

nothing to do with Central America, things that are back home don't in any way hold up the consideration of either piece of legislation, and so we will work hard on it.

Thank you.

Oh, I have to get my key to the city. If I wear this to dinner tonight, I'll get a discount. [*Laughter*]

Thank you.

NOTE: The roundtable began at 2:52 p.m. in the conference room at the Central Bank. In his remarks, the President referred to Pope John Paul II. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

### **Statement on the Kennedy-Murray Amendment to Proposed Education Flexibility Partnership Legislation**

*March 9, 1999*

For the second day in a row, the Republican leadership has continued its efforts to stand in the way of voting on an amendment to finish the job of hiring 100,000 teachers to reduce class size. Communities across the country need to know that Congress will live up to the bipartisan commitment we made last fall to fund this effort. The American people expect us to work together to improve the education of our students. I call on the Republican leadership to allow an up-or-down vote on more teachers and smaller classes, and I call on every Senator to support the Murray-Kennedy measure to reduce class size and hire well-prepared teachers across the Nation.

### **Message to the Congress Transmitting the Report of the National Endowment for the Arts**

*March 9, 1999*

*To the Congress of the United States:*

It is my pleasure to transmit herewith the Annual Report of the National Endowment for the Arts for Fiscal Year 1997.

The Arts Endowment awards more than one thousand grants each year to nonprofit arts organizations for projects that bring the arts to millions of Americans. Once again, this year's grants reflect the diversity of our

Nation's culture and the creativity of our artists. Whether seeing a classic theatrical production in Connecticut or an art exhibition in Arizona, whether listening to a symphony in Iowa or participating in a fine arts training program for inner-city students in Louisiana, Americans who benefit from Arts Endowment grants have experienced the power and joy of the arts in their lives.

Arts Endowment grants in 1997 supported:

- projects in theater, dance, music, visual arts, and the other artistic disciplines, demonstrating that our diversity is an asset—and helping us to interpret the past, understand each other in the present, and envision the future;
- folk and traditional arts programs, which strengthen and showcase our rich cultural heritage; and
- arts education, which helps improve our children's skills and enhances their lives with the richness of the arts.

The arts challenge our imaginations, nourish our spirits, and help to sustain our democracy. We are a Nation of creators and innovators. As this report illustrates, the NEA continues to celebrate America's artistic achievements and makes the arts more accessible to the American people.

**William J. Clinton**

The White House,  
March 9, 1999.

### **Message to the Congress Transmitting the Trade Policy Agenda and a Report on the Trade Agreements Program**

*March 9, 1999*

*To the Congress of the United States:*

As required by section 163 of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended (19 U.S.C. 2213), I transmit herewith the 1999 Trade Policy Agenda and the 1998 Annual Report on the Trade Agreements Program. This report includes the Annual Report on the World Trade Organization, as required by section

124 of the Uruguay Round Agreements Act (19 U.S.C. 3534).

**William J. Clinton**

The White House,  
March 9, 1999.

**Remarks to the Legislative Assembly  
of El Salvador in San Salvador**

*March 10, 1999*

To the president of the Legislative Assembly, thank you very much for your welcome and your fine comments. To the president of the Supreme Court, the leaders and members of the Assembly; to the other leaders from Central America who are here; members of the diplomatic corps; other distinguished public officials from El Salvador; members of the American delegation. Mr. President, I noticed you said you would officially certify the results of the recent Presidential elections today, so I don't want to jump the gun, but apparently, the President-elect is here. And I'm delighted to see him as well.

I have come to Central America with gratitude for our partnership, gratitude for the warm reception that my wife received when she came here recently, and later the wife of our Vice President, with a distinguished delegation of Members of Congress, heads of our Federal agencies, members of the White House staff, my new Special Envoy to Latin America, former Lieutenant Governor of Florida, Buddy MacKay, and others.

For 2 days now, we have been seeing and speaking with many different kinds of people in Nicaragua and Honduras, now in El Salvador, about efforts to recover and rebuild in the wake of Hurricane Mitch. We have met people who have lost everything but hope. I have been moved and humbled by their refusal to be defeated in the face of the deaths of their children, their husbands, their wives, their parents, the loss of all source of income.

I am very proud and grateful that the United States, through our soldiers, our aid workers, and our Peace Corps volunteers, our private donations, have had the opportunity to work alongside the people of Central America in the rebuilding process.

The message I have heard from all kinds of people is that it is not enough now simply to fix things which were destroyed and move on; that, together we must build a better life for future generations, restoring people's lives and livelihoods as soon as possible, in a way that strengthens freedom and peace and the rule of law over the long run.

No one can forget that just a few years ago, the people of Central America were suffering from a legion of manmade disasters far more cruel than anything nature can bestow on us. There was a time not long ago when many in this region believed they could only defend their point of view at the point of a gun, a time when civil war and repression claimed tens of thousands of lives and cast many thousands more into exile, a time when farmers were pushed off their land and children were torn from their parents, a time which provoked, in the United States, bitter divisions about our role in your region.

You have worked hard here in El Salvador to shed light on that dark and painful period. Now, all of us as friends and partners, can and must join in building a common future, determined to remember the past but never to repeat it.

I hope the people of Central America now see the United States in a new way, as a partner, a friend, a colleague in the process of strengthening democracy, in reconstruction, in reclaiming your rightful future.

The wars are over. Every country in Central America now is governed by elected leaders accountable to their people. What once was a no-win contest for power has turned into a win-win contest for better schools, safer streets, and economic opportunity. A battlefield of ideology has been transformed into a marketplace of ideas. Decades of struggle have brought a victory for democracy, the only revolution of our time that has not betrayed its principles.

In so many other parts of the world things are different. Nations still short-change schools and hospitals to pay for arms in the vain pursuit of weapons of mass destruction—not in Central America and certainly not in El Salvador. In so many other places in the world financial turmoil has undermined confidence in open markets and societies—not in Central America and certainly