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Statement on the Murder of Vice President Luis Maria Argana of Paraguay

March 24, 1999

I want to express the profound sadness of the United States for the death earlier yesterday of the Vice President of Paraguay, Luis Maria Argana, and offer our condolences to the people of Paraguay and especially to the family of Vice President Argana. Vice President Argana was shot and killed yesterday by unknown assailants while on his way to the office. We strongly condemn this brutal murder, which occurred against the backdrop of continued political turmoil in Paraguay. I join the President of Paraguay, Cubas Grau, in urging all Paraguayans to put aside politics and draw together in the interest of all Paraguayans to support the democratic process.

Statement on Legislation To Strengthen Medicare

March 24, 1999

Today, the Senate Democrats introduced important amendments to address the major defect of the Republican budget: its complete failure to address Medicare. The majority's budget fails to set aside even one penny of the surplus to strengthen Medicare and does not extend its solvency by a single day. Yet, Medicare faces the same demographic challenges as Social Security and is projected to become insolvent even sooner. Instead of putting Medicare first, the Republican budget puts top priority on a tax cut that explodes in cost just at the time that baby boomers retire.

I applaud Senate Democratic efforts to fix the Republican budget by putting a higher priority on strengthening Medicare and by making sure that any lock-box includes Medicare. I urge Congress not to miss this historic opportunity to strengthen Medicare.

Proclamation 7175—Greek Independence Day: A National Day of Celebration of Greek and American Democracy, 1999

March 24, 1999

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

America has deep roots in Greece, and today we celebrate the friendship, values, and aspirations our two countries have shared for more than 2 centuries. Greek thought and the passion for truth and justice deeply influenced many of our Nation's earliest and greatest leaders. The documents our founders wrote to establish our democracy and the political and legal institutions they created to preserve our independence and protect our rights reveal that influence.

Later, recognizing this profound debt to Greek thought and culture and inspired by the struggle of modern Greece in the War of Greek Independence, many Americans left home to join in that distant fight for freedom between 1821 and 1832. In this century, the relationship between the Greek and American peoples deepened as we fought together in two world wars. The U.S. desire to help preserve freedom in Greece after the devastation of World War II moved President Truman to stand firm against isolationism and for postwar engagement abroad. Our nations stood together in Korea and in the Gulf War, and we continue to work shoulder-to-shoulder today in our efforts to find a lasting solution in the Balkans and to promote democracy around the world.

The bonds of family have further reinforced our ties of friendship and shared ideals. All across our Nation, Americans of Greek descent have brought their energy, grace, and determination to every field of endeavor, and they have added immeasurably to the richness and diversity of our national life. The sons and daughters of Greece have flourished in America, and with their help, America too has flourished.