining a high quality Federal physician work force.

I want to note, however, my objection to a provision in this legislation that appears to expand preemption of State law remedies for FEHBP enrollees who are injured as a result of wrongful benefit delay or denial by their plan. As I have consistently stated, I believe that a right without remedy is not a right at all. I strongly believe that Federal employees should have the right to legally enforceable remedies, including under State law, to protect them when health plans do not provide contractually obligated patient protections. I therefore want to clarify that my enactment of this legislation should in no way be construed to indicate my support for this preemption provision. I also would like to reiterate my disappointment that the Congress has adjourned without passing a Patients' Bill of Rights that would give new protections and remedies to all Americans, including Federal employees. Assuring that health plans provide needed patient protections and adequate remedies will be one of my top priorities for the next Congress.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
October 23, 1998.

NOTE: H.R. 1836, approved October 19, was assigned Public Law No. 105–266. An original was not available for verification of the content of this statement. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Statement on Signing the Omnibus Consolidated and Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act, 1999

October 23, 1998

I have signed into law H.R. 4328, the "Omnibus Consolidated and Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act, 1999."

This bill represents a significant step forward for America. It protects the surplus until we have saved Social Security for the 21st century, contains an agreement to fund the International Monetary Fund, and puts in place critical investments in education and training, from smaller class sizes to after-school care, and from summer jobs to college mentoring. I am pleased that this bill honors my commitment to maintain fiscal discipline by providing additional resources for essential new investments, which are fully financed