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Weekly Compilation of

Presidential Documents

Monday, November 1, 1999
Volume 35—Number 43
Pages 2125–2198

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Editor's Note: The President was in Atlanta, GA, on October 29, the closing date of this issue. Releases and announcements issued by the Office of the Press Secretary but not received in time for inclusion in this issue will be printed next week.

WEEKLY COMPILATION OF

PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

Published every Monday by the Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC 20408, the *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* contains statements, messages, and other Presidential materials released by the White House during the preceding week.

The *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* is published pursuant to the authority contained in the Federal Register Act (49 Stat. 500, as amended; 44 U.S.C. Ch. 15), under regulations prescribed by the Administrative Committee of the Federal Register, approved by the President (37 FR 23607; 1 CFR Part 10).

Distribution is made only by the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402. The *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* will be furnished by mail to domestic subscribers for $80.00 per year ($137.00 for mailing first class) and to foreign subscribers for $93.75 per year, payable to the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402. The charge for a single copy is $3.00 ($3.75 for foreign mailing).

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Statement on Signing the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park and Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area Act of 1999

October 21, 1999

Today I have signed into law S. 323, the ''Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park and Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area Act of 1999.''

This Act represents more than a decade of hard work by the people of the Western Slope of Colorado to bring to the Black Canyon of the Gunnison the recognition it deserves. Bipartisan support from the Colorado delegation and both Houses of Congress led this effort to establish the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park—our 55th National Park—and the adjacent Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area. I would like to commend Representatives Mark Udall, Scott McInnis, and Diana DeGette for their leadership on this legislation in the House of Representatives, and I would particularly like to commend and congratulate Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell, who has worked for over a decade on this effort.

In the 1930s, President Herbert Hoover established and President Franklin D. Roosevelt expanded the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Monument under the authority provided by the Antiquities Act. S. 323 redesignates the Monument as a National Park and expands its size. These actions add geographical and recreational diversity and protect the rural scenic backdrop of this spectacular gorge. The expansion will also enhance existing park resources and provide greater opportunities for visitor use and enjoyment.

Like other National Parks, the Black Canyon of the Gunnison belongs to all Americans, an heirloom to be passed on from generation to generation. As such, it deserve the highest level of protection to ensure that the outstanding characteristics and qualities that make it worthy for National Park status will never be degraded.

In the words of geologist Wallace Hansen, ''[n]o other canyon in North America combines the depth, narrowness, sheerness, and somber countenance of the Black Canyon of the Gunnison.'' Through this Act, we recognize for all future generations the unique combination of geologic and biologic features that make the canyon such an awe-inspiring place.

The Act represents a continuing commitment to the protection of our Nation's wilderness resources, by expanding the existing Black Canyon of the Gunnison Wilderness by over 4,400 acres and by establishing the 17,700-acre Gunnison Gorge Wilderness that will be managed by the Bureau of Land Management.

The Act also creates the 57,725-acre Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area, which includes the Gunnison Gorge Wilderness. This recognition is deserved for an area that offers a variety of natural and geologic features and unsurpassed recreational opportunities. The Bureau of Land Management will be responsible for managing these lands, and as directed by the Act, will develop a management plan to ensure the long-range protection of the conservation area.

Finally, S. 323 calls for a land study for Curecanti National Recreation Area. This study will seek solutions to protect Curecanti's scenic, natural, and cultural resource values and determine the best management strategies for this popular recreation area.

This Act will protect unique natural resources that will continue to be enjoyed by all Americans for many years. We can be proud of the legacy of park, public land, and

wilderness protection that we are leaving for the generations to come.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
October 21, 1999.

NOTE: S. 323, approved October 21, was assigned Public Law No. 106–76. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Statement on Signing the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2000

October 22, 1999

Today I have signed into law H.R. 1906, the ''Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2000.''

The Act provides $14.1 billion in discretionary budget authority for programs of the Department of Agriculture and the Food and Drug Administration, including the Special Supplemental Feeding Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC); food safety programs; and various programs to protect and support rural communities.

The Act also provides $8.6 billion in emergency funds to assist our Nation's farmers and ranchers who are suffering through the second year in a row of low commodity prices and, for many, crop and livestock losses from severe drought and flooding. My Administration will work hard to ensure that these funds are distributed to farm families as soon as possible; however, because the Congress wrote some of the programs in a complex manner, farmers and ranchers need to understand that, for my Administration to implement them fairly, some of the assistance will take some time to provide. This is the second year in a row that substantial additional Federal assistance has been needed, on top of our regular farm programs, due to deficiencies in the 1996 Farm Bill—further evidence that the 1996 Act simply does not provide an adequate farm safety net.

I continue to be concerned that the income assistance in the Act I have signed today is provided through supplemental Farm Bill income support payments, and therefore is not targeted to producers most in need. These payments are made based on past production, which may have no relation to the crops grown or the market situation facing producers this year, and in some cases payments are made to individuals who are no longer farming. There is now, however, an urgent need for farm assistance, and so I have approved H.R. 1906. But I once again call on the Congress to work with my Administration to fix the 1996 Farm Bill permanently so American producers have the assurance of an adequate farm income safety net, while they continue their work to feed us all.

While the Act's funding for crop and livestock losses from natural disasters has been increased over the amount in the Senate bill, it still will not adequately meet the devastating farm losses in many parts of the country. In addition, H.R. 1906 cuts farm loans by 25 percent from last year, which is simply untenable as we head into a crop year when farmers and lenders alike are saying that they will need even more Federal financing help than last year. The Act also does not include emergency conservation funds to help farmers and rural communities affected by Hurricane Floyd to clear their fields and streams of debris and restore their small waterways. My Administration will work in the remaining days of this session of Congress to secure funding for these and other urgent, unmet needs. In addition, I have asked the Vice President to work with the Department of Agriculture to implement, within existing authorities, measures to improve the operation of various conservation programs.

The additional crop insurance subsidies provided in the Act will help producers afford higher coverage next year, but I call on the Congress to pass long-term crop insurance reform before adjourning this year, to improve this important component of the farm safety net.

The Congress has not provided the full amount of my requested increase for the WIC program, thereby failing to ensure that we can achieve the goal of full participation of 7.5 million women, infants, and children in this vital program. I also remain opposed

to the provision that modifies the nonimmigrant farm worker program, known as the H–2A program, because it virtually eliminates the credibility of the recruitment process that protects legal U.S. farm workers. The Act also makes significant cuts in a number of high-priority conservation programs, including the Wetlands Reserve and Environmental Quality Incentives Programs, and fails to fully fund implementation of the Clean Water Action Plan and important bioenergy and bioproducts research and development. In addition, the Act fails to fund the Farmland Protection Program, a valuable conservation program that has received bipartisan support in the past and would have prevented the conversion of farmland and the loss of a way of life in rural communities.

I am concerned that the Act frustrates initiatives to improve customer service in USDA county offices, for example by blocking the Secretary of Agriculture's new Support Services Bureau designed to modernize administrative functions, at a time when farmers and rural residents truly need upgraded assistance. Since the first days of my Administration, the Vice President and I have made improved customer service and greater administrative efficiency a top priority, which we will continue to pursue at the USDA.

I am concerned that, with the exception of the school breakfast pilot projects, H.R. 1906 prohibits the use of Food and Nutrition Service funds for research and evaluation of nutrition programs. The research needs of these important programs should continue to be addressed in the context of the programs' administration. I am asking the Secretary of Agriculture to look into this matter and to work with the Director of the Office of Management and Budget on the most effective approach to address my concerns.

I am pleased that the Act provides significant rural development loans and grants to help our rural communities diversify economically and improve their quality of life. The Act also includes a significant portion of the increase I requested for my Food Safety Initiative to reduce food-borne illnesses. In addition, the Act establishes mandatory livestock price reporting for certain meat processors, which will expand information to livestock producers and particularly will help smaller producers improve their ability to get a fair price in the marketplace. However, I am concerned with the Act's preemption of State price reporting requirements, which is compounded by the lack of funding in the Act to implement the new Federal requirements. My Administration will seek additional funding for these purposes.

There are a number of provisions in the Act that may raise Constitutional issues. These provisions will be treated in a manner that is consistent with the Constitution.

- Section 722 of the Act specifies that funds may not be used to provide to any non-Department of Agriculture employee questions or responses to questions resulting from the appropriations hearing process. To the extent that this provision would interfere with my duty to "take Care that the Laws be faithfully executed," or impede my ability to act as the chief executive, it would violate the constitution, and I will treat it as advisory.
- Section 735 of the Act purports to constrain my ability to make a particular type of budget recommendation to the Congress. This provision would interfere with my constitutional duty under the Recommendation Clause, and I will treat it as advisory.
- Finally, there are provisions in the Act that purport to condition my authority or that of certain officers to use funds appropriated by the Act on the approval of congressional committees. My Administration will interpret such provisions to require notification only, since any other interpretation would contradict the Supreme Court ruling in INS v. Chadha.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
October 22, 1999.

NOTE: H.R. 1906, approved October 22, was assigned Public Law No. 106–78. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Memorandum on an Interagency Task Force on Nonprofits and Government

October 22, 1999

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: Supporting the Role of Nonprofit Organizations: Interagency Task Force on Nonprofits and Government

The United States is the most generous Nation on Earth. In 1998, an estimated $175 billion was given by American individuals, communities, foundations, corporations, and other private philanthropies to a wide variety of causes and organizations. Individuals accounted for 85 percent of all contributions in 1998 and their giving has increased by almost one-third since 1995. And over the next 20 years, approximately $12 trillion in wealth is expected to be transferred from one generation to the next—more than $1 trillion of which will flow to nonprofit organizations through charitable giving.

In many cases it is nonprofit organizations that convert philanthropy into results—helping people in need, providing health care and educating our Nation's youth. The nonprofit sector is an integral component of our national life, encompassing more than one and a half million organizations with operating expenditures in excess of $600 billion. But more telling than the dollar figures is the new spirit of service and civic activism that nonprofits of every kind are now exhibiting. We are today in the midst of a nonprofit boom, a time when the activities of this sector are becoming ever more creative and entrepreneurial.

Nonprofits are uniquely able to identify problems, mobilize fresh thinking and energy, care for those in need on a human scale, and promote social change at the community level. As this sector grows in size and importance, there is an ever greater opportunity to forge partnerships that include Government, nonprofit groups, businesses, and citizens to address pressing public problems. There are already many ways that nonprofits work closely with the Federal Government. For example, Federal grant programs from the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health assist nonprofit research institutions that search for cures to cancer. And the Corporation for National Service works with nonprofits throughout the Nation to provide after-school and tutoring programs. Our challenge in this time of burgeoning social entrepreneurship is to encourage Government, nonprofits, and others to work together more meaningfully.

Therefore, today I direct the Assistants to the President for Domestic Policy and Economic Policy and the Chief of Staff to the First Lady to convene an Interagency Task Force on Nonprofits and Government ("Task Force"). The purpose of this Task Force will be twofold: first, to identify current forms of collaboration between the Federal Government and nonprofits; and second, to evaluate ways this collaboration can be improved.

Structure of the Task Force

The Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy, the Assistant to the President for Economic Policy, and the Assistant to the President and Chief of Staff to the First Lady will jointly Chair the Task Force. The Office of the Vice President, the Office of Management and Budget, and the Council of Economic Advisers will be regular participants.

The Task Force shall be composed of the following members:

(1) Secretary of the Treasury
(2) Attorney General
(3) Secretary of the Interior
(4) Secretary of Agriculture
(5) Secretary of Commerce
(6) Secretary of Labor
(7) Secretary of Health and Human Services
(8) Secretary of Housing and Urban Development
(9) Secretary of Transportation
(10) Secretary of Education
(11) Administrator of the Small Business Administration
(12) Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation for National and Community Service

The Chairs of the Task Force may add such other officials and independent agencies as they deem appropriate to further the purposes of this effort or to participate in

specific aspects of it. The Chairs, after consultation with Task Force members, will appoint staff members to coordinate the Task Force's efforts. The Chairs may call upon the participating agencies for logistical support to the Task Force, as necessary. Members of the Task Force may delegate their responsibilities under this memorandum to subordinates. During its work, the Task Force will consult regularly with the nonprofit sector.

Objectives of the Task Force

The Task Force will:

1. Develop a public inventory of "best practices" in existing collaborations between Federal agency programs and nonprofit organizations. In cooperation with the nonprofit sector, the Task Force will work to apply these leading models to other government efforts. For example, cross-agency initiatives that reflect the community-wide focus on many nonprofits could be highlighted and replicated. The Task Force will also examine ways that Federal agencies can better draw upon the experience and innovations of nonprofits in the development of public policy.
2. Evaluate data and research trends on nonprofits and philanthropy. Understanding the significance of the relationship between the nonprofit and Government sectors requires an understanding of the impact that the nonprofit sector has on the economy and on public policy. For example, the Council of Economic Advisers should undertake an analysis of existing data from the private and nonprofit sectors concerning the role of philanthropy in our economy, including an examination of the factors that affect giving and an investigation of trends that are likely to affect future giving. The Task Force will also coordinate agency efforts to identify the contributions made by the nonprofit sector and information regarding philanthropic activity.
3. Develop further policy responses. The Task Force will meet to discuss new findings and to consider new or modified Administration policy responses. For example, the Task Force will work with the nonprofit sector and others to explore ways to encourage philanthropy and service, efforts to help nonprofits develop and grow (including "venture philanthropy"), opportunities for closer collaboration on research and in meeting local needs, and ways to reduce governmental barriers to innovative nonprofit enterprises.

From time to time, the Task Force will report to me on the results of its efforts.

General Provisions

This memorandum is intended only for internal management of the executive branch. This memorandum is not intended, and should not be construed, to create any right, benefit, or trust responsibility, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or equity by a party against the United States, its agencies, its officers, or its employees. This memorandum shall not be construed to create any right to judicial review involving the compliance or noncompliance with this memorandum by the United States, its agencies, its officers, or any other person.

William J. Clinton

NOTE: This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Remarks at a Kennedy/King Dinner in Alexandria, Virginia

October 22, 1999

Thank you very much. I guess I ought to begin by saying that all the things that Congressman Moran said so generously about me, we might all well say about him—he has represented you so well. I am delighted to see all of you here, from the leader of your Senate to the chairman of the State Democratic Party to all the local officials to all the candidates. It actually might not have been a bad idea to let all 52 of you talk tonight. [*Laughter*]

I've been thinking about what I could say tonight that would give you something to carry out of here into these legislative races

and into the great election season next year. We come here in honor of the two men whose pictures are behind me. Thirty-one years ago, I was a senior at Georgetown University when Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy were killed. One of my roommates was working in Senator Kennedy's office.

This week I had a wonderful experience. Hillary and I hosted a large number of Americans as we celebrated the fifth anniversary of our national service program, AmeriCorps, in which, in only 5 years, 150,000 Americans have already served—working in their communities, earning credit for college, making America a better place. And we asked Coretta Scott King to be one of the people who presented awards to the most outstanding of our young AmeriCorps volunteers.

Last night I went to the home of Senator Edward Kennedy for an event to raise funds for his campaign for reelection next year. And the wife of Robert Kennedy, Ethel Kennedy, was there; his daughter, Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, probably the finest Lieutenant Governor anywhere in America, the only person to successfully get a State to include in its school curriculum, as a required course for graduation, community service—in the spirit of her father.

As all of you know, Edward Kennedy's son, Robert Kennedy's nephew, Patrick, is now the chairman of Congressman Moran's Democratic Senate Campaign Committee, for all the House Members. One of his sons, Joe Kennedy, represented Massachusetts in Congress. Another of his sons, Chris, is being urged to run for Congress in northern Illinois this year. The Kennedys and the Kings continue to serve, continue to inspire.

And Senator Edward Kennedy has been faithful to his brother's legacy, based on the sheer body of his accomplishments—I think by any measure, one of the 10 outstanding people ever to serve in the entire history of the United States Senate, in over 200 years, now.

But I said last night, when I was a sophomore in high school, Ted Kennedy was in the Senate. [*Laughter*] And when I leave after two terms as President, he'll still be in the Senate. [*Laughter*]

I also want to say a word on behalf of a Senator who wanted to be here tonight, my friend of 20 years Chuck Robb. You should know—I hope you won't be offended when I tell you, as the father of a college student, that I am very glad he is not here tonight, because he's at parents' weekend at Jennifer's college. And just as he stood up for all of you for so many years, he's standing up for her this weekend. He gets to escort her onto the field for her last field hockey game. Now that's a big deal to a daddy, and I am glad he's not here.

But he's still standing up for you. He stood up for you in the Senate when he introduced legislation to help the States and school districts build or modernize 6,000 schools. No State in the country needs that more than Virginia. He embraced and introduced a bill with Congressman Moran to fight gridlock in northern Virginia. And I've been lobbied about it again tonight. He stood up for you and the environment when he offered an amendment last month to protect our beautiful national forests and supported me in setting aside 40 million acres for roadless areas in our national parks.

And in 1993—at enormous political peril to himself—when, if anybody in the entire Congress could have been justified in taking a dive on a tough vote—because of all he had been through, and because of the difficulties of any Democrat getting elected statewide in Virginia—Chuck Robb never blinked. He stood up, and he gave courage to other Senators when he said, "We have to support the President's economic plan." It passed by one vote, and that's why we've got the longest peacetime economic expansion in the history of the country. He is a brave and good man.

All the polls say he's behind now because he governed and made decisions as a Senator in tough and difficult times, and because we Democrats have a hard time in Virginia. But I'll make you a prediction. If you stand up for him the way he stood up for you all these years, he will be elected in November of 2000 for another 6-year term.

Now, how are we going to do that? What are we going to say? Let's begin with the people we honor tonight, and be honest about what our problems have been. When

Robert Kennedy eulogized Martin Luther King, he said, ''Martin Luther King dedicated his life to love and to justice for his fellow human beings.'' King could have said that about Robert Kennedy.

The truth is that a lot of people who could vote either way in an election know that we're for love and justice. But they used to characterize us, our Republican friends did, in ways that were, to say the least, unhelpful at election time. [*Laughter*] They created these sort of cookie-cutter stereotypes of us, you know? We never met a tax we didn't like. Couldn't be trusted with the budget and the economy. Soft on welfare; soft on crime. Could never be put at the helm of the country's affairs. You've heard it all.

So Jim Moran, Chuck Robb, and a lot of other Democrats set out with me in 1993 to change all that, to transform our country, to transform our party, but to be absolutely faithful to the guiding principles which have kept us Democrats and made this the oldest political party in history. And we had some new ideas.

Basically, Jim sort of hit the essence of it when he said I never tried to divide people. You have to understand, for a dozen years before I came here, I was Governor, as President Bush used to say, of a small Southern State. [*Laughter*] I did not—I was proud of it and loved every day of it. [*Laughter*] But I was not part of this Washington political scene, you know? I didn't wake up every day and read these columns in the Washington Post that turn you inside out. I didn't watch the talk shows on Sunday. I just sort of went about my life. When I came to Washington, I had people's business to do. I wasn't maneuvering on some greasy pole up or down.

But it seemed to me that the country was totally paralyzed by what was going on in Washington. There was this—everybody had to have a liberal position or a conservative position. And the most important thing is that people should be fighting, fighting always, and never be caught getter together.

And what I was looking for was a set of unifying policies to turn this country around. For example, it was hard to get the Democrats to support reducing the budget deficit because the Republicans always wanted to do it by cutting education. So I said I believe we can balance the budget and increase our investment in education. I believe we can follow policies which protect the legitimate interests of laboring people—both those in unions and those who aren't in unions—and still be pro-business. I believe we can grow this economy and make the environment cleaner. I believe we can maintain our military strength but realize that it is the moral force of our ideas that is the true source of our influence in the world; and that we can go into this post-communist world and be a great force for peace and freedom. I believe we can celebrate our diversity and still find common cause in our shared humanity. Unifying ideas.

And we tried to turn those into specific policy initiatives. Some of them were quite controversial because it is always hard to change. And people took a chance on me in this country—on me and Al Gore and our whole crowd. Because we were just making an argument, no one could know whether it was true or not. And as we were rocking along in '96, we did a little better in the reelection—Virginia we nearly carried, even. We did pretty well here. [*Laughter*]

But here's what you need to start with saying to people who say they're independents, ''Look, this is not an argument anymore. The evidence is in, and the policies that the Democrats have followed have given us the longest peacetime expansion in history; 19½ million new jobs; the highest homeownership in history; the lowest unemployment in 29 years; the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years; the lowest poverty rates in 20 years; the lowest crime rate in 30 years; the first back-to-back balanced surpluses, budget surpluses in 42 years—all accomplished while reducing the size of the Federal Government to its lowest point in 37 years.''

Now, it doesn't take long to say that. But what I want to say—just try to remember that. Because then our Republican friends have a little hill to climb. [*Laughter*] Now, they're pretty good at climbing it; they're never in doubt, I've got to give them that. [*Laughter*] I like that the evidence never deters them. I admire that. [*Laughter*] But we don't have to win many—two seats in the Senate, a few more seats in the House—to pad your margin.

There is no answer to that—because we had no support for our economic plan from the other party, and most of them opposed our crime policy. I had to veto two welfare bills before I got one that required able-bodied people to work but didn't hurt the kids and put more money into child care.

These are our policies, and they work. Not because of me. I am just grateful I had the chance to serve at this time, to be the instrument of trying to move our country forward and pull our country together. The ideas are important. It doesn't matter how persuasive a person is, in fact, it can be dangerous if a person is persuasive and the ideas are wrong.

What we have stood for works for America. And you need to memorize—every Democrat needs to memorize that litany. If this expansion goes on until February, it'll be the longest economic expansion in history, including all the ones with wars. And you just remember that. Lowest unemployment rate in 29 years; lowest welfare rolls in 30 years; lowest poverty rates in 20 years; lowest minority unemployment rates ever recorded, since we've been keeping statistics; highest homeownership in history; first back-to-back balanced budgets in 42 years; and the lowest crime rate in 30 years. Just remember those things, because the things they—all those little things they used to say about us are demolished by that set of statistics.

Then we get to the main event, which is, okay, now we're in this shape, now what are we going to do? What are we going to do?

You know, what I wanted to do in 1992 was to turn the country around and pull the country together. And I should say that we also did a lot of other things. We passed the Brady bill, and it worked, and it didn't do any of the things they said it would do. We passed the family and medical leave bill. Fifteen million people took advantage of it. We raised the minimum wage, and every year there was a new record set for new small businesses started. It worked. It didn't do the bad things that they said it would do. And compared to 7 years ago, the air is cleaner; the water is cleaner; the food is safer; and we set aside more land, protected more land, than any administration in the history of America except those of Franklin and Theodore Roosevelt. So you can grow the economy and improve the environment.

So we start with that. Now, what are we going to do?

You know, the election of 2000 ought to be about change. They do all these polls and they say 75 percent of the people want change, and they act like I should be upset. And I said, ''If they'd polled me, I'd be in the 75 percent, too.'' [*Laughter*] If somebody ran for President, for example, and said, ''Vote for me. I'll do everything Bill Clinton did,'' I'd vote against that person. Why? Because this is a country in a constant state of renewal, and because, objectively, the world we're living in is changing so fast we have to keep moving and moving.

But what I want to say to you is this—and it's relevant to the State elections and to the national elections—8 years ago in 1991 and 1992, we had to worry about getting this country together again and moving this country forward again. Now, we're headed in the right direction. Sometimes the most dangerous time in life is when things are really rocking along well. [*Laughter*] Right? I used to have a rule in politics: You're always most vulnerable when you think you're invulnerable. And it's a good rule in life.

How many times in our own lives have we squandered some great moment by relaxing, by getting diverted, by not thinking about the opportunity being presented to us? Every one of you secretly is nodding your head, at least inside your head. [*Laughter*] It is human nature.

So when the Republicans come along with this siren song, ''Let us take all the non-Social Security surplus and give it back to you in this huge tax cut,'' it sounded pretty good. One of the most hopeful things for the future is the way the American people stood with me and our allies in Congress when I vetoed that tax cut bill. They knew better than to do that. It was very hopeful. It was very hopeful. [*Applause*] Thank you.

What I hope the next few days of budget negotiations, the next year of work with Congress, and the debate in 2000, will be about is the following thing: Okay, we've got this chance; it is the chance of a lifetime. Not in my lifetime have we had a chance like this. The economy was maybe close to this good

by the terms of that time back in the sixties, but we had to deal with Vietnam and civil rights. We now have a chance to write the future of America and our children in a new millennium. And we better not blow it. And that's what this election ought to be about—and what are the big issues?

Very briefly, this is what I think the big issues are. Number one, the aging of America. Not only the baby boomers retiring but all of us living longer. If we get the results I expect from the human genome project, there are young people in this audience whose children will be born with a life expectancy of nearly 100 years.

Now, what do we know right now? Right now we know that in 30 years there will be twice as many people over 65. And we know that the baby boom generation is bigger than our children. Therefore, since we have the money and the opportunity, we should now—move now—to save Social Security, reform Medicare, and add a prescription drug benefit now, not later.

The second thing, what do we know about the children of America? We know that education will be more important to them than ever before. We know that they live in a world in which information technology will determine all kinds of options in life. We know that they are the first generation of children bigger than the baby boom and that they are far more diverse racially, ethnically, linguistically, and religiously.

So what do we know about that? Well, we know, at an absolute minimum we have to do more to give them a world-class education. And for me that means finishing the work of putting 100,000 teachers out there for smaller classes, giving those thousands of modern and new schools, having high standards, and giving schools help to turn around problems, giving kids more after-school programs and the other mentoring programs that they need, but putting the education of these children first and recognizing it will be different.

Third issue—that I think is a huge issue—what have we learned about the 21st century economy, with all this long run? Can we keep it going? And to me, very important to be faithful to them, can we be honest enough to say that in the most prosperous period of American history there are still millions of our country men and women who have been left behind? Because there are people and places that are untouched by this recovery. So is there more that we can do there?

I would argue for two things. Number one, in terms of poverty, we need to continue to do the work that the Vice President has done so well with these empowerment zones and these enterprise communities. I wish you could talk to the people who have been a part of them. He has mobilized thousands of people across America to take their destiny into their hands, to attract investment, to move forward. It is amazing. But we'll never have every poor community in an empowerment zone. We don't have enough money. That's why it's important for the Congress to adopt this new markets proposal I have made. All it does is this: It provides some money to help people start things going economically, but it gives investors the same incentives to invest on an Indian reservation, in the Mississippi Delta, in Appalachia, in a poor inner-city community; the same incentive to invest in developing markets in America we give them to invest in developing markets in Latin America, in Asia, in Africa, and other parts of the world.

And if we can't bring free enterprise to the poorest parts of America now, when will we ever? It's very interesting. We passed this financial modernization bill last night, or at least we reached an agreement. And I was so moved that all the banks were saying, "We agree with the President. We don't want to get rid of the Community Reinvestment Act. We think it's an opportunity to invest in poor communities in America, because most of those people are working. They want to work harder. They're capable of having new businesses. They're capable of doing more."

The Democrats ought to be on the forefront. Now is the time to say we can bring opportunity to poor people, and the Government doesn't have to do it all. The private sector can do it, and we will make it good business. That ought to be our cause in this election. We've got to go out there and prove that everybody that wants to work, that wants to have a chance to start a business, ought to have the same chance that those of us who've been blessed to be able to come to

this dinner tonight have had. I think it is very important.

Finally—this is something I know Chuck Robb believes, too—I hope that we will stay on the path that we're on and say we're not going to spend that Social Security surplus, and we're going to hang on to enough money so that over the next 15 years we can pay off $3½ trillion of national debt. And in 15 years this country will be out of debt for the first time since 1835, when Andrew Jackson was President of the United States.

Now, why should the Democrats be the party? We're supposed to be the more liberal party—you've heard it dripped from their lips, our adversaries—[*laughter*]—as if it were a dirty word. Why should the more progressive party be for paying off the debt?

Because it's the progressive thing to do. Because it will keep interest rates down. Because it means more businesses and more jobs and higher incomes. Because it means, though the economy will doubtless go up or down in the future, it'll always be better than it otherwise would have been. Because it means that ordinary people will have lower home mortgages, lower car payment rates, lower credit card rates; and they can send their kids to college with lower college loan rates than would otherwise be the case. Because it means when our friends overseas get in trouble, like the Asian countries did in the last 2 years, and our economies hurt because they can't buy our things anymore, they will be able to get out of trouble at lower cost. Every wealthy country in this world ought to get itself out of debt in a global economy, set a good example, and give people everywhere a chance to live up to their dreams. And I want the Democrats to lead America away from the wilderness of the 12 years before I came here into a debt-free future.

There are other things that I could say, I don't want to spend a lot of time on. We've got to stay with this environmental issue. We've got to prove you can grow the economy and improve the environment. There is nothing so dangerous for a country to be in the grip of a big idea that is wrong. And most countries still believe—most dominant influence centers in most countries still believe that you can't get rich in the 21st century unless you get rich the same way American got rich in the first half of this century, which means that you have to use more energy than oil and coal and things that burn, more greenhouse gases and heat the climate of the world and cause all these problems. We've got malaria going to higher and higher places and showing up in odd places around the world. That's just one little example. The thinning of the ice caps. All kinds of other problems.

I am telling you, I have studied this for 22 years. I don't think anybody believes that I'm not pro-growth, pro-business, pro-economic strength. It is no longer true that you have to grow the economy by burning up the atmosphere. It is now possible, technologically, to reduce our emission of greenhouse gases and create more high wage jobs and a brighter, high-tech future by doing the environmentally responsible thing. It is affordable; it is sensible; and we just don't know it yet. So we need to be out there.

And let me just say one thing before I get to the main point I want to make. [*Laughter*] I want you to remember this: the aging, the children, the economy, the environment, America, and the world. For all the politics around this Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty vote, you should know that there are a lot of people in the other party that really think it's a bad idea. And why do they think it's a bad idea? They say, ''People can cheat; we don't trust the rest of the world, so why should we sign a test ban treaty?''

Well, my answer is, number one, we're not testing now. We're spending $3½ billion of your money to keep our nuclear weapons safe and usable without testing. Even they don't think we ought to start testing. So it's easier to cheat now than it would be if the test ban treaty were passed. Why is that? Because if somebody tests an underground bomb a good ways away and it's not too big, you may think it's an earthquake. And if it's small but still usable, you may not detect it at all. But if this treaty passes, we'll have over 300 sensors out there, all over the world in all the right places, dramatically increasing the chances that people can't cheat.

So the truth is, it's a visceral, ideological thing. They really believe that what we need is more bombs, more missile defense, a higher wall, a bigger bomb; that we should

go into that 21st century by ourselves because you can't trust anybody—never mind the fact that the cold war is over; never mind the fact that our allies in the cold war have all signed the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty; that Britain and France, two nuclear powers without anything like the capacity we have to maintain their nuclear weapons, aren't worried at all.

But you need to understand there is a different view here. A lot of them feel sort of bad about not paying their U.N. dues, but they're not sick about it. I'm sick about it. It's wrong. A lot of them, it doesn't bother at all. Or passing a foreign affairs budget that has no money to fulfill the obligations we solemnly made to the Middle East peace process when we've got a chance to actually get it done; that has no money to continue to get rid of the Russian nuclear weapons; that has no money for America to do its part to help the poorest countries in the world get rid of their debt, something the Pope has asked us to do and every sensible world leader knows would be good for the economy of America, as well as for those poor countries.

So you've got to decide, what do you think our role is? Most Americans, I think, including most Republicans who live outside the beltway, believe that this is an interdependent world in which we ought to work with our friend and neighbors and allies, in which we're safer and more secure and more prosperous when we have a sense of partnership.

I'll give you two practical examples. All those people in Kosovo were being slaughtered because they were Albanian Muslims. And we went in and stopped them because we had the military power to do it, with our Allies. But we're very much in the minority in Kosovo now because other people are carrying the load. That's what partners do.

We raised a lot of Cain about what was happening to those poor people in East Timor. But it's a long way from our backyard. And because we have partners, we're a tiny, tiny portion of the global effort to bring humanity and freedom and independence to the people of East Timor—because we work with other people. It's a good deal, folks. And if the Democrats need to stand up for responsible internationalism and not isolationism, that ought to be a part of it.

But if I were on my last day in office, if you asked me what the number one thing I would give to America—if I could give us one last gift of citizenship—it wouldn't be solving the aging crisis or the long-term economy or the environment or even the problems of the children or our role in the world, even though I care about them. I would find a way for us to really be one America.

If you look at all the problems that I've had to deal with—from Northern Ireland to the Middle East to the Balkans to the tribal wars in Africa—this whole world, on the verge of this modern age of explosion in scientific and technological advances, is beset by the most primitive failure of human society. We're still afraid of people that aren't like us, whether it's because of their race or their ethnicity or their sexual orientation. We're afraid.

So even America, which has had so much success, has a young man like Matthew Shepard stretched across a fence, or James Byrd dragged to pieces, or a Filipino postal worker murdered in Los Angeles, or a young Korean Christian shot as he came out of his church by a guy who said he belonged to a church that didn't believe in God but believed in white supremacy. And we're doing better than most places, and we have this.

In one of Hillary's Millennium Evenings, which we've been having at the White House, dealing with the big subjects of the future, we had a man named Vint Cerf, who was one of the founders of the architecture of the Internet—sent the first E-mail, 18 years ago, to his wife, because she was so profoundly deaf even hearing aids couldn't help her. So he wanted to find a way to talk to her when he was at work. That's how the E-mail came about.

And he was there with a professor named Lander, who is a professor of genomics, the study of the whole gene structure. And what they were talking about was the intersection of computers and learning about the genes, and how we couldn't really break down the human gene if it weren't for computers. And they said a lot of fascinating things, including the fact that it may be that we'll be able to come up with digital, computer-operated

program devices, tiny ones, that we'll be able to insert in all defective parts of the human body—for example, if someone has a spine severed in an accident—we've been working on replacing nerves. They now believe they may be able to put digital equipment in the spine that will replicate the nervous system and allow people to stand up and walk again.

And Mr. Cerf's wife, who was profoundly deaf for 50 years, they found—a small digital device was developed, they stuck it way down in her ears, and she heard after 50 years—and stood up and talked about the experience of hearing and what it was like to hear the birds for the first time after 50 years and what it was like to go to a James Taylor concert now. Those of you who are young, that won't be such a big thing—[*laughter*]—but for me it's a big thing.

But here's the thing I wanted to tell you. Lander said, ''Look, there's 100,000 genes and billions of variations. But the truth is that all human beings genetically are 99.9 percent identical.'' And even more important—especially here in northern Virginia, where you have all this diversity—this is the most astonishing thing. He said if you took any genetic group—let me just look around the room. Let's say you took 100 Pakistanis and 100 Chinese and 100 Mediterranean Europeans and 100 people from west Africa. He said if you took those groups, there would be more genetic differences within the groups, among individuals, than there would be between one group and another. Amazing, huh? You remember that. It gives scientific support for what our values say.

We're a smart country. We nearly always get it right in the end. [*Laughter*] Otherwise we wouldn't be around.

But I'm telling you that it is—the thing that concerns me most is, we're on the verge of all these scientific breakthroughs—we're going to find out what's in the black holes in the universe; we'll discover billions of other galaxies; we'll revise our notion of time itself—unless we are dragged down by the oldest human failing: being afraid of people because they're different from us, which leads to misunderstanding, which leads to hatred, which leads to dehumanization, which leads to violence.

Now, the Democrats are now in a position to say, ''Let's go back to love and justice and concern, expressed in Martin Luther King's and Robert Kennedy's life. And let us do it because you can trust us. You know we can run the economy. You know we can get the crime rate down. You know we can manage the welfare issue. You know we can manage the budget. You can trust us; let's deal with our core problems.''

So when the Virginia legislature says, ''We're for a Patients' Bill of Rights, or we need smaller classes, and we need to do things to educate our children,'' it is an expression of our common humanity and our mutual responsibilities.

I just want you to walk out of here armed with the information to say, ''Look, this is not an experiment. Our way works. The most important thing is for us to go forward together. Give us a chance, from the bottom to the top.''

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:30 p.m. in the main ballroom at the Alexandria Hilton Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Lt. Gov. Kathleen Kennedy Townsend of Maryland; Coretta Scott King, founder, Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change; State Senate Minority Leader Richard L. Saslaw; Kenneth R. Plum, chairman, State Democratic Party; Vinton G. Cerf, senior vice president of Internet architecture and technology, MCI WorldCom, and his wife, Sigrid; and Eric Lander, director, Whitehead Institute/MIT Center for Genome Research. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

October 23, 1999

Good morning. Today I want to talk about what we must do to meet one of the critical challenges of the next century: the aging of America.

This week I sat down with congressional leaders of both parties at the White House to ask them to work with me to construct an overall framework for completing our work on the spending bills that reflect the priorities and the values of our people. The cornerstone of that framework must be paying down our debt, investing in education

and other critical priorities, strengthening and modernizing Medicare, and saving Social Security for the retirement of the baby boom generation.

If we value the financial well-being of our parents and grandparents, if we believe that all Americans deserve to retire with dignity, if we want to make sure we don't place an unfair burden on the backs of the next generation of young parents, then we must seize this moment of unprecedented prosperity and budget surpluses to extend the life of Social Security.

Unfortunately, so far, instead of making the tough choices to save Social Security and extend its life to 2050, the Republican majority in Congress, especially some of the House Republican leaders, have been accusing the Democrats of spending the Social Security surplus. They've also been claiming that their budget doesn't spend the Social Security surplus.

As it happens, neither claim is true. Oh, they've used a lot of budget gimmicks—like claiming the census and ordinary Pentagon expenditures are actually emergencies—in an effort to claim they're not spending billions from the Social Security surplus. But unfortunately for their argument, their own Congressional Budget Office has said they've already spent more than $18 billion of the Social Security surplus. But the main problem is, while spending this money, their plan doesn't extend the solvency of Social Security by a single day. I think we can do better. The American people deserve more than confusion, doubletalk, and delay on this issue.

So it's time to have a clear, straightforward bill on the table, and next week I plan to present one—legislation that ensures that all Social Security payroll tax will go to savings and debt reduction for Social Security. Over 15 years, this will allow us to pay down more than $3½ trillion of debt, to be debt-free as a nation for the first time since 1835 when Andrew Jackson was President.

But my plan goes further. After a decade of debt reduction from protecting Social Security funds, all the interest savings from this debt reduction will then be reinvested in Social Security, extending its solvency into the middle of the next century. This is the first big step toward truly saving Social Security. It will take the Trust Fund out beyond the lifespan of the baby boom generation—no gimmicks, no budgetary sleight of hand; just the right choices that really add up to protecting the Social Security surplus, extending the life of Social Security, and paying down the debt by 2015.

Let's remember what's at stake. Since 1935, Social Security has provided a solid foundation for retirement and lifted millions of our people out of poverty. But the number of older Americans will double as the baby boomers retire and the number of workers supporting each beneficiary will decline. Today, there are 3.4 workers for each Social Security beneficiary. By 2030, the ratio will be down to two to one. That will put a big strain on the system. If nothing is done, the Social Security Trust Fund will be completely depleted by the year 2034. We can't let that happen, and we don't have to. We can easily go back to 2050.

Social Security was created in the depths of the Depression. Today, we have the longest peacetime expansion in history, with 7 consecutive years of fiscal improvement and back-to-back surpluses for the first time in 42 years. This gives us an historic opportunity and a responsibility to protect and guarantee Social Security for future generations. Again, I urge the congressional majority to put aside partisanship and achieve something of lasting value for all our people.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 5:30 p.m. on October 22 in the Oval Office at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on October 23. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 22 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Remarks at a Birthday Celebration for the First Lady

October 23, 1999

Senator. [*Laughter*] Marisa, thank you for coming. We thought someone should be here today who does not have an accent. [*Laughter*] We have so many wonderful entertainers who are here for the VH1 millennial concert, which will be held later this afternoon. And

one of them just came in, my neighbor and friend from Mississippi B.B. King. Please come in.

Since we're celebrating her birthday—and it's almost reached the point where Hillary and I don't want to celebrate anymore—[*laughter*]—I want to tell you, B.B. played at the White House the other night; we had a blues concert—and he's a year or two older than I am—[*laughter*]—and he's just as good as he ever was. So you never get too old to do what you do well and love, and I thank him.

I will be brief and then bring on the birthday girl. I have to say one other thing as a point of personal pride. Senator Daschle couldn't—because we both come from what my predecessor used to call a small State—could not bring himself to tell you the most relevant fact of that little history lesson he gave you about women in the Senate. Hattie Caraway was elected more than 60 years ago with the help of Huey Long, back when he was for Roosevelt as an ardent supporter of the New Deal. The first woman ever elected to the United States Senate was from my home State of Arkansas, and I'm very proud of that.

I think it's high time New York, which has been on the cutting edge of so many other developments, join that great phalanx for the future.

But I want to say something serious, that has nothing to do with Hillary or me or—almost nothing to do with our party, except that we happen to be the only people, in my view, doing the right thing. Back in '92, when we moved here after the election and we began to work, this country was in trouble. It was so long ago and things had been good for so long, a lot of people had forgotten what it was like then—how high the unemployment rate was, how high interest rates were, how big the debt was and the deficit, how much the crime rate was going up, how swollen the welfare rolls were, and how divided the society was.

We have worked hard to turn this country around. And it is moving in the right direction. If this economy keeps going until February it will be the longest economic expansion in the history of the United States, and it will be done without a war. We have the lowest unemployment rate in 29 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years, the lowest poverty rates in 20 years, the lowest crime rates in 30 years, the first back-to-back budget surplus in 42 years, the smallest Federal Government in 37 years. The environment is cleaner. There are more protections for family leave to help people balance family and work. We've got 150,000 young Americans serving in AmeriCorps. The country is moving in the right direction.

But the great question now is, what will we do with this moment of prosperity? And as all of you know, I'm not running for anything. [*Laughter*] My interest is in what happens to our children and grandchildren. We've worked real hard for 7 years to turn this country around. And now we are in the position that most countries get maybe—maybe—once in the lifetime of a citizen, where things are moving in the right direction and you can literally chart the course for the future. You can paint a picture of your children's future and give them a chance to live it.

And because it is the United States and because it's the end of the cold war and because of our fortunate position, we also can help make the world a more peaceful and prosperous and secure place, not only for our children but for children in every continent.

That is this incredible opportunity we're getting. But nations are like people. Sometimes—I used to have a rule in politics—I had eight or nine rules, but one of my rules was, you're the most vulnerable when you think you're invulnerable. And if you think about your own life, we commonly make mistakes when we think everything is going great—because we break our concentration; we become self-indulgent; we think all the things that happened to us as individuals—that can happen to the country. That's why I vetoed that tax bill, because it was self-indulgent, short-term.

I would be here for my wife if she were not my wife, because we have got to have people with a lifetime of commitment to the future and to children, to a balanced sense of the country coming together and moving together. We need somebody who understands that for all this economic prosperity there are people and places that have been

left behind. And if we can't bring economic opportunity to poor people now we will never get around to doing it. That ought to be one of our highest priorities.

We need somebody who can resist the lure of the moment of the election and say, "We're going to keep paying down this debt so we get out of debt for the first time since 1835—we can do it in 15 years if we stay at it." We need somebody that will think about the aging of America. You know, my generation is plagued with this—the idea that we'll retire and hurt our children and our grandchildren.

What I want you to know about Hillary is, from the first minute I met her, she was thinking about the things that are important today. And one of the reasons that she looks so much younger than she is—[*laughter*]—apart from the highly interesting and stimulating life—[*laughter*]—and how good the American people have been to us, is that all of her life—all of her life—she has cared about the things that America needs to focus on now, that we dare not pass up the opportunity, literally, of a lifetime. I hope.

Never in my life, not even once, has our country been in the position that we are now in to shape the future of our children and grandchildren and the future of the world. The only time in my life when the times were remotely this good was in the early 1960's, and we had to deal with the civil rights challenge and the war in Vietnam and the cold war. This has never happened in my life.

And you need people in the Senate who are genuine visionaries and practical doer. She is a genuine visionary, a practical doer, and a wonderful human being.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately noon at the Capitol Hilton. In his remarks, he referred to actress Marisa Tomei; and musician B.B. King. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at VH1's Concert of the Century

October 23, 1999

The President. Well, I don't know how much longer we have on the commercial break, and I don't own this network, so I could really get the hook. [*Laughter*]

But let me thank you and thank all the artists. And I've got all this stuff to say on the teleprompter at the end, but I just want to tell you why I did this. I still remember Miss Lucille Rutherford, who taught me to sing, and George Grey, who taught me to play the clarinet and the saxophone; my two junior high school band directors; and my wonderful high school band director, Virgil Spurlin. And I don't think I would have become President if it hadn't been for school music. And that's why I did this. And I thank you. Thank you.

[*At this point, the program continued.*]

The President. Thank you, Robert De Niro, for the introduction, for your friendship, for your fabulous movies. [*Laughter*]

Let me thank all of the wonderful performers who have graced this stage today; they have blessed our lives and all of America who has heard them. Let's give them all a big hand one more time. [*Applause*] We respect and honor them for their talents and their knowledge of music. But we also respect what they have given us tonight. I respect them so much, I left my saxophone up in the White House. [*Laughter*]

But we have had another wonderful lesson this afternoon, thanks to the National Endowment for the Arts, which is supporting our country's living cultural heritage; and VH1, the Save The Music Foundation, preserving our musical traditions. The most important lesson we've had is that what we've seen in stunning brilliance tonight should at least be a possibility in the lives and the minds of all of our children.

Music education is very important to me. When I was a young boy, as a school musician, I started at 9 with Ms. Lillian Rutherford and George Grey learning to sing and play. I learned that music was more than scales or keys or how to make sure I was always in tune. Music taught me how to mix practice and patience with creativity. Music taught me how to be both an individual performer and a good member of a team. It taught me how to work, always to bring mind and body and spirit together, and the beauty of music.

And so for all my teachers, for the ones I mentioned, for my junior high school band directors, Carol Powell and Joel Duskin, for my wonderful friend Virgil Spurlin, who taught me in high school, some are still with me, some have gone on to their reward, I want to say again, I don't think I would be President if it hadn't been for school music.

And I am very grateful to John Sykes, to VH1, to all the wonderful stars and performers who are here tonight, because they want to give all our young people that same opportunity to learn, to achieve, to express themselves—and to develop their math brain cells. [*Laughter*]

This century has been called the American Century. It gave rise to democracy around the world. For the first time in history, more than half the world's people are living under governments of their own choosing. So we gave that to the world. But at the same time, we mustn't forget that America brought the world the rhythm of jazz, the consolation of country, the hard truth of the blues, the excitement of rock and roll. And the diversity of our music and our musicians—which we have seen tonight—mirrors the diversity of our people and reminds us of the greatest lesson we have always to teach and always to learn, that we are stronger when we're playing in harmony, based on our common humanity.

A stunning example of that is the great American songwriter George Gershwin, a Jewish boy from New York who wrote the magnificent black opera, "Porgy and Bess." He listened to others. And he once said, "True music must repeat the thought and inspirations of the people and the time. My people are Americans and my time is today."

Let us promise that we Americans will keep American music and the spirit it represents, inspiring our children and their children as we enter the new millennium.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 5:30 p.m. in a tent on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to John Sykes, president, VH1, who presented the President with a guitar signed by the artists who performed in the program entitled, "Concert of the Century for VH1 Save The Music." The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady.

Message on the Observance of Make A Difference Day, 1999

October 23, 1999

Warm greetings to everyone throughout the nation participating in Make A Difference Day. I am delighted that so many Americans are joining together with their neighbors on this day of helping to create a better world for us all.

It is a very American idea that we meet our challenges not through big government or as isolated individuals, but as members of a true community, with all of us working together. Upholding this fine tradition, citizens young and old are working on this special day to raise awareness of the power of citizen service not only to give hope and help to individuals in need, but also to renew the strength, vitality, and character of communities across our nation.

As you clean up parks and neighborhoods, read stories to young people, collect clothing and other necessities for families recovering from Hurricane Floyd, and participate in numerous other community efforts, I thank each of you for devoting your time, talents, and energy to fulfill America's bright promise for all our people.

Earlier this week, we celebrated the fifth anniversary of AmeriCorps, our national service initiative that engages thousands of citizens in projects that are changing lives and changing America. AmeriCorps members are living up to the highest obligations of American citizenship—creating opportunities for others, taking responsibility for themselves, and fostering a community of all Americans. I commend everyone participating in Make A Difference Day for adding your own contribution to the tradition of citizen service that has always been a hallmark of our democracy.

Hillary joins me in sending best wishes for a productive and meaningful day.

Bill Clinton

Proclamation 7244—United Nations Day, 1999

October 22, 1999

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

As the 20th century draws to a close, Americans are taking time to reflect on the institutions that have shaped our past and that hold great hope for our future. One of the most important of these institutions is the United Nations. A dream of peace rising from the ashes of World War II, the U.N. has made great strides toward fulfilling the goals of its founders by saving lives, enhancing the security of law-abiding nations, and improving living conditions across the globe. This year, in marking the 54th anniversary of the founding of the U.N., we celebrate not only the organization's many accomplishments, but also its potential to bring the family of nations together to work toward a more peaceful, democratic, just, and prosperous world.

Since the U.N.'s founding more than half a century ago, humankind has learned a great deal—how to produce enough food for growing populations, how human activity affects the environment, how telecommunications can link the countries of the world into a single global community. But one of the most important lessons humanity has learned is one that Americans have always known: open societies are more just and open markets create more wealth.

Through the United Nations, America has access to a powerful forum where we can join with the other peoples of the world to raise awareness of these truths and to advance common interests and shared values. During the past decade, U.N. conferences have brought together nearly 50,000 people in Beijing to advance the rights and well-being of women; 47,000 in Rio de Janeiro to discuss ways to promote development while protecting the environment; and 30,000 people in Istanbul to seek solutions to urban problems.

In the last year alone, we have seen abundant evidence of the ways in which the United Nations benefits America and the world. The United Nations is the primary multilateral forum to press for international human rights and lead governments to improve their relations with their neighbors and their own people. As we saw during the Kosovo conflict, and more recently with regard to East Timor, the perpetrators of ethnic cleansing and mass murder can find no refuge in the United Nations and no source of comfort in its charter. It is the institution the international community turns to in pursuit of solutions to armed conflict. It is the primary vehicle for broad international cooperation in addressing the needs of refugees and of the tens of millions of people around the world who remain mired in abject poverty. The United Nations and its affiliated agencies also provide a powerful voice for upholding and furthering the development of the rule of law and standards of international commerce—rules and standards that are crucial to global and economic stability and progress.

In acknowledging the far-reaching contributions of the United Nations to the international community, we must renew our commitment to work with our fellow U.N. members to advance international peace and prosperity and to champion human rights. In achieving these goals, the United Nations should make wise use of the international resources at its disposal; and the United States should meet its obligation to provide our share of these resources. By doing so, we can ensure that the United Nations will be an integral player in making the next millennium an era of unprecedented global peace, security, and prosperity.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim October 24, 1999, as United Nations Day. I encourage all Americans to acquaint themselves with the activities and accomplishments of the United Nations and to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies, programs, and activities furthering the goal of international cooperation.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-second day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred

and ninety-nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., October 27, 1999]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on October 28. This proclamation was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 24.

Remarks on Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage

October 25, 1999

Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Callus, Ms. Kayden, for your remarkable statements. Thank you, Secretary Shalala, for your steadfast leadership on this issue. I would like to welcome a very large number of Members of the United States Congress who are here: Senator Baucus and Senator Wyden; Representatives Abercrombie, Brown, Waters, Obey, Vento, and Hoyer; and Congressman Berry. And I would like to acknowledge the important work of two that are not here, Representatives Waxman and Allen, who have been particularly interested in this issue.

Death of Senator John H. Chafee

Before I go into my remarks, I would like to make a statement about the passing last night of Senator John Chafee of Rhode Island. Rhode Island and America have lost a great leader and a fine human being who, in 23 years in the Senate and in his service as Secretary of the Navy, always put his concern for the American people above partisanship.

When you think of the term bipartisan, you immediately think of John Chafee. Known throughout his beloved Rhode Island simply as ''the man you can trust,'' Senator Chafee was a consummate statesman and patriot. He served with valor in war and peace. I am particularly grateful for his commitment to health care, his concern for the environment, and his devotion to our children, especially his work for foster care and child care.

John Chafee proved that politics can be an honorable profession. For him, civility was not simply a matter of personal manners. He believed it was essential to the preservation of our democratic system and the progress of our Nation. He embodied the decent center which has carried America from triumph to triumph for over 200 years. How we will miss him.

Today our thoughts and prayers are with his wonderful wife, Ginny, their five children, and their twelve grandchildren. And again, I want to say a special personal word of appreciation on behalf of Hillary and myself for the many kindnesses John Chafee extended to us and the many opportunities we had to work together.

Prescription Drug Benefits

Now, last January, in the State of the Union Address, I was able to give the American people a great report on our economy and the improving condition of our society, which now has the lowest unemployment rate in 29 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years, the lowest poverty rates in 20 years, the lowest crime rates in 30 years, and the first back-to-back budget surpluses in 42 years.

In the State of the Union Address, I said as we approached the new century, we could look back on 100 years of Americans meeting the great challenges of the century we're about to leave—the Depression, civil rights, two World Wars, the cold war. And now, because of the good fortune we presently enjoy, we have the opportunity and the obligations to meet the great challenges that we know lie before us in the 21st century: to build one America out of our amazing diversity; to make America debt-free for the first time since 1835; to use this moment of prosperity to bring genuine economic opportunity to the people and places that have been left behind; to deal with the challenge of global warming; to meet the new security challenges of the 21st century, including the challenges of high-tech terrorism and weapons of mass destruction; to give the largest and most diverse group of children in American history a world-class education; and to meet the challenge of the aging of America.

We will double the number of people over 65 in just 30 years. There will be two people working for every one person drawing Social Security. This challenge would be truly daunting were it not for the fact that all of us, as a country, have worked so hard over the last 7 years to bring us to this moment of prosperity and to bring us to a point where we can predict long-term, consistent budget surpluses into the future which give us the means, if we have the will and vision, to deal with this challenge.

No one should have to make the kind of choices Mr. Callus and Ms. Kayden spoke of in their remarks in a country that has the strongest economy on Earth. No senior should have to forgo or cut back on lifesaving medication because of the cost. Neither should any senior be forced to get on a bus to Canada where the same medicines cost so much less. Just a couple of days ago, the Vice President held up an example of one of the most popular drugs for lowering cholesterol. In Canada, 60 tablets cost $44; in New Hampshire, they cost $102, if you're lucky. I think we can do better than that. It's wrong, and we have to deal with it.

We also have to deal with the fact that about three-quarters of our seniors simply don't have effective, affordable access to prescription drugs. We can afford to do something about it; we know what to do about it, and therefore, we have no excuse for inaction.

This debate over Medicare is more than about politics and budgets; it's about people, real people like Mr. Callus. You heard what he said. He said he was in pretty good shape, and I think that his speech verified that. [*Laughter*] But giving him and Americans like him all over the country the chance to live to the fullest of their God-given abilities, not only to live as long but to live as well as they can, is an important value that we all stand for.

For 34 years, Medicare has helped to achieve that value. And it has eased the financial burden on families who care for their loved ones. Before Medicare, nearly half of our seniors had no health care coverage at all.

Today, Medicare is truly at a crossroads. As Secretary Shalala said, when we took office the Trust Fund was supposed to expire this year. And thanks to the good work of the Congress and the people who operate the program and the people who administer the health care of the country, we've worked together and we got the life expectancy of the Trust Fund back to 2015. We've done it by combating fraud and making Medicare more efficient and investing some more funds. But we know we have to go further because it is simply not going to be enough to stay with the status quo.

This past June I gave the Congress a comprehensive and fiscally responsible plan to extend the life of Medicare to 2027, while at the same time modernizing it to keep pace with changes in our medical system and our medical needs. I proposed new innovations used now in private sector health care to keep quality high and costs lower. I said we should remove barriers to preventive tests for cancer, for diabetes, for osteoporosis, and other diseases. I said we should invest more money, not only to deal with some of the hardships caused by the savings in the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 but simply because there are going to be so many more people on Medicare over the next few years. And I want to say this again, no expert who has studied this has said we can deal with the challenge of Medicare without injecting more money into the system.

And finally, I called for adding a prescription drug benefit. Adding prescription drug coverage, as Secretary Shalala said, isn't just the right thing to do; it is the smart thing to do, medically, over the long run. Today, prescription drugs can accomplish what once could be done only through surgery, at far less pain and far less cost. We already pay for doctor and hospital benefits under Medicare, but we let many of our seniors go without prescription drugs and preventive screenings that could keep them healthy and keep them from having to undergo expensive treatment. It doesn't make sense.

Unfortunately, the Republican leadership in Congress has refused altogether to consider adding a prescription drug benefit, effectively rendering meaningful Medicare reform impossible this year. The Congress is joining with me to work to alleviate undue strain on hospitals, nursing homes, home

health agencies, and other providers—and that's a good thing—to alleviate some of the most severe burdens of the Balanced Budget Act.

But by ignoring the need for a prescription drug benefit, the Republican leaders are squandering a golden moment, leaving more than 13 million seniors without any prescription drug coverage and millions more with inadequate coverage, unreliable at best.

Now, in human terms, that means a lot. Think of the seniors on fixed incomes, like Mr. Callus, who are paying a couple of thousand dollars a year out of pocket. Think of men and women falling prey to illnesses because they can't afford proper doses of new miracle drugs that could easily keep them well. Asking them to wait for Medicare reform is like putting their lives on hold, and maybe into a lottery. It is unacceptable. It is unacceptable especially because it is so unnecessary. And I want you to know I don't intend to give up the battle until it is won.

And the good news is, because I vetoed the tax bill that would have taken away all the money to fix Medicare, we can still win it.

First, let's set the record straight. One of the key reasons no action was taken on prescription drugs this session was because the pharmaceutical industry spent millions of dollars on an all-out media campaign filled with flatout falsehoods. In ads featuring a fictional senior named Flo—[*laughter*]—the special interests say that our Medicare proposal—and I quote—"would put big Government in your medicine cabinet."

I might point out that even though we do, thanks to the leadership of these people, have the smallest Federal Government since 1962, it's still not small enough to get in your medicine cabinet. [*Laughter*]

It says—and I quote—"all seniors will be forced into a Government-run plan." The truth is, under our plan, there are no Government restrictions of any kind. Doctors would be able to prescribe any needed drug for any patient at any time, and the benefit would be purely voluntary, completely optional. If seniors want to keep their current coverage, they're perfectly free to do so.

We cannot stand by and watch the pharmaceutical industry go on and distort this debate. We have to expose these deceptions and give the American people the facts. I wish they'd spend this ad money explaining why seniors have to get on the bus and go to Canada to buy drugs at less than half the price they can buy them in America, when the drugs are made in America with the benefit of the American system and American research and American tax systems. I wish they would spend their advertising money explaining that to the American people.

I guess if you've got a weak case, the best thing to do is change the subject. [*Laughter*] But I would like for Flo to get on TV and tell me about that. I'm sure she could explain it. [*Laughter*] And it would be so enlightening to us. [*Laughter*] Meanwhile, the rest of us are going to keep on talking about expanding access to affordable prescription drugs.

Another thing I don't understand is, I know they're worried that if we buy drugs in bulk the way the private sector does, that their profit per package of drugs will be smaller. But if we cover all the seniors, the volume will be so much greater, they will make more money. Do you remember when Medicare came in? All the people were saying, "Oh, my goodness, the people providing health care are going to go broke." But they didn't.

The pharmaceutical companies are going to do fine under this. We're not going to have the Government try to take them over. We're not going to have a big price control system. But we ought to be able to bargain to get American seniors a decent deal. And the volume, the increase in volume will more than offset the better prices that large purchases get.

Besides that, old Flo's up there arguing for keeping 13 million seniors, just like her, from having any access to any drugs. Bet she wouldn't be making that ad if she had found herself in the same position.

So this is really important. Look, all these issues are complicated. We're a big, grownup country; we don't have to have bogus ads out there confusing people about what the truth is. This is a matter of life or death. Everybody this man's age, who has the ability to be standing and talking and being what he was

up here today, ought to have the same chance. That's what we believe.

Now, beyond dealing with the ad campaign to illustrate that the failure to add a prescription drug benefit has actual consequences, I am going to gather clear and indisputable evidence of what this failure costs in physical and financial terms. Today I'm directing Secretary Shalala to produce a sweeping study—the first of its kind—to examine prescription drug costs in America. In 90 days she will present me with an analysis of what the most commonly prescribed drugs cost for those with and without coverage to help assess whether people without coverage are paying too much. The analysis will also report on trends in drug spending by age and by income to help us document the increasing toll high drug costs are taking on our seniors, on people with disabilities, and on their families.

Combined with a State-by-State analysis on our seniors' prescription drug needs, which I've already ordered, the new cost study should help to lay the foundation for a more informed debate in the coming year.

Finally, as part of the plan to safeguard the Social Security surplus, tomorrow I will send to Congress legislation that would reserve a third of the non-Social Security surplus—the non-Social Security surplus—all of which would be gone if I hadn't vetoed the tax cut bill—[*laughter*]—that would reserve a third of this for extending the solvency of Medicare and for funding a prescription drug benefit.

Now, I stand ready to work with Congress across party lines on crafting a Medicare reform plan that has the best chance of gaining bipartisan support. But even if Congress won't pass the Medicare modernization plan this fall, it can and should adopt at least a proposal for protecting the Social Security surplus.

I challenge Congress to pass this legislation as part of the final budget negotiations now underway, to ensure that Social Security and Medicare will have the resources they need to meet the challenges in the new century.

Let me just say what the difference in my proposal is and the proposal of the Republican majority. Anybody under any circumstances who saves the Social Security surplus gives America one big benefit, which is, if we don't spend the Social Security surplus, we pay down more of the debt every year; interest rates stay lower; the economy grows more. Our two plans have that in common.

The difference is that under my plan, starting at about 10 years, we will take the interest savings we get from reducing the debt from the Social Security surplus and put it into the Social Security Trust Fund, which will take the Trust Fund out to 2050 and go beyond the life expectancy of the baby boom generation. That's the big difference.

If you just save the Social Security surplus, if you don't do anything else, it doesn't add to the life of the Social Security Trust Fund. Because all those years, from 1983 forward, when the deficit was made to look smaller because we were spending the Social Security surplus—the Social Security surplus got a Government bond and it gets the money back, and it pays the seniors. So if you want to do something meaningful for the baby boom generation, it's not enough to save the Social Security surplus. You've got to take the interest savings you get on the budget from saving the surplus and put it into Social Security, so you add to the life of the Social Security Trust Fund.

So we have a lot more work to do, even though we're already in the last week of October. Congress still has not done a lot of things. Because they have not taken action to protect the privacy of medical records, I will use the power of my office to do that in the coming days. I think that's a very important issue. But there are other agreements we have to make before we can end this year. Congress made a commitment last year, which I applauded, a bipartisan commitment, to 100,000 more teachers in our schools to reduce class size and paid for 30,000 of them. Now they want to totally undo it. I think it's wrong.

They have not yet given our families the vital protections of a Patients' Bill of Rights. They took the hate crimes legislation out of the legislation that they've sent me to fund the Justice Department. They have not yet raised the minimum wage. And they have not yet fixed the flawed system that prevents

people with disabilities from going to work. All those things can be done in the next few weeks, and we intend to work hard to see that they are done.

But let me close again with the subject that brought us here today. Colleen Kayden came here and spoke about her experience as a pharmacist. She also spoke for every pharmacist and every community pharmacy in America. Stephen Callus came here and talked about his life. He could have been speaking for millions upon millions of seniors.

Time is passing here, and I want to get back to the point I made at the beginning. I hope to be one of those baby boom seniors one day—and it's getting there in a terrible hurry—[*laughter*]—but I have lived, already, quite a good number of years. Never in my lifetime has this country had the opportunity we now have—free of war, free of internal discord—to chart a course for the future that will embrace all Americans and that will consciously deal with the great challenges before us.

Only once in my lifetime have we had an economy that approximated this economy. That was in the early sixties—but we had to deal with the civil rights challenge and with the Vietnam war. We have never had an economy like this and, basically, the freedom within our own hands to just chart a course for the future. And there are some things that we know are going to be out there, including how many kids we're going to have and what their different backgrounds are; and how many seniors we're going to have and what their absolutely certain health challenges will be. And we absolutely have no conceivable excuse for walking away from the chance of a lifetime to build the century of our dreams.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:55 a.m. in Presidential Hall (formerly Room 450) in the Old Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Medicare recipient Stephen Callus, who introduced the President; and pharmacist Colleen Kayden.

Remarks on Departure for New York City and an Exchange With Reporters

October 25, 1999

Federal Budget

The President. Last February I sent to the Congress a balanced budget that maintains our fiscal discipline, pays down the debt, saves Social Security, strengthens and modernized Medicare with a prescription drug coverage, and meets our most pressing priorities—putting 100,000 teachers in the classroom, another 50,000 community police on our street, protecting the environment, and strengthening our national security. And everything in the budget I sent is paid for without touching a penny of the Social Security surplus.

Unfortunately, the congressional majority has rejected the approach I recommended. And so, in the 8 months since I sent them the balanced budget, they have failed to produce a budget of their own that meets our Nation's priorities and values. Instead, they have tried one thing after another, one unsuccessful scheme after another, to meet the budget priorities.

Now the majority wants an arbitrary across-the-board cut in all Federal investment. The plan would cut military recruiting and, according to the Department of Defense, would cut as many as 70,000 men and women from our Armed Forces. Their plan would cut off thousands of children from the benefits of Head Start, cut childhood immunizations and our cleanup of toxic waste. It would do something they have pledged not to do. With all these cuts, it would still spend the Social Security surplus, as their own Congressional Budget Office has said it would do.

And yet, in spite of this, Congress has seen fit to fund its own pork-barrel projects, like a ship the Pentagon says it doesn't need and aircraft it didn't ask for. They've found a way to fund corporate welfare for oil companies and other special interests and to fund their own pay raise.

Now, the American people sent us here to make tough choices. But these are the

wrong choices. I will not allow Congress to raise its own pay and fund its own pork-barrel projects and still make devastating across-the-board cuts in everything from education to child nutrition to the FBI. I will not sign any budget that puts special interests above the national interest.

Now, this week I may be forced to veto several of the appropriations bills because they fail to meet our most pressing national priorities. I have decided to sign into law the Department of Defense appropriations bill, and I have just done that, because in good conscience I cannot allow our national security needs to be held hostage to this budget battle. This legislation provides funding for our most critical military needs, including weapons procurement and modernization, research and development, and, importantly, a much needed pay raise for our men and women in uniform.

I had proposed the first sustained increase in defense spending in a decade, and this bill will help to maintain that. Still, what Congress sent me is far from perfect. The legislation is loaded with things the Pentagon didn't ask for and doesn't need. It applies accounting gimmicks to important areas.

For example—listen to this—Congress designated the $7.2 billion for base operations and basic training, something our military needs and depends upon every year, year-in and year-out, as an ''unforeseen emergency'' expense.

Despite my reservations, I am signing this bill—I have signed it—because it's crucial to our national security and our military readiness, because the troops that defend our interests abroad deserve the strongest support we can provide here at home.

The second action I have just taken is on the appropriations bills for the Departments of State, Justice, and Commerce. Today I vetoed that bill. I vetoed it because it fails to fund the additional 50,000 community police we need to keep crime going down in our communities. We have the lowest crime rate in 30 years, but we can't stop until America is the safest big country in the world.

This bill fails to provide the funding to give the American people their day in court against the tobacco companies. It fails to take a strong stand, indeed, it fails, inexplicably, to take any stand, whatever, against hate crimes. And by failing to provide for our obligations, including our U.N. dues in arrears, it imperils not only our vote in the United Nations but the ability to meet our obligations and, therefore, to maintain our national security.

The appropriations bill for the Interior Department is no better. If Congress sends it to me in its current form, with provisions that weaken, rather than strengthen our environmental programs, I will have to veto that, too.

On Friday the temporary resolution that keeps the Government running again will expire. That's the second such measure to have come and gone—another week, another deadline—and still we don't have a budget like the one I proposed that pays down the debt, saves Social Security, reforms and modernizes Medicare, and meets our most important national priorities.

They have not lived up to their obligations and the commitment they made last year to put 100,000 teachers in our classroom. They have not provided for another 50,000 community police to keep crime going down in our community. They have not done what is necessary to protect our environment.

Now, even though time is short, we still have a good chance to meet these goals. Today my budget negotiators are continuing to work with Congress to finish the job. I hope that the Members of Congress will work with us in good faith to make this a season of progress. And I remain committed to that end.

Thank you very much.

Learjet Crash in South Dakota

Q. Mr. President, was there a possibility you might have had to order an attack on that plane, the Learjet, as it was flying north?

The President. Well, let me say, first of all, I am profoundly sorry for the loss of Payne Stewart, who has had such a remarkable career and impact on his sport, and a remarkable resurgence in the last couple of years; and the members of his group, including the two pilots and two others who were with him. This is a very sad day.

I am very grateful for the work the FAA did and for the two Air Force pilots and the

others in the Air Force that monitored this plane and made every effort to try to make contact with it. They did everything that could humanly be done, and they were looking out for the safety of everyone involved. And I'm just sorry that it crashed and what happened, happened.

Candidacy of Pat Buchanan

Q. Mr. President, Pat Buchanan announced today he will run for the Reform Party nomination. Any comments from you, sir?

The President. No. [*Laughter*]

Defense Department Appropriations Bill

Q. Mr. President, on the defense bill, sir, given your strong objections to it, why couldn't you have vetoed the bill and gotten the provisions which you wanted by negotiating with Congress? Did you not have the Democratic votes to sustain your veto?

The President. Well, I think we could have sustained a veto, although it would have been a close call. I'm fairly confident we could have sustained it. But I didn't think it was fair, frankly, to put the Democrats in the position of being attacked by the Republicans for being against the defense budget that the Democratic Party has basically pursued.

The core of this budget is the policy of our party—not just me as President, and not just our administration, the President, the Vice President, the Secretary of Defense—it's the policy of our party to give the military a chance, after 10 years of defense reductions, to have the pay increase, to have the improvements in quality of life, and to have the military modernization.

The pork barrel that is in this defense bill is not unknown to Capitol Hill. But what is unknown, of course, that we've never seen anything like before, is declaring daily operations to be emergencies so that they can appear not to be spending the Social Security surplus when they are.

But I felt, on balance, given the urgent need to get the pay increase out and to begin the modernization programs, it was the right thing to do. I also thought it would show good faith with the Members of Congress.

But I think it is—I will say again—I also felt, as a practical matter, that we should focus on the bills where the substantive deficiencies are, in the teachers, in the police officers, in the environmental programs, in the absence of hate crimes legislation, in the failure to pay the U.N. dues. I think we should focus on the bills where the real flaws are.

And I think—and I have made it clear that insofar as I proposed increased investments over and above what the Congress has recommended, I am prepared to pay for them, and I think they ought to do the same with theirs. And we need to work together and get this worked out. We can do this. This is terribly important, and we can do it.

But the idea of just saying, ''Well, we'll have an across-the-board cut, and using some percentage term that makes it seem smaller than it is without considering the consequences,'' I think, is terrible.

And let me point out, just on the defense bill, if they put in this across-the-board cut, after having mandated that so much money to this plane or this boat or this depot or this reconstruction project, the Pentagon will have no choice but to lay off, the DOD says, up to 70,000 people.

So I don't think that's an acceptable resolution to this, and I hope that we can work together and work through this. But I am determined to keep fighting for something that we can all be proud of. And we can still do it.

Yes, ma'am.

Alternatives in Budget Negotiations

Q. Mr. President, you've made clear you oppose across-the-board spending cuts, and the Republicans have made clear they don't support your revenue proposals. Would you be willing to find common ground in spending bills that are based on a combination of OMB and CBO scoring?

The President. Well, they're already doing—they've used a few OMB scoring devices when it worked to their advantage, but I have no objection to that, because we think we're right and on balance. Over the last 7 years, our scoring has been quite accurate. So I will work with them on that.

I also think there are other alternatives here. There are alternatives between turning every ordinary expenditure into an emergency and their adopting my proposal for a 55 cent cigarette tax. There are lots of other ways that we can bridge these gaps.

What I have recommended in investments, in the Middle East peace talks, in reducing the nuclear threat, in paying our U.N. dues, in the 100,000 teachers—what I've recommended in this coming year does not amount to a great deal of money. I can offer them ways to pay for that. And then they need to find ways to pay for some of their extra spending. And if we'll work together, we can do this. We can do it in a timely fashion, and we won't have to have a whole series of other continuing resolutions.

And I hope we can do it. I think we can do it in the next couple of weeks if we put our minds to it.

Third Continuing Resolution

Q. Mr. President, are you prepared to sign another continuing resolution, sir?

The President. Of course. I think—let me say, I have serious problems with a lot of this, as I've said. But I can also tell you, we are making some progress. I see the progress being made, and it's just a question—they will have to decide if they want to work with me to get this resolved. But I think I owe it to them, because we committed to work in good faith, to sign another continuing resolution, and I will do that.

Thank you.

Q. In weeks? Days?

The President. Well, I don't know how many days it will be. But it ought to be an appropriate amount of time for us to finish. And it shouldn't be too long, but there needs to be enough time for us to finish. And I'll keep working with them.

Thank you.

Legislative Agenda

Q. Mr. President, on the hate crimes situation and Pat Buchanan, may I just try one more on that? Do you think his campaign at this time is going to further incite racial and ethnic hatred?

The President. Well, I hope not, but that's more up to him than it is to me. And it's also a matter of how we respond to it. All I'm saying is, after all we've been through in this country in the last couple of years and all the hate crimes we've seen, I just don't see how we can possibly walk away from this session of Congress and not pass this.

And I guess I ought to say, in reaction to the previous question about the continuing resolution, we should remember that in addition to the budgets, the fact that there is a continuing resolution and the Congress will stay in session gives us the chance to pass the bill that would enable more disabled people to go to work. It gives us a chance to pass the Patients' Bill of Rights. It gives us a chance to pass the minimum wage. We've got a chance to do a lot of other good things to end the year on a very high note and a very positive note for the American people. So we have to just keep plugging away.

And I think all of us have an obligation to try to minimize racial, ethnic, and other kinds of discrimination, and we just have to keep working at it. And I'm going to do that.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:03 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House.

Statement Honoring Chinese-American Veterans of World War II

October 25, 1999

I am honored to recognize the contributions of Chinese-Americans during World War II. This untold story is one of great patriotism and heroism. Some 20,000 Chinese-Americans served our country during this period as aviation specialists, paratroopers, military intelligence officers, medics, in the Women Army Corps (WAC's) and Women Army Air Force Service (WASP's) and so on. From Normandy to prisoner of war camps they served this Nation with great pride and courage.

Asian-Americans, as demonstrated by the veterans I met today, have proved over and over again their loyalty to this country. It is intolerable that the patriotism of Asian-Americans continues to be questioned, in the light of the recent allegations of espionage at one of our national laboratories. Asian-American scientists like those who have

served proudly in our military have made significant contributions to our national security and have made the U.S. the foremost leader in scientific achievements. Yet instead of our thanks, many have received nothing by suspicion and prejudice.

Racism and stereotyping have no place in our Nation of diverse peoples who trace their ancestry to every corner of the globe. The remarkable men and women that I met today are examples of why our diversity is our greatest strength. Today I honor these Chinese-American veterans of World War II and their service and steadfast loyalty to this country.

Statement on the Election of Fernando de la Rua as President of Argentina

October 25, 1999

On behalf of the people of the United States, I congratulate Fernando de la Rua on his victory in Argentina's Presidential election. The Argentine elections were a model of civic participation and a testament to the strength and vibrancy of Argentina's democracy.

I look forward to working with President-elect de la Rua and to deepening the partnership between our two nations.

Remarks at a "Broadway for Hillary" Celebration in New York City

October 25, 1999

Now, you all just relax while I get used to my new role. [*Laughter*] Somewhere between the amen corner for Jimmy Naughton, the straight man for Rosie, and the warmup for Hillary, I'll figure out something to do. [*Laughter*]

Jim, that was a heck of a speech. It's a good thing you didn't file—Al and Bill would be nervous about that. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank all of you for being here tonight. I'm profoundly grateful to everyone who conceived and put together this program, and all the people who gave their time. I remember the "Broadway for Clinton" program back in June of '92. And I remember the people who performed and the people who came, because I was running third in the polls back then. [*Laughter*] But by the time the convention rolled around, everything had changed.

I want to thank Senator Schumer for his remarks and his support; the New York legislative leaders that are here: Speaker Silver, Majority Leader Bragman, Senator Martin Connor; Judith Hope, the State Democratic chair; our borough president, C. Virginia Fields; the Bronx borough president, Freddy Ferrer; City Council Speaker Peter Vallone; Comptroller Alan Hevesi; and Mark Green, our longtime friend, the public advocate. Thank you all very much. And thank you, Rosie, and everyone else who performed.

Jim Naughton said most of the stuff I was going to say—[*laughter*]—and better. So I would just like to say a few things. First, thank you for being so good to us in New York. Thank you for 1992, for the convention, for the vote. Thank you for 1996—the largest margin of victory we had in any State in America. Thank you for welcoming us here when we leave the White House. Thank you for being here tonight, not only as supporters but as friends.

October's a great month for us and our family. First, we celebrate, on the 11th, our anniversary. We just had our 24th wedding anniversary. And then we celebrate Hillary's birthday. And now, thanks to your doing this, and the fact we get back about 2 in the morning, we expect to have like a 24-hour celebration.

We have been very blessed, Hillary and I, and we've been blessed by our family, our friends, and the opportunity to serve in public life. I am very grateful for all the work that we have done together over all these years. I am very grateful that now my wife has a chance to do what I thought she ought to do 26 years ago when we finished law school. And I was really afraid, as I have told many of our friends—and some of our old friends are nodding their heads out there—the only thing that really worried me about our getting married was that somehow she would be denied the opportunity to share her gifts in the most important way. For we have always only cared most, in our work life, about public service. I have watched her for over 30 years give—I've only watched her

for 29 years, but, for 30 years and more—care passionately about children and give herself to service.

The first job she had out of law school was with the Children's Defense Fund. She could have gone to work for any number of law firms, but she wanted to help kids. Then she became head of the Legal Services Corporation Board, when President Carter was in office. She then became chair of the Children's Defense Fund board. She headed the education reform movement in Arkansas when I was Governor. And as First Lady, she has literally inspired tens of millions of mothers and their children all around the world, trying to get a better deal for young girls and their families in poor villages from Africa to Latin America to Asia.

She has been a major force in the passage of legislation that will enable us to insure over 5 million children with health insurance. It makes it easier for people to adopt children. She has worked on all the things we have done to try to reduce violence against our young people. She has played a major role in all of our reforms in education, early childhood learning, and health care. And in so doing, she has always been willing to do it without getting, really, anything like the credit she deserved for the work she did and the impact she had. Over all these years, I have seen her driven by a personal sense of responsibility to serve, partly because she does believe it takes a village to raise a child or to raise a country.

When we went to Washington in 1992, late '92, about 3 weeks before the inaugural, we had some ideas that we thought would work to turn our country around in a very troubled time. They were just ideas, just an argument. But the country gave us a chance, and the results have been good. Jimmy Naughton listed some of them.

What I want to say to you tonight in bringing Hillary on is this, in my lifetime, we have never had the chance, as a nation, we have today. The country was going in the wrong direction; now it's going in the right direction. We have the lowest unemployment in 29 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years, the lowest crime rate in 30 years, first back-to-back surpluses in 42 years, the lowest poverty rate in 20 years. We're moving in the right direction.

But we all know there are these huge challenges out there—the aging of America, the largest and most diverse group of kids we ever had, the opportunity and the responsibility we have to give poor people a chance to be a part of this prosperity for the first time ever. In my lifetime, this has never happened. In the 1960's, we had an economy that, for a few years, was maybe about like this. But we had the civil rights crisis, and we had the war in Vietnam, and we became divided, and we never got around to doing it. Now all we have to overcome is the politics of pettiness and personal destruction. We have to lift ourselves out of that as one country, one America.

All the things that Jim said a Senator will have to decide are true. But the thing you ought to think about is this: New York has distinct challenges and unprecedented opportunities. Your country has the first chance in your lifetime to imagine and then to build the future of our dreams for our children and for our grandchildren. And it will only happen if we are led by the right people.

I have done everything I could do to leave this country in good shape. There is still a lot more we can do in the next 15 months. But fundamentally, the decisions the voters make in the year 2000, the millennial year, will determine whether we do what so many people do when times are good—get distracted, become self-indulgent, make short-term and often foolish decisions; or we seize the chance of a lifetime.

The best I can give the American people now is to do my best to make sure that they know that the person I love most in the world is without any doubt the ablest, most passionate, most committed, most visionary public servant I have ever known.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:30 p.m. at the Ford Center for the Performing Arts. In his remarks, he referred to author James Naughton, who introduced the President; talk show host and event emcee Rosie O'Donnell; Vice President Al Gore and former Senator Bill Bradley, Democratic candidates for President; Sheldon Silver, speaker, and Michael J. Bragman, majority leader, New York State Assembly; State Senator Martin Connor; C. Virginia Fields, president, Borough of

Manhattan; Fernando Ferrer, president, Borough of the Bronx; and Alan Hevesi, comptroller, and Mark Green, public advocate, New York City. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady.

Memorandum on the Proposed Australia-United States Agreement on Technology for the Separation of Isotopes of Uranium by Laser Excitation

October 25, 1999

Presidential Determination No. 00–03

Memorandum for the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Energy

Subject: Presidential Determination on the Proposed Agreement for Cooperation Between the United States of America and Australia Concerning Technology for the Separation of Isotopes of Uranium by Laser Excitation

I have considered the proposed Agreement for Cooperation Between the United States of America and Australia Concerning Technology for the Separation of Isotopes of Uranium by Laser Excitation, along with the views, recommendations, and statements of the interested agencies.

I have determined that the performance of the Agreement will promote, and will not constitute an unreasonable risk to, the common defense and security. Pursuant to section 123 b. of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended (42 U.S.C. 2153(b)), I hereby approve the proposed Agreement and authorize you to arrange for its execution.

The Secretary of State is authorized and directed to publish this determination in the *Federal Register*.

William J. Clinton

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 26.

Message to the House of Representatives Returning Without Approval the "Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State, the Judiciary, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2000"

October 25, 1999

To the House of Representatives:

I am returning herewith without my approval H.R. 2670, the "Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State, the Judiciary, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2000."

This legislation should embody the continuing commitment of this Administration on a broad range of fundamental principles. First and foremost amongst these tenets is the notion that the United States of America should be the safest country in the world. Our families must feel secure in their neighborhoods. Since 1993, the progress realized toward that end has been impressive and must not be impeded.

Moreover, America must continue to lead the community of nations toward a safer, more prosperous and democratic world. This guidepost has for generations advanced the cause of peace and freedom internationally, and an erosion of this policy is untenable and unacceptable at this critical moment in history.

This great Nation serves as example to the world of a just and humane society. We must continue to lead by our example and maintain a system that vigorously protects and rigorously respects the civil rights of individuals, the dignity of every citizen, and the basic justice and fairness afforded to every American.

Unfortunately, this bill fails to uphold these principles.

Specifically, and most notably, the bill fails to adequately fund the proposed 21st Century Policing Initiative, which builds on the success of the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program. I requested $1.275 billion in new appropriations, and this bill provides only $325 million. To date, the COPS program has funded more than 100,000 additional police officers for our streets. The 21st Century Policing initiative would place an additional 30,000 to 50,000 police officers on the street over the next 5

years and would expand the concept of community policing to include community prosecution, law enforcement technology assistance, and crime prevention. Funding the COPS program required a bipartisan commitment, and it paid off; recently released statistics show that we have the lowest murder rate in 31 years and the longest continuous decline in crime on record. I strongly believe we must forge a similar commitment to support the COPS program's logical successor.

The bill would also threaten America's ability to lead in the world by failing to meet our obligation to pay our dues and our debts to the United Nations. This is a problem I have been working with the Congress to resolve for several years, but this bill fails to provide a solution.

Though the bill does include adequate funds to support our annual contribution to the United Nations regular budget, it conditions the funding on separate authorizing legislation, continuing an unacceptable linkage to an unrelated issue. For this reason, because of additional provisions, and because the bill is inconsistent with provisions agreed to by the authorizing committees, the bill would still cause the United States to lose its vote in the United Nations. It would undercut efforts that matter to America in which the U.N. plays an important role, from our fight against terrorism and proliferation, to our efforts to promote human rights, the well-being of children, and the health of our environment. It would undermine our ability to shape the U.N.'s agenda in all these areas and to press for reforms that will make its work more effective. All this is unacceptable. Great nations meet their responsibilities, and I am determined that we will meet ours.

In addition, the bill includes only $200 million for International Peacekeeping Activities, a reduction of almost 60-percent from my request. The requested level of $485 million is necessary to meet anticipated peacekeeping requirements in East Timor, Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, and Eritrea. In each of these places, the United States has worked with allies and friends to end conflicts that have claimed countless innocent lives and thrown whole regions into turmoil. In each case, the U.N. either has been or may be asked to help implement fragile peace agreements, by performing essential tasks such as separating adversaries, maintaining cease-fires, enabling refugees to go home, training police forces, and overseeing civilian institutions. In each case, as in all U.N. peacekeeping missions, other countries will pay 75 percent of the cost and provide virtually all the military personnel.

It is clearly in America's national interest to support an institution through which other countries share the burden of making peace. Refusing to do our part would be dangerous and self-defeating. It could undermine fragile peace agreements that America helped forge, and spark new emergencies to which we could only respond later at far greater cost. It would leave America with an unacceptable choice in times of conflict and crisis abroad: a choice between acting alone and doing nothing.

The bill includes a number of provisions regarding the conduct of foreign affairs that raise serious constitutional concerns. Provisions concerning Jerusalem are objectionable on constitutional, foreign policy, and operational grounds. The actions called for by these provisions would prejudice the outcome of the Israeli-Palestinian permanent status negotiations, which have recently begun and which the parties are committed to concluding within a year. The bill also includes a provision that could be read to prevent the United States from engaging in diplomatic efforts regarding the Kyoto protocol. Applying restrictions to the President's authority to engage in international negotiations and activities raises serious constitutional concerns. Other provisions that should be deleted from the bill because they would unconstitutionally constrain the President's authority include provisions on Haiti, Vietnam, and command and control of United Nations Peacekeeping efforts. My Administration's objections to these and other language provisions have been made clear in previous statements of Administration policy regarding this bill.

This bill does not contain a needed hate crimes provision that was included in the Senate version of the bill. I urge the Congress to pass legislation in a timely manner

that would strengthen the Federal Government's ability to combat hate crimes by relaxing jurisdictional obstacles and by giving Federal prosecutors the ability to prosecute hate crimes that are based on sexual orientation, gender, or disability, along with those based on race, color, religion, and national origin.

The bill freezes the funding level for the Legal Services Corporation. Adequate funding for legal services is essential to ensuring that all citizens have access to the Nation's justice system. I urge the Congress to fully fund my request, which provides an increase of $40 million over the FY 1999 enacted level. Also, funding for the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) is frozen at the enacted level. This level would undermine EEOC's progress in reducing the backlog of employment discrimination cases.

Similarly, inadequate funding is provided for the United States Commission on Civil Rights and the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice. The bill does not fund my requested $13 million increase for the Civil Rights Division, including increases for law enforcement actions related to hate crimes, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and fair housing and lending. I ask the Congress to restore requested funds for these law enforcement enhancements.

The bill contains adequate funding for the decennial census, but I oppose language that could inhibit the Census Bureau's ability to actually conduct the census. The bill would require the Census Bureau to obtain approval from certain committees if it chooses to shift funds among eight functions or frameworks. This approval process would impose an unnecessary and potentially time-consuming constraint on the management of the decennial census. It is imperative that we move forward on the census; this legislation could impede it.

The United States has recently entered into the U.S.-Canada Pacific Salmon Agreement. The agreement ends years of contention between the U.S. and Canada regarding expired fishing harvest restrictions and provides for improved fisheries management. This bill includes extraneous legislative riders that would hinder the implementation of that important Agreement. These riders would prohibit the application of the Endangered Species Act to Alaskan salmon fisheries and would change the voting structure of the Pacific Salmon Commission, the decision-making body established by the Agreement. In essence, the voting structure rider would prevent the Federal Government from negotiating agreements that balance the interests of all States. In addition to the riders, the bill provides only $10 million of the $60 million requested to implement the Salmon Agreement. Similarly, funding for the Salmon Recovery Fund falls far short of that needed to work cooperatively with the States of Washington, Oregon, California, and Alaska and with Treaty Tribes to help them mount effective State-based plans to restore Pacific coastal salmon runs. These shortfalls together would severely inhibit our ability to recover this important species.

In addition, the enrolled bill does not provide my request for a number of other environmental programs, including my Lands Legacy Initiative, Endangered Species Act activities, the Clean Water Action Plan, and the Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment program. The additional funds required to bring these programs to my requested levels are small compared to the benefits they provide to our natural resources.

The bill does not include $100 million in new funding for the Drug Intervention Program, which would have provided critical assistance to State and local governments developing and implementing comprehensive systems for drug testing, drug treatment, and graduated sanctions for drug offenders. These resources are critical to reducing drug use in America.

The bill does not provide additional requested funding to the Justice Department for tobacco litigation. Smoking-related health expenses cost taxpayers billions of dollars each year through Medicare, veterans' and military health, and other Federal health programs. The Department of Justice needs the $20 million I requested to represent the interests of the taxpayers, who should not have to bear the responsibility for these staggering costs.

This bill would also hurt our Nation's small businesses. The level provided for the Small

Business Administration's (SBA's) operating expenses would inhibit my Administration's ability to provide service to the Nation's 24 million small businesses. The bill also fails to provide sufficient funds for the Disaster Loan program within the SBA. Without additional funding, the SBA will not be able to respond adequately to the needs arising from Hurricane Floyd and other natural disasters. In addition, the bill does not include funds for my New Markets Initiative to invest in targeted rural and urban areas.

The bill fails to include a proposed provision to clarify current law and protect taxpayer interests in the telecommunications spectrum auction process. Currently, $5.6 billion of bid-for-spectrum is tied up in bankruptcy court, with a very real risk that spectrum licensees will be able to retain spectrum at a fraction of its real market value. The requested provision would maintain the integrity of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) auction process while also ensuring speedy deployment of new telecommunications services. The bill would also deny funds needed by the FCC for investments in technology to better serve the communications industry. Also, the bill does not provide sufficient funds for the continued operations of the FCC. The Commission requires additional funds to invest in technology to serve the communications industry more effectively.

In conference action, a rider was added that would amend the recently-enacted Treasury and General Government Appropriations Act to expand the prohibition of discrimination against individuals who refuse to ''prescribe'' contraceptives to individuals who ''otherwise provide for'' contraceptives (all nonphysician providers) in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program. As an example, this language could allow pharmacists to refuse to dispense contraceptive prescriptions. This action violated jurisdictional concerns and is also unacceptable policy.

The bill underfunds a number of high-priority programs within the Department of Commerce. My Administration sought an additional $9 million to help public broadcasters meet the Federal deadline to establish digital broadcasting capability by May 1, 2003. The bill would provide less than half of last year's funding level for the Critical Infrastructure Assurance Office. The bill also fails to fund the Department's other programs to protect critical information and communications infrastructures. The Congress must restore these funds if the Department is to continue performing its important and emerging role in coordinating activities that support our economic and national security.

The bill does not include any funds to reimburse Guam and other territories for the costs of detaining and repatriating smuggled Chinese aliens. These entities deserve our support for assisting in this interdiction effort.

I look forward to working with the Congress to craft an appropriations bill that I can support, and to passage of one that will facilitate our shared objectives.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
October 25, 1999.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 26.

Message to the Congress Transmitting the Proposed "Strengthen Social Security and Medicare Act of 1999"

October 26, 1999

To the Congress of the United States:

I transmit herewith for your immediate consideration a legislative proposal entitled the ''Strengthen Social Security and Medicare Act of 1999.''

The Social Security system is one of the cornerstones of American national policy and together with the additional protections afforded by the Medicare system, has helped provide retirement security for millions of Americans over the last 60 years. However, the long-term solvency of the Social Security and Medicare trust funds is not guaranteed. The Social Security trust fund is currently expected to become insolvent starting in

2034 as the number of retired workers doubles. The Medicare system also faces significant financial shortfalls, with the Hospital Insurance Trust Fund projected to become exhausted in 2015. We need to take additional steps to strengthen Social Security and Medicare for future generations of Americans.

In addition to preserving Social Security and Medicare, the Congress and the President have a responsibility to future generations to reduce the debt held by the public. Paying down the debt will produce substantial interest savings, and this legislation proposes to devote these entirely to Social Security after 2010. At the same time, by contributing to the growth of the overall economy debt reduction will improve the Government's ability to fulfill its responsibilities and to face future challenges, including preserving and strengthening Social Security and Medicare.

The enclosed bill would help achieve these goals by devoting the entire Social Security surpluses to debt reduction, extending the solvency of Social Security to 2050, protecting Social Security and Medicare funds in the budget process, reserving one-third of the non-Social Security surplus to strengthen and modernize Medicare, and paying down the debt by 2015. It is clear and straightforward legislation that would strengthen and preserve Social Security and Medicare for our children and grandchildren. The bill would:

- Extend the life of Social Security from 2034 to 2050 by reinvesting the interest savings from the debt reduction resulting from Social Security surpluses.
- Establish a Medicare surplus reserve equal to one-third of any on-budget surplus for the total of the period of fiscal years 2000 through 2009 to strengthen and modernize Medicare.
- Add a further protection for Social Security and Medicare by extending the budget enforcement rules that have provided the foundation for our fiscal discipline, including the discretionary caps and pay-as-you-go budget rules.

I urge the prompt and favorable consideration of this proposal.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
October 26, 1999.

Statement on Senate Action on the Proposed "African Growth and Opportunity Act"

October 26, 1999

I applaud the strong, bipartisan vote in the Senate to move forward with consideration of the "African Growth and Opportunity Act." This historic legislation will help build a partnership that will strengthen economic and political ties, increase trade, and boost economic growth and opportunity in both the United States and Africa. It will strengthen the relationship between our Nation and a continent entering a new era of democracy and economic progress. I urge Congress to pass this legislation this year.

Statement on Signing the Wireless Communications and Public Safety Act of 1999

October 26, 1999

Today I am pleased to sign into law the Wireless Communications and Public Safety Act of 1999. By making it easier to use wireless phones to report emergencies, this bill could save thousands of lives every year.

Nearly 100,000 times each day, someone uses a wireless phone to make an emergency call. People with wireless phones can speed the delivery of public safety services by providing rapid reports of car crashes, incidents of aggressive or drunk driving, serious crimes, and natural disasters. Getting rapid care to someone who is suffering from a heart attack or is involved in a car crash can mean the difference between life and death.

The legislation I am signing today will improve emergency wireless communications in several ways. First, it will make 9–1–1 the universal emergency telephone number for

wireless and ''wireline'' telephones across the United States. Currently, there are 20 different emergency wireless numbers in different States. Second, it will encourage statewide coordination of the efforts of public safety and law enforcement officials to protect our citizens and save lives. Finally, it will increase private sector investment in emergency wireless services by providing wireless companies with the same level of liability protection that ''wireline'' telecommunications companies have.

I want to thank Members of Congress, the wireless industry, public safety officials, and medical professionals who worked together to pass this important legislation.

NOTE: S. 800, approved October 26, was assigned Public Law No. 106–81.

Remarks at a Vogue Magazine Reception

October 26, 1999

Thank you very much, Annie, Anna, Madam Secretary, ladies and gentlemen. First of all, you've just heard in Madeleine Albright, who has done a magnificent job for our country, the introduction—give her a hand. [*Applause*] She was so generous to me, it was a perfect illustration of Clinton's third law of politics: Always be introduced by someone you appointed to high office.

It was so nice, I had to pinch myself to make sure I was still alive. [*Laughter*] Normally, you have to keel over before people say things like that for you. [*Laughter*]

Let me say, I am so honored to have all of you here for this truly historic moment in the cultural history of our country. We're here to honor two groups of people that I think are very important to our present and to our future, women and photographers. [*Laughter*] The White House—some of my former photographers, as well as some of my present ones, are here tonight, but a lot of people in the office have almost made fun of me, because I'm always comparing the job of a photographer in Washington with the job of a reporter or a columnist. And in some ways, the job of the photographer is easy, because a photographer is rewarded just for looking to see what's there and capturing it in some remarkable, clear, crystal way. The poor reporters and columnists have to perform reverse plastic surgery on the event to get any notice whatever. [*Laughter*] But it's a really important thing.

I want to say one thing. I'm delighted that Senator and Mrs. Leahy are here. Senator Leahy, some of you may know, is also a very accomplished photographer. And we have in the home of our cabin at Camp David a magnificent picture that he took in Tibet, which we treasure very much. So there are a lot of people here who admire you, Annie, and your craft.

I also want to thank Susan Sontag for her participation in this. You never know how a book like this is going to do, but in terms of its appropriateness at this moment in our history, it strikes me that it could have the kind of impact that James Agee and Walker Evans had so many decades ago with their magnificent book, ''Let Us Now Praise Famous Men,'' which captured the faces of the Depression. And for people like me who grew up the children of Depression-era parents in very poor places, it had a profound impact. And that's what I sense is possible here.

This work also—you heard about our Vital Voices initiative that Hillary has worked so hard on, the Secretary of State has worked so hard to support. But Vital Voices has a lot in common with what is being celebrated here, because it has worked to empower women all over the world who are just interested in making politics what it's supposed to be, an instrument of solving common problems. And I have seen the power of this.

Hillary and I went to Africa a couple of years ago, and we were in, I think it was Senegal, at the end of our trip, but we went to this meeting. Hillary is always getting to go to these meetings and talk to people about solving—[*laughter*]. And all of a sudden—and she said, ''You know, I met these people the last time I was here from this little village, these women who were determined to end the practice of female genital mutilation.'' And they had a few token guys there who were cheering them on. It's the same thing everywhere. [*Laughter*] ''And they have come all the way to the Capital to meet you.

So you've got to understand this, and you've got to handle this.''

So we go into this meeting, and there are these people just in these resplendent, bright, brilliant, beautiful native dresses, these women and their token male supporters, who were also pretty dolled up and pretty proud of themselves for trekking in and sticking up. [*Laughter*] But they were alive.

I met with Irish women that Hillary had been working with for several years, by the time I met with them, who had been critical to the progress we've made in the Irish peace process. In Bosnia, when the Muslims and Croats and the Serbs wouldn't even talk to each other, there were women in groups reaching across the ethnic and religious lines to work for the common future of their children. And they weren't really anti-political. They were political in the best sense.

One of the things that happens to all political systems and all movements is that people tend to acquire a vested interest in the perpetuation of whatever the problem is, because that's how they got where they are. And we all have to be willing to let it go and go on.

And this vital voice, she just got back from Iceland. And in Reykjavik, they had women from central Europe, from the Baltic States, from Russia, from all the Scandinavian countries coming together to talk about common problems. This is a huge potential force in world politics. And I, for one, am very grateful.

I've also seen the work that we have done since we've been here—and I thank you, Secretary Albright—through our AID programs. We fund now 2 million microenterprise loans every single year, almost all of which go to poor village women in Latin America and Asia and Africa, who with just a little bit of money can change the future.

We met a woman in Uganda in a little village who was now in the rabbit business, having gone up from the chicken business. We met another woman who had started her own restaurant in this little village. All these things are an important part of changing the new millennium for women and their daughters.

I'm especially grateful, too, for the work that Hillary and Madeleine have done to try to encourage the education of young women. And I loved it, when we were in Africa and Uganda, they were bragging about the fact that they had more girls in school than other African countries, that they knew we wanted to hear it. They knew we cared, but they knew it was the right thing to do.

And the last thing I would like to say, because no one has mentioned this yet—perhaps the most difficult place in the world for women today is still Afghanistan. And I hope that the fact that we have had two Afghan women here in one of our human rights events and the fact that we continue to push for changes in the lives of those people and to take as many in as we can here will someday lead to a change in that country because no women should have to undergo what those women have experienced.

Now, we celebrate tonight Annie Leibovitz's photographs of our women, from coal miners to Supreme Court justices. We say that they are all important, that they all matter, that they are not any longer invisible, nor are they any longer discounted, that we know our ability to manage all of our other diversities in America, and we are fast becoming the most diverse, complicated, big democracy in the world, racially, ethnically, religiously, many other ways.

Our ability to manage them all must begin with our ability to have genuine equal treatment, mutual respect, and equal empowerment of women and men. And I truly believe that the stunning gifts of this great artist and fine human being, who happens to be a woman, will make a major contribution to that end.

I'm glad you brought your family. They're a pretty rowdy bunch. [*Laughter*] And I see where you got your spirit. And I see how you became so observant. It was probably necessary from time to time to be observant just to survive in this crowd. [*Laughter*] But I—I thank you, Annie, for doing this. I thank you for your dedication to your work. I thank you for showing that capturing the simple truth about people is the most interesting thing of all.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:52 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to photographer Annie Leibovitz; Anna Wintour, editor-in-chief, Vogue magazine; and author and critic Susan Sontag whose essay appears in "Annie Leibovitz: Women," a companion catalog to the exhibit of the same title which opened at the Corcoran Gallery of Art on October 27. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady.

Telephone Remarks on the Oprah Winfrey Show

October 21, 1999

Ms. Winfrey. Someone is on the phone who wants to speak with you, so you look right there, and then you can hear them speak.

The President. Mary Beth?

Mary Beth Talley. Uh-huh?

The President. It's President Clinton. How are you?

Ms. Talley. Good.

The President. Well, I heard about you when that terrible thing happened, and I had a good visit with your minister at the church. But I just wanted to call and thank you for what you've done and for being so humble about it. You did show great courage. You were selfless. And I think you represent something really good in the young people of our country today.

Yesterday I had a lot of young people here who were serving in our national service program, AmeriCorps—150,000 have in the last 5 years. The day before, I met with young people who came from all over America to lobby Congress to do more things to help combat violence and pass sensible gun legislation.

But you know, I think that everyone watching this program should look at you and see not only that you are a wonderful person who did a wonderful thing, but I think you represent something profoundly good in the young people of our country. And I hope more and more people will follow your lead, in daily life, in ways that may not require as much courage but do require as much commitment to the welfare of other people. And I hope you'll always be willing to share your story and those terrible moments, which prove that you are a truly wonderful person.

Ms. Winfrey. Thank you, President Clinton. We have a number of young people here today who, in the face of difficult times, have shown that they were willing to make a difference. So I know you wanted to say something to all of them, as well as Mary Beth.

The President. I do. I think, you know, for many years, there was this sort of typecasting of young people today as generation X-ers, people that were only interested in themselves and didn't care about the larger society or the problems of less fortunate people or people in trouble. And I think every day you all prove that it's not true.

I believe today's generation of young Americans is the most idealistic, the most concerned and, in some ways, the most committed to good citizenship of any generation of young people we've ever had. And I just want you to get out there and spread the word and let people know what you're doing and who you are and where you're coming from and try to make sure other young people follow your lead.

I am very proud of you and very grateful for what you do to make our country a better place.

Ms. Winfrey. Thank you, President Clinton. Say hello to Hillary for us.

The President. I'll do it. She's doing great. She said to say hello, Oprah.

Ms. Winfrey. Thank you.

The President. Goodbye, everybody.

Ms. Winfrey. Isn't this great?

The President. Goodbye, Mary Beth.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:52 p.m. from the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to program honoree Mary Beth Talley, who protected her friend Heather McDonald during the shooting at Wedgewood Baptist Church in Fort Worth, TX, on September 15. These remarks were released by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 27 the day the program aired. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks on Departure for the Capitol and an Exchange With Reporters

October 27, 1999

Debt Reduction

The President. Good afternoon. Nearly 7 years ago, at a time of economic distress, social division, and political drift, we set out on a course to put America's fiscal house in order with an economic strategy rooted in common sense and common values, committed to bringing down the deficit, investing more in people, and expanding trade.

With the historic 1993 economic plan and the 1997 Balanced Budget Act, we made the tough choices to reduce the deficit and balance the budget the right way. Year-in and year-out, we have resisted politically attractive but economically unwise tax cuts that would have abandoned this commitment and taken us in the wrong direction. It hasn't been easy, and all along the way many said our approach wouldn't work. Some Members of Congress who, in 1993, took the courageous stand for our future even lost their seats as a result of what they did.

But this economic strategy has paid off. We have the longest peacetime expansion in history, 19½ million new jobs, the lowest unemployment rate in 29 years, the lowest welfare rates in 30 years, the lowest poverty rates in 20 years, the highest homeownership in history.

America has now enjoyed 7 consecutive years of fiscal improvement and economic growth, withstanding along the way the Asian financial crisis and helping to bring the world back toward prosperity. Now we have further evidence that our economic plan is working.

Today the Department of the Treasury and the Office of Management and Budget are releasing the financial totals for the fiscal year that just ended. It is now official, and I'm proud to announce that we posted a budget surplus of $123 billion, the largest surplus in American history.

And in the last 2 years alone, we have paid down our Nation's debt by $140 billion, the largest debt reduction in our Nation's history. We have closed the book on deficits and opened the door on a new era of economic opportunity. These new numbers also show that last year we came within $1 billion of balancing the budget without using the Social Security surplus, for the first time in decades.

Unfortunately, this year's Republican budget reverses that course, spending about $18 billion from the Social Security surplus, according to estimates from the Congressional Budget Office. That is wrong, and it doesn't have to be. Congress should pass the plan I submitted that meets our priorities, doesn't rely on the Social Security surplus, and continues our aggressive efforts to pay down the debt.

According to today's report, America's debt is now $1.7 trillion lower than it was projected to be when I took office. What does that mean? For America it means lower interest payments on our debt and lower interest costs across-the-board. Last year the Government paid $91 billion less in interest than was projected in 1993, creating a virtuous cycle that boosted the budget surplus and further reduced the debt.

For American business, debt reduction means that the Government is borrowing less, so there's more capital for business to invest at more modest prices. As a result, investments in technology, in particular, have boomed, bringing greater productivity, more jobs, higher wages.

The best story is perhaps what it means for working families. That's what the chart to my left shows. Debt reduction means lower interest rates and more money. It means $2,000 less in home mortgage payments for the typical family. It means $200 less in car payments and $200 less in college loan payments. Debt reduction really means a tax cut and a sizable one for America's families. It proves that putting our fiscal house in order helps every American household.

Now, in spite of our progress, the congressional majority has continued to try to take us off this path, first with an irresponsible tax plan that I vetoed and then with a budget that fails to live up to our values and our interest for the future. Even without their tax cut—can you just imagine the fix we'd be in if that tax cut had become law? Even without their tax cut, they are set to spend several billion dollars of this year's Social Security surplus, while trying to disguise it with gimmicks. They are even set to enact an

across-the-board spending cut that would have a destructive impact on our efforts to educate our children, protect our environment, and modernize our military. Even with all this, they would not extend the solvency of Social Security or Medicare by one single day.

That is why, yesterday, I sent legislation to Capitol Hill that would ensure that all the Social Security surplus goes to debt reduction. And just like when a family cuts its debt, this will result in lower interest payments for the Government. I have also proposed, therefore, that we use these interest savings from Social Security surplus contributions to our debt reduction to extend the life of Social Security until the year 2050, which will encompass the life span of most of the baby boomers.

Now, we can do this and still have a budget that puts 100,000 teachers in the classroom, 50,000 police on the street, provides real protection for our environment, strengthen and modernizes Medicare, and keeps us on track to becoming debt-free for the first time since 1835.

Today's good news is a result of hard-won economic choices that put our people first. That strategy has created the most prosperous economy in generations. If we seize this historic moment, we can now create a generation of prosperity. That is the debt we still owe to our children and to America's future in the new century.

I am committed to working with the Congress to make good on that commitment and to get the job done.

Thank you very much.

Attack at the Armenian Parliament

Q. Mr. President, how concerned are you about the situation in Armenia, and who do you believe is responsible for that coup attempt?

The President. Well, as to the last—I'm very concerned about it and my heart and prayers go out to the people of Armenia and the families of the very important officials who have been killed already. We are not sure who is responsible. The situation is ongoing. As soon as we know more, we will let you know.

We have a good relationship with Armenia, and as you know, we've done a lot of work with Armenia and Azerbaijan to try to resolve the difficulties surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh. The two Presidents have been very forthcoming, and this is a real blow to that country and to that region, and I'm very sorry about it. But I don't know any more at this time.

Privacy of Medical Records

Q. Mr. President, is it really possible to keep a privacy of medical records guaranteed at a time of electronic data keeping and when those records are worth a lot of money in marketing?

The President. Well, they are worth a lot of money in marketing, which is why we're determined to keep them private, except in appropriate circumstances or where the patients, themselves, agree.

It's a complicated question, as you know, which is, presumably, why the Congress in 1996 agreed to let me take executive action if they were unable to resolve it legislatively. I still think as a matter of policy, because it's such an important sweeping matter, it would be better if we could have legislation on this. But I intend to proceed and to propose the regulations, open them for public comment.

I do believe that there are technological fixes which could protect the privacy of records. It's complex; we're trying to make the rules as understandable, as clear as possible, and as susceptible of enforcement and honoring as possible by the people who have to implement them.

But this privacy issue is a big deal. And the more we become digitalized and the more all of our records are stored electronically, the more we'll have to do. In the financial modernization bill, which we've reached agreement on, I'm very pleased that we were able to allow the financial modernization to proceed, which, I think, will be good for our economy. I'm very pleased that we were able to preserve the strong Community Reinvestment Act, which has been a major part of our anti-poverty strategy. But I do think there—the privacy rules are not as strong as they might be, and I hope there will be an

effort, congressionally, to deal with that issue as well.

Trade With Europe

Q. Mr. President, when you talked to Mr. Prodi today, did you talk about American beef and the bananas? What are the results of these conversations?

The President. Well, they agreed to work with us to try to resolve both those matters in an expeditious fashion. They are causing real trouble, not only between the United States and the European Union but for our efforts to build a global trading system. Because if there is an international body which is supposed to resolve these disputes and you win and then you win again and then you win again and nothing happens, it's very frustrating. It undermines our ability to build support in the Congress and in the country for a new trade round which, as you know, I think is very, very important.

Nuclear Weapons in Armenia

Q. Sir, on Armenia, on nuclear weapons, are there nuclear weapons or nuclear stores in Armenia that you know about?

The President. I believe that what we have done on the nuclear weapons issue and getting the nuclear weapons out of all the republics of the former Soviet Union, except for Russia, is well-known, and I have no reason to believe that we have not succeeded in that.

Payment of United Nations Dues

Q. Mr. President, what would be the message sent if the U.S. again fails to pay its U.N. dues? And will you use your veto pen to ensure that the U.N. dues are paid this year?

The President. Well, I have already vetoed the legislation which didn't provide for that, as you know. And now I'm working very, very hard to try to resolve that. I hope that the responsible leaders in the Senate and the House, in the Republican and the Democratic Party, in the pro-life and pro-choice camps, will work through this.

It is wrong for the United States not to meet its responsibilities to the United Nations, and we get a lot out of that. You know, there are these people in Kosovo and elsewhere around the world, in East Timor and other places, doing work that America does not have to do because of the United Nations. And all they want us to do is to pay our fair share, and that's what I think we ought to do.

I've got to go to President Ford's Medal of Freedom now—I mean, Congressional Medal.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:40 p.m. on the South Grounds at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Robert Kocharian of Armenia; President Heydar Aliyev of Azerbaijan; and President Romano Prodi of Italy, who met with the President in his capacity as President of the European Council.

Remarks on Presenting the Congressional Gold Medal to Former President Gerald R. Ford and Former First Lady Betty Ford

October 27, 1999

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Gephardt, Mr. Armey, Mr. Ehlers, Senator Lott, Senator Daschle, Senator Thurmond, Senator Abraham, Governor, Chaplain Ford, Chaplain Ogilvie; to the members of the Ford family and the Members of the Congress who are here; Secretary Albright, Secretary Cohen, Ambassador Holbrooke; Senator and Mrs. Dole, good to see you; and Mr. Michel, Secretary Laird, so many other great Americans who are here.

You know, so many wonderful things have been said here today, I wouldn't be surprised if President Ford didn't leave here and check to see whether the filing is closed in the New Hampshire primary. [*Laughter*]

I would like to say that I think every Member of Congress and every former colleague you have here is proud to be here, without regard to his or her party. There is one person who is not here I would like to take just 15 seconds to acknowledge because he embodied so many of the qualities that we now revere you for, and that's Senator John Chafee from Rhode Island. We miss him, and we are grateful, too, for his contributions to our Nation.

It was just a couple of months ago that I had the honor of welcoming President and Mrs. Ford back to the White House to award Gerald Ford the Presidential Medal of Freedom, so he wouldn't be the only person in his house without one. [*Laughter*] It is fitting now that both the White House and the Congress have bestowed their highest awards on the Fords because they served both the Congress and the White House so nobly.

In these hallowed halls, President Ford, as Congressman Ford, worked for 25 years. On the House floor, he was a forceful leader. In the caucus room, he was a loyal party leader. In the cloakroom and the committee room, he knew when to put politics aside for the sake of the people.

As has been said, he never sought the Presidency. But thank goodness for the rest of us he did not shrink from it, either. He steered us through stormy seas to new and brighter beginnings for human rights, for the reduction of nuclear arms, for America's role in the world.

And so many of the issues that occupied him then continue to be on his agenda today, whether he's advising his successors in the Oval Office or defending affirmative action or making the case for free trade. I am immensely grateful for all the times we have spent together, for his counsel, for his support, for his always constructive criticism, and for the occasional golf game.

I also want to say, as so many have, a personal word of thanks to Betty Ford. Perhaps no First Lady in our history, with the possible exception of Eleanor Roosevelt, has touched so many of us in such a personal way. Because I lost my mother to breast cancer, Betty Ford is a heroine to me. Because my family has been victimized by alcoholism, and I know what it's like to see good, fine people stare into the abyss of their own personal despair, I will be forever grateful to the Betty Ford Clinic. And for the millions of other people whose lives have literally been turned around and often saved—they may not have gone to that clinic but went somewhere because she showed them it was not wrong for a good person and a strong person to be imperfect and ask for help. You gave us a gift, and we thank you.

I also want to say that there's something special about them together. Their children are here, still rooting for them, and that's something, because kids go through hell if their folks are in politics. They get all the burdens and none of the benefits.

I'll tell you a little story. On September 19, 1993, for what I understand was the only time in the history of America, four Presidents had dinner in the White House. President and Mrs. Ford were there; President and Mrs. Carter was there; and President Bush joined Hillary and me in the White House. It was a magnificent night. It was the night after the Middle East peace signing between Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat, and it was the night before we kicked off the campaign to ratify the North American Free Trade Agreement. And we were all sort of carried away by the moment.

I invited all the Presidents to spend the night in the White House. I thought that would be a neat thing, kind of a bunking party, you know. And President Bush stayed, and President and Mrs. Carter stayed. But President and Mrs. Ford said that they were going to spend the night in the hotel room where they had spent their first night as a married couple nearly 50 years before. They did not have time to come to the White House. They were seeing to their own business, and I love that. [*Laughter*] I've told that story a hundred times ever since, and I never get tired of it. It think they made the right decision. [*Laughter*]

Gerald Ford had the great honor of being President on our Bicentennial. And on that July 4th, 23 years ago, he stood in Valley Forge and spoke these words: "A nation survives only so long as the spirit of sacrifice and self-discipline is strong within its people." We are here today in no small measure because that spirit was so strong within Gerald and Betty Ford.

Mr. President, there's one other personal thing I want to say. Every American remembers where he or she was when you became President. We're all up here talking now about how great your were in healing the country and the wonderful words you said. But you made some tough decisions, too. And when you made your healing decisions, you made the Democrats and the liberals

mad one day, and then you made the conservatives mad the next day. You made everybody mad at you.

I was a young politician trying to get elected to Congress. Thank God I failed. [*Laughter*] Otherwise I would have never become President, probably. But I want you to know something personal. It was easy for us to criticize you, because we were caught up in the moment. You didn't get caught up in the moment, and you were right. You were right for the controversial decisions you made to keep the country together, and I thank you for that.

So it is our common honor to thank these people for their contributions for America and my pleasure now to ask the Speaker and Senator Thurmond to join me as we present them the Congressional Gold Medal.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:02 p.m. in the rotunda at the Capitol. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. John Engler of Michigan; U.S. Special Envoy Richard C. Holbrooke; former Senator Bob Dole, and his wife Elizabeth; former Representative Robert H. Michel; and former Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the former President Gerald R. Ford, former First Lady Betty Ford, and Speaker J. Dennis Hastert.

Statement on the Attack at the Armenian Parliament

October 27, 1999

I am shocked and saddened by today's armed attacks in the Armenian Parliament. I condemn this senseless act against individuals actively engaged in building democracy in their country. The victims and their families are in our thoughts and prayers.

The United States has built strong ties with Armenia, focused on helping the Armenian people build a prosperous, secure, and democratic future. At this time of tragedy, we renew our support for the Armenian people and their leaders as they continue to build on the principles that today's victims have so courageously embodied.

Joint Declaration by President William Jefferson Clinton and European Commission President Romano Prodi

October 27, 1999

1. President Clinton and President Prodi held a wide-ranging discussion on 27 October about the prospects for launching a new Round of trade negotiations in the World Trade Organization (WTO) next month at Seattle. There was an essential overlap of interests and a desire to collaborate closely to bridge remaining differences.

2. They recalled the EU–U.S. Bonn Declaration of June 1999, where we agreed that "together we can advance our shared values, our common security and our mutual prosperity more effectively than either of us alone. Together . . . we can face . . . the complexity of ensuring that democracy and free markets improve tangibly the lives of people in a rapidly globalizing world."

3. Mindful of the essential role played by the multilateral trading system in supporting over the last 50 years the greatest economic expansion in history and more recently in containing the adverse impacts of economic downturns in Asia and elsewhere, the two leaders agreed to strive to secure agreement in Seattle to launch a new Round of global trade negotiations.

4. Their discussions concentrated on the possible topics for a new Round and how to provide momentum for a successful launch at Seattle. Not only agriculture and services, but a number of other issues need to be included, to meet the U.S. and EU's respective interests and those of our partners, but also to ensure that the WTO continues to be a leading part of the solution to the problems that will confront the global economy in the next century. In this respect, they discussed topics such as comprehensive market access; greater coherence in international economic policy making to complement and enhance the work underway in the Bretton Woods institutions and other UN agencies; government procurement (including transparency and market access); foreign direct investment; electronic commerce (including extension of the moratorium agreed last May); competition; trade facilitation; trade-related

intellectual property rights protection (TRIPS); technical barriers to trade; and the issue of early agreements, provisional where necessary. While differences remain between the United States and the European Union as to the most appropriate scope for the forthcoming negotiations, both sides agreed to continue to take forward their discussions in a constructive spirit in forthcoming weeks.

5. The leaders agreed that the new round had to be definitively different in content and process from its predecessors. For example, we had to take into account the rapid advances in technology, particularly related to electronic commerce. They agreed on the goal of better addressing the social dimensions of trade by promoting a substantive dialogue with our partners, involving the WTO and the ILO, although we still differ on the modalities. The dialogue would include an examination of the relationship between trade policy, trade liberalization, development and fundamental labor rights, so as to maximize the benefits of open trade for workers. The two leaders also agreed that the new round should enhance the potential for positive synergies between trade liberalization, environmental protection and economic development.

6. But the agenda for the new Round also had to address the needs and interests of all our partners. Although major players in the world economy, the U.S. and EU needed to do more than in previous Rounds to work with all our partners in the WTO system. The new Round should offer major opportunities to the developing countries, strengthening their role in the world economy. Particular attention needs to be paid to the least developed countries. Their concerns and interests should be fully taken into account, including through specifically targeted, enhanced, and effective market access and capacity building.

7. An additional important new element was to make the multilateral trading system as responsive as possible to all our citizens. The two leaders agreed to work vigorously to assure the public that the trading system and the WTO as an institution works in the broadest interests of everyone—and to ensure that this remains the case. Both leaders renewed their commitment to the WTO Dispute Settlement System, and agreed that WTO decisions should be respected and implemented. The leaders also anticipated ratifying at Seattle a package of improvements to the Dispute Settlement Understanding. Additionally, they agreed to work towards enhanced transparency in the WTO decision-making process.

Washington, D.C.,
27 October 1999

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint declaration.

Memorandum on the Report to the Congress Regarding Conditions in Burma and U.S. Policy Toward Burma

October 27, 1999

Memorandum for the Secretary of State

Subject: Report to the Congress Regarding Conditions in Burma and U.S. Policy Toward Burma

Pursuant to the requirements set forth under the heading ''Policy Toward Burma'' in section 570(d) of the FY 1997 Foreign Operations Appropriations Act, as contained in the Omnibus Consolidated Appropriations Act (Public Law 104–208), a report is required every 6 months following enactment concerning:

(1) progress toward democratization in Burma;

(2) progress on improving the quality of life of the Burmese people, including progress on market reforms, living standards, labor standards, use of forced labor in the tourist industry, and environmental quality; and

(3) progress made in developing a comprehensive, multilateral strategy to bring democracy to and improve human rights practices and the quality of life in Burma, including the development of a dialogue between the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) and democratic opposition groups in Burma.

You are hereby authorized and directed to transmit the attached report fulfilling this requirement to the appropriate committees of

the Congress and to arrange for publication of this memorandum in the *Federal Register*.

William J. Clinton

Memorandum on Pakistan and India

October 27, 1999

Presidential Determination No. 2000–04

Memorandum for the Secretary of State

Subject: Pakistan and India

Pursuant to the authority vested in me as President of the United States, including under title IX of the Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2000 (Public Law 106–79), I hereby waive the sanctions contained in sections 101 and 102 of the Arms Export Control Act, section 620E(e) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, and section 2(b)(4) of the Export-Import Bank Act of 1945:

(1) with respect to India, insofar as such sanctions would otherwise apply to activities of the Export-Import Bank, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, and the Trade and Development Agency; assistance under the "International Military Education and Training" program; the making of any loan or the providing of any credit to the Government of India by any U.S. bank; assistance to the Asian Elephant Conservation Fund, the Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Fund, and the Indo-American Environmental Leadership program; and any credit, credit guarantee, or other financial assistance provided by the Department of Agriculture to support the purchase of food or other agricultural commodity; and

(2) with respect to Pakistan, insofar as such sanctions would otherwise apply to any credit, credit guarantee, or other financial assistance provided by the Department of Agriculture to support the purchase of food or other agricultural commodity; and the making of any loan or the providing of any credit to the Government of Pakistan by any U.S. bank.

You are hereby authorized and directed to report this determination to the Congress and to arrange for its publication in the *Federal Register*.

William J. Clinton

Remarks at a Reception for Representative David Bonior

October 27, 1999

Thank you very much. Thank you, David, and thank you, Vic. I'm glad to know you still have to pay some political dues for the price of going into private life. [*Laughter*]

Let me say, I'm honored to be here for David Bonior. And the most important thing I can say to all of you is, thank you, because you know it's important that he be reelected or you wouldn't be here. I do think it is worth pointing out that he represents the kind of district that is pretty reflective of America; it could go either way. And he always has a competitive race because they spend a lot of money against him, and they try to say things that will turn the voters against him and convince them that he's something he isn't.

Dave and Judy go home every summer; they knock on thousands of doors; they actually talk to people. I know that if you give money to a lot of candidates, one of the things you want to know is, now, if I really back this person, is he or she going to work hard? This guy kills himself to fulfill his responsibilities to his country and to his party in Washington and to his district back home. And he does as good a job in as difficult a situation as anybody in the United States.

The other thing I want to say is that I am in a unique position having worked with him for nearly 7 years now, under some of the most difficult conceivable circumstances with very hard issues, to tell you that he is a great leader who is both loved and admired. Some of the people in the other party, they seem fond of electing people that they can then be terrified of, so they have to be browbeaten into doing whatever it is they want to do. This guy is followed because he is respected, admired, and loved by people who sometimes don't agree with him on every issue.

The last point I want to make is this. We are very close now to returning a majority of the House of Representatives to the Democrats. We can't lose any seats, and we've got to win some. And we certainly don't want to fool with a leadership team that is working and is producing for our party and, more importantly, for our country.

The most important thing in politics is to have, first of all, the right ideas and then, secondly, the right people. And I define the right people as people who understand how ideas affect real peoples' lives and identify with them and then have the courage to fight for them.

One of the things that David didn't say, that I think he ought to take a lot of credit for back home—in a district of prudent, conservative Americans—is that when I came into office the deficit was $290 billion. We just got the final numbers on last year's budget. We had a $123 billion surplus. We paid $140 billion down on the debt in the last 2 years. If I had run for President in 1992 and I had told you, ''Vote for me. I'll turn this $290 billion deficit into a surplus. We'll do it 2 years in a row, and I'll pay $140 billion on the debt,'' you would have said, ''You know, he's a very nice young man, but he's totally delusional, and we should send him home.'' [*Laughter*]

Now, that reduction, on average, for the average American family, has been worth $2,000 savings in home mortgage payments, a $200 savings in car payments, and a $200 savings in college loan payments. So the average American family has gotten a $2400 tax cut, in effect, from responsible economic policies brought to you by our party. And it's not just the President. None of this would have happened if we hadn't had the votes in for the '93 economic plan and if David and Vic and others hadn't been up there whipping it. We did not have a single vote to spare, and the Vice President had to break a tie in the Senate, and it turned the country around.

And for that reason alone, in a district that thinks of itself as a moderately conservative district, I wouldn't give away a man without whom it would not have happened. This country's economic recovery was sparked by our commitment to that and by enacting it, and David Bonior deserves an enormous amount of credit for it, and I'm very grateful to him, and I thank him.

The second point I want to make, only because a lot of you run in the circles of our friends, is he was too modest in the litany he gave. And I say this because, again, I say, I could have done none of this without his help and others. But here are the real numbers. This country now has the longest peacetime expansion in history. If it goes on until February, it will be the longest economic expansion in the history of America, and we didn't have a war during this. It's unthinkable. The highest homeownership in history. And here are the numbers. We have the lowest unemployment rate in 29 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years, the lowest poverty rates in 20 years, the lowest crime rate in 30 years, the lowest teen pregnancy rate in 30 years, the first back-to-back budget surpluses in 42 years with the smallest Federal Government in 37 years. Now, that is a record that you ought to be able to run on in any congressional district in America and be very proud of.

And I'll close with this; this is by far the most important point. The real issue before the American people—and Senator Bradley and Vice President Gore are having a town meeting right now in New Hampshire while we're here—the issue is not whether we're going to change, of course we are. The world is changing. It's practically moving under our feet. The question is, how are we going to change? Are we going to, on the one hand, take a U-turn and go back to the policies that got us in so much trouble in the first place, which is essentially what all the people running on—for the other party's nomination advocate on economic and social policy? Are we going to forget what got us here in the first place and forget about things that will maintain our economic prosperity? Or are we going to build on what has happened, to take advantage of this moment to meet the big challenges of the new century?

This is the first time in my lifetime that our people, as a people, have had a chance to essentially build the future of their dreams for their children. You know, the last time we had an economy that was about this good was in the 1960's: We had the civil rights

crisis; we had the Vietnam war. Now we have no excuse. But a nation is no different from a business or a family or an individual. You are most vulnerable to making a mistake in life when you think everything is peachy-keen, because it's easy to just relax, it's easy to get distracted, it's easy to do something that's in the short-term selfish interest that doesn't deal with the long run.

The challenges this country faces is no different than the challenges that you have seen in your businesses, in your families, and in your lives. When things are really good, it's hard to muster the vision, the will, and the focus to do the right, big things. That's what the candidates should all be questioned about this year.

The most important reason for his candidacy and his leadership is so we can save Social Security for the baby boom generation, so we can modernize Medicare and put a prescription drug benefit, so we can radically improve the education of the largest and most diverse group of kids in the country's history, so we can bring prosperity to the people and places that still haven't felt it, so we can keep on until we pay down the debt completely for the first time since 1835, so we can stop all these assaults on the environment and prove that we can clean the environment and grow the economy at the same time, so that we can meet our responsibilities in the world.

David is an internationalist, and Gerald Ford spoke so passionately today about the importance of a bipartisan commitment to our global responsibilities, which means, do what it takes to continue to fight for peace and against ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and Kosovo, continue to support the Irish peace process, continue to support the Africans, who want to stop further tribal wars, continue to work for peace in Northern Ireland, continue to work for peace in the Middle East, continue to work against the proliferation of nuclear weapons, continue to work for the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, continue to work against terrorism.

This is an important part of our future. If you don't think that all this stuff we're enjoying could be interrupted tomorrow by a collapse of the international economic system, by a rise in global terrorism, by America walking away from its responsibilities to peace in these important areas—think again. So I say to you, this is an important part of it.

And the last thing I'll say is, we Democrats, we may have lost a lot of votes over the last 30 years because we believe in one America, without regard to race or gender or religion or sexual orientation. But if you look at the way the world is in turmoil today and if you look at the horrible, though isolated, instances of hate-related violence in America today, I think you will agree that it's pretty important that we hang in there together.

Dave Bonior has a big heart, a good mind, and a steel spine. He will fight a buzz saw for what he believes in. And that's why the people who follow his lead both respect him and love him. You did a good thing in coming here tonight, but we've got a lot of work to do between now and next year at this time. If we do it, we're going to have a lot to celebrate.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:40 p.m. in the Concorde Room at the Hay Adams Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to former Representative Vic Fazio; and Judy Bonior, wife of Representative David Bonior.

Remarks at an Awards Ceremony for Blue Ribbon Schools

October 28, 1999

Thank you. Good morning. Congratulations. I want to begin by thanking Ruth Summerlin for her introduction and for the power of her example which includes not only turning her school around but asking for a little more help. Did you notice the way she slipped that in there? [*Laughter*] That was pretty impressive.

I want to thank Secretary Riley for his wonderful leadership. All the things he said about me, he might have said about himself. He is clearly not only the longest serving but the ablest, the most dedicated, and most effective Secretary of Education we have ever had.

When the new millennium rolls around in January, we will have completed 21 years of working together, as friends and colleagues,

since we were young Governors in the South trying to start our education reform programs, more than two decades ago. And every year has been a joy, and I'm very grateful for what he's done in this administration.

I want to acknowledge the presence in the audience of Vincent Ferrandino, the executive director of the National Association of Elementary School Principals. And I also want to thank Bill Ivey, as the Secretary did, the chair of the NEA, and say just a brief word about—before I get into a couple of other announcements—about what Ruth said about bringing the arts back into the schools. I would urge all of you to see this new movie that's out, that I had screened at the White House, starring Meryl Streep, called ''Music of the Heart,'' about the East Harlem violin program.

But I have been mortified at the collapse of the availability of music and the arts in the schools all over America because of all kinds of issues that you understand better than I do. But I've been active in VH1's effort to get people to donate instruments and other support for music programs back in the schools. The NEA has worked very hard to support arts programs in the schools.

There is not only concrete evidence that such programs improve student learning in others areas because of the way they make the brain work; there's also a lot of evidence that many people with equal learning capacities learn in different ways, in ways that sometimes are nonlinear. And I think it is a terrible mistake to deprive these children of access to music and the arts if we can avoid it at all. So I urge you to look at the movie. And for those of you who agree, this movie may give you a lot of boost, because I'll be surprised if it's not also a commercial success. It's a terrific film.

Now, I'd also like to say a word about some new economic news before I get into talking about education. When I came here as President, almost 7 years ago, our administration—Vice President Gore and I—we said we would try to turn America around. And a lot of people have forgotten it. There was a lot of economic distress then, an enormous amount of social division—we'd had that big riot in Los Angeles—a lot of alienation, and a sense of political drift. And so we said, ''Give us a chance, and we will have economic policies that promote opportunity for all, social policies that promote responsibility from all, and a community of all Americans. We'll try to pull this country together and move it forward.''

A big part of our economic policy was investing in our people, from early childhood up, also expanding our ability to sell American products, and finally, getting this deficit down and getting rid of it, which was keeping interest rates high and stagnating the economy all over America.

We just got the news today that in the third quarter of this year—that is the quarter ending on the last day of September—our economy grew at an amazing rate of 4.8 percent, after growing 4.3 percent last year, 4.1 percent in 1996, and all of this with the lowest inflation rate in decades, while we were actually cutting the size of the Federal Government.

So in the years since I've been President, the economy has grown 3.8 percent. If you take out the shrinking of the Federal Government and the shrinking of the deficit, it's grown over the last 7 years by well over 4 percent and with no inflation. It's virtually, as far as I know, unprecedented in our time.

It has given us over 19 million new jobs; along with the welfare reform law, it's given us the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years; the lowest poverty rates in 20 years. And in the new housing numbers released today, more Americans now own their own homes, over two-thirds of us, for the first time in the history of the United States.

The percentage of Hispanic- and African-American homeowners has also broken new records, as Hispanic- and African-American unemployment has dropped to record lows since we've been keeping separate statistics, nearly 30 years ago.

This new report shows, once again, that if we have strong fiscal discipline, strong investment, and a strong commitment to education and the new economy, we can get an investment boom and maximize the benefits of the information and technology revolutions now going on all over the world.

If we keep this going, in February, without having had a war, we will have the longest economic expansion in history. It's now the

longest peacetime expansion in history. Wars guarantee you an economic expansion. In February, it will be the longest economic expansion of any kind in history, without a major conflict. And we can be very grateful for that. It's a tribute to the American people and their innovation.

Yesterday I pointed out that we had the first back-to-back budget surpluses in 42 years—42 years since the Government was in the black 2 years in a row. And that has saved us about $1.7 trillion in debt over what it was projected to be when I took office. And those savings are worth, to the average American family, $2,000 in lower mortgage rates; $200 in lower car payment rates; $200 in lower college loan rates.

This is the good news. But we now have a chance that no generation, at least in my lifetime, has had to shape the future of our dreams for our children in the absence of an overarching threat from without and in the absence of an overarching crisis within our borders. And I say that because the last time the economy was remotely this good was when I was a young man finishing high school in the early 1960's. But we had to deal with the civil rights challenge. It was an honor and a responsibility, but it had to be done. And then we had to deal with all the controversy about the war in Vietnam, our role in it, the cost of it, and we never got around to finishing our assault on poverty and doing a lot of other things.

But a lot of great things happened then, including Medicare and Medicaid and the first substantial Federal aid to education, because of the potential. But never in my lifetime have we had the chance we now have to shape the future of our dreams for our children.

And since all of you deal with children all the time, I think you know the wisdom of something a wise, old sage told me 20 years ago in politics when I got elected Governor at 32. I was too young to know what I was doing, I think, at the time. [*Laughter*] But he said, ''Let me tell you something, Bill. In this life, you're always most vulnerable when you think you're invulnerable.'' And if you think about it, what I want you to understand is, countries are no different than businesses or schools or families or individuals. When things are rocking along really good, because we're human, it's easy to get distracted. When there is a threat, it's easy to be focused.

I told somebody the other day—I got a big laugh—I said, ''You know, I get so angry at all these conflicts around the world and these expressions of hatred here at home based on race or religion or sexual orientation. If we were being attacked by space aliens, like in that movie, 'Independence Day,' we'd all be looking for a foxhole to get in together and a gun to pick up together.'' The absence of a threat sometimes causes us to lose our sense of focus, our center, our concentration.

But the truth is that this is the greatest opportunity that we've had in my lifetime. And so we have to look to the great challenges of the future, because we know that they're out there. There's going to be twice as many of us over 65 in 30 years, only two people working for every one person drawing Social Security. So for younger people, it's imperative that we reform Social Security and Medicare, so that the baby boom generation, when we retire, doesn't bankrupt our children and their ability to raise our grandchildren.

We know the recovery of our economy has left a lot of people and places behind, probably in a lot of communities represented here. We now have a chance to embrace those places and the working poor of our country in a way we never have. And we better do it now, when the economy's good.

We know that we have a chance to get not only—now we're paying down the debt. We paid the debt down $140 billion in the last 2 years. The most we ever did. We can actually get rid of it in 15 years. Can you imagine, in 1992, if I'd run for office and said, ''Folks, we've got this $300 billion deficit. Vote for me. I'll give you back-to-back surpluses. I'll pay $140 billion on the debt, and I'll show you how to get us out of debt for the first time since 1835?'' People would have said, ''You know, he seems like a nice young man, but we'd better send him home to Arkansas. He's a little touched in the head.'' [*Laughter*]

But we can do that now. And we ought to do it, because we ought to keep the interest rates down, we ought to keep the economy going, we ought to keep things moving. And I'm smart enough to know when this happens, the State taxes roll in, and the State coffers are in good shape, and they have more money to give to schools. And that's important, to keep the economy going to help the schools. It's important.

But one challenge above all we have to look at, and that is the fact that we now have the largest and most diverse group of students in our history and more diversity everywhere. And my home State of Arkansas, which, in the 1980 census was second only to West Virginia in having the highest percentage of people living in the State that were born in the State, this year was second in the country in the percentage growth of the Hispanic population. There's a Catholic church in the northwest part of my State in an area where there were no minorities 20 years ago, literally, none when I started out in politics, that now has to have mass in Spanish every single Sunday.

Across the river here, there's a Baptist minister from Arkansas who is the cousin of my minister at home, who moved up here to find that the biggest congregation he had besides the regular one at 11 o'clock every Sunday morning was a separate Korean congregation. And he now has these massive language classes in his church. These things—America is changing, and all of you are dealing with this.

Now, our Founders understood all this. If you go back to the dawn of the Republic, Thomas Jefferson said, ''an enlightened citizenry is indispensable to the proper functioning of a republic.'' And keep in mind, what does the Declaration of Independence say? We're establishing a democratic republic because it's the best way for people to pursue life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Then Jefferson said, because an enlightened citizen is indispensable for the proper functioning of a republic, he went on to say, ''therefore, educate and inform the whole mass of people.''

So they knew then what is even more true today because of the nature of the economy and society in which we live. Every one of you representing every one of these 266 blue ribbon schools is, therefore, living out the faith of the Founders of this country, that all of our children can learn and that all of them must learn. And for that, we are all in your debt. There are schools here from every region and every neighborhood. In each of your schools there are many differences, but in each school, students are learning at a high level.

We have already made some real progress in the last few years, and I think it's worth pointing out. The very idea of standards, which was championed in our Goals 2000 legislation and embodied in 1989 in the National Education Goals, is now taking root across the country. But it takes a good while to turn the education system around. In 1996, as late as 1996, there were only 14 States with measurable performances for students, measurable standards for students' performance—1996. Today, there are 50. That may be one reason why reading and math scores are up nationwide, including in some of our most disadvantaged poor areas, urban, small town, and rural.

More and more schools are reducing class size with the help of the initiative begun last fall the bipartisan support of Congress to put 30,000 of our goal of 100,000 new, highly trained teachers in the classroom. Greenwood Elementary in Newport News, a blue ribbon winner, hired new teachers this fall, bringing class sizes down in the first and second grades, from 27 children per teacher to 20. And you just heard Ruth say that they had used the class size funds to have teachers in her school.

Many other blue ribbon schools are using the Vice President's E-rate program to connect their classrooms and libraries to the Internet. I just want to talk about that a minute. A few years ago the Vice President and I went out to California for the first of our NetDays, and we hooked up—we wired a school so that all the classrooms could be hooked up to the Internet, as part of our goal of trying to get everybody hooked up by the end of next year. And we were wiring this school, and I looked at him, and I said, ''Well, how are these places going to afford to use the Internet?'' It's sort of an Alphonse and

Gaston routine we do; the fact that I'm technologically challenged has become legendary in our administration. [*Laughter*]

And he said, ''Well, we've got to give them a discount.'' And so we came up with this idea in the Telecommunications Act of giving the Federal Communications Commission the ability to give a discount for schools and hospitals and libraries. And there was the awfulest squalling about it you ever heard around here for a long time. And our political opponents started calling it Gore tax—[*laughter*]—you know, on the takeoff, because he likes to run around in GORETEX, I guess. But anyway—[*laughter*]—but we were attacked for it. We were opposed in it, but we hung in there. And it was the right thing to do, and that E-rate has literally empowered—some of our poorer schools get a 90 percent subsidy for the E-rate. And it has been a wonderful thing, because one of the things we cannot do in this country is allow a digital divide to develop. It already exists. We're determined to close it.

Our objective is to see Internet access in America become as universal as telephone access. And if we can do that we will open up all kinds of educational and economic opportunities to people and places left behind. I also believe if we can have the same sort of penetration around the world in poor countries of cell phones and the Internet as quickly as possible, a lot of countries with whom we deal and whom we'd like to help could skip 30 years of economic development and make a great leap into the new century.

So I want to thank you, all of you who supported us with the E-rate program, because it's making a big difference. For example, to mention one of the schools here, with the help of the E-rate, seventh graders at Whitebead School in Pauls Valley, Oklahoma, are communicating directly with scientists conducting research in Africa. I didn't do that when I was in the seventh grade. [*Laughter*] Students are writing papers based on that research. The E-rate gives every seventh grader in America at least the chance to do that as we get the schools wired and hooked up.

And Secretary Riley would never forgive me if I didn't mention this, just parenthetically. Some of our schools are too old to be wired and too decrepit. And they need to be modernized and rewired in all kinds of ways. One of our proposals here that is not particularly costly would allow us to help local school districts build or modernize 6,000 schools. And if you're for that, I hope you'll help us pass it.

In Philadelphia, the average school building is 65 years old; New York City, 40 percent of the schools are over 70 years old—40 percent. All kinds—there's a large number of schools that are schools that are still heated by coal furnaces. And then I've been to—I was in a little town in Florida the other day where they had a dozen trailers behind the school building—a dozen—just one little school. So this is a big issue, and I hope that we can continue to work on it.

But to begin with the good news. You should all be very proud, not only of what you have done but of what you represent. In the last 16 years since the issuance of the ''Nation At Risk'' report in 1983, there has been a sea change in attitudes and commitments on the part of American educators and their supporters, among parents and business leaders and community leaders, and a genuine commitment to excellence in education from all kinds of schools in all kinds of places.

And it's been a difficult process because some schools have adequate funding and some don't, and because, at least for the public schools, they get their money from three different places, which means that you have to hire more people in the administrative arm of the schools to keep up with and be accountable to. And there are all kinds of issues here.

But we are getting it, and you prove that all of our kids can learn and that we can turn America's education system toward the 21st century, and that is the good news. But it is terribly important that we all recognize that we still have work to do and that this will always be a moving target. No one believes, yet, that we are giving every child in America a world-class education in K through 12. Everybody knows we have the best system of higher education in the world. Therefore, we cannot quit until we know that we have done the same with K through 12.

And I think that this is the attitude we ought to have. Keep in mind, you don't know

when we'll have an economic time like this again. You don't know when we'll be living through a time when we feel secure from outside threat again for this long a period of time. And I think when you go home, you need to try to give people some historical sense of this. And in your communities, you need to get people imbued with a passionate commitment about this and every other challenge.

I'll give you another example. We've got the lowest crime rate in 30 years now. Now, that's wonderful—[*inaudible*]—everyone who thinks it's low enough, please raise your hand. [*Laughter*] You see what I mean? So why should we quit until America's the safest big country in the world? If we want to be the freest big country, why not? Why shouldn't we be the safest big country in the world? Why shouldn't we keep working to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and children? Why shouldn't we keep working to make our—we should do it.

The point I want to make—again, I know I'm preaching to the choir, here, but this is important—is that this is a time for intense focus and commitment, and we are most in danger of being distracted and drifting around because things seem to be going so well. But make no mistake about it, we will pay an enormous price in opportunities foregone and future problems in our lap if we don't use this magic moment to build the future of our dreams. And it's especially true in education.

And I am worried that what we see in Congress today in this debate on education is an example of the kind of mental lapse or focus on short-term politics that we can see in other areas, not only in the Congress and in Washington but in the country, because it's so easy to indulge yourself in whatever's in front of your nose when things are rocking along and you're doing well. But it's a huge mistake.

Now, in Washington the good news is—assuming we work through this attempt to have an across-the-board cut, which includes education, that I'm against, but assuming we do that, the big issue in Washington now is more on how we spend money. I mean, I've been fighting for 4 or 5 years on whether to spend adequate amounts of money; now, we're fighting about how to spend it.

For example, last year we reached an agreement with Congress to begin hiring 100,000 new, highly trained teachers to lower class sizes in the early grades for obvious reasons. The size of our schools is exploding. And the research is clear that smaller classes and quality teachers bring higher achievements. Last year congressional Republicans not only agreed to it, they went home and campaigned on it and bragged about the fact that the proposal I made reflected Republican principles, because there was no bureaucracy in it. We just gave the money to the schools, and they hired the teachers. We disbursed the money; schools have gone out; they've hired new teachers.

Now suddenly, the same people who, just before the election last year, thought this was the greatest thing since sliced bread, have not only refused to add any more teachers, they have abandoned the commitment to the ones we've already hired and proposed, basically, to just send the blank check to the districts, and if they don't keep the teachers, fine.

So you have to understand, one of the key things in my mind about what this education debate is about is whether we're going to keep what we've done and continue to add to our goal of putting 100,000 teachers in the classroom. [*Applause*] It's very important. This debate is eerily reminiscent of the debate I had in 1994 in the Congress about putting 100,000 police on the street. And it wasn't rocket science: Violent crime tripled between 1964 and 1994, and the size of our police forces went up 10 percent. A third-grade arithmetic student could figure out the ratio had gotten worse, and that was part of the problem. And part of the reason we've got the lowest crime rate in 30 years is we put those 100,000 police out there, ahead of schedule and under budget.

So if it was true in law enforcement, it will be even more true in education. It's a very important issue. I thank you for your applause, but I want you to stay with us on this. This is not a partisan issue anywhere but Washington. And frankly, I still can't figure out how it got to be a partisan issue since

just a year ago we were all being canonized by the same people for doing this.

Now the budget debate is also about accountability, about getting real results for the education dollars. When all of us are held accountable for meeting higher standards and all the actors in education are given the resources they need to meet those standards from smaller schools to after-school programs, we have progress. And we have seen whole schools can be turned around in a relatively short period of time. Ruth explained how her school was selected by the State of South Carolina, given more resources, and turned itself around. This is not an isolated case.

Two years ago, North Carolina drew up a list of the State's 15 worst performing schools, sent assistance teams to each school, and focused on them. A year later, 14 of the 15 schools had been taken off the bad performance list.

Last year, I was in Cabrini-Green in Chicago, one of the biggest housing projects in the country, one of the most difficult areas in the country, and one of the poorest areas in any big city in the country, to visit an elementary school which has had unbelievably poor performance. In 2 years, under the new system they have there, they doubled their math scores and tripled their reading scores. That's pretty good in 2 years. And even though they started from a low base, they're moving in the right direction. If you double your performance every 2 years, you can go from a very low base to 100 percent in no time. So it's very important.

Our budget has dedicated $200 million to set aside funds to help States and school districts all over America put together teams that would identify and help to turn around or shut down the lowest performing schools. It's not a lot of money, but it's a very big deal because not every State is doing this. And I have a very strong conviction that—you know, I believe that social promotion should be ended. But I don't think you should identify schools or students as failures and then tell the kids there is something wrong with them when the system is failing them. So I think we have to have systems in every State in the country to turn around these schools, because they can all be turned around.

I don't understand why the Congress has refused to put a dime into this $200-million proposal to turn around low-performing schools. I know there is not going to be a press conference where the Republican leaders stand up and say, ''We are unalterably opposed to accountability,'' or, ''We're fine on accountability, but we want to punish the students instead of make the schools better.'' Maybe they think people just wake up in the morning knowing how to do this. But if everyone knew how to do it, it would be done now in every State in the country, in every school district.

So again, I ask for your help here. I presume in this room there are people who are Republicans and Democrats, people who disagree on all different kinds of issues. But if we've got something that we know works, then—to go back to the Framers; they said all of the States were supposed to be the laboratories of democracy. But in a laboratory, when you find a scientific discovery, you publish the results as soon as possible. Then everybody takes it on board, and they build on that scientific discovery and go on to the next one.

In education, when somebody does something that's a true breakthrough, sometimes it takes 3 years to get 15 miles down the road. [*Laughter*] You know this is true, don't you? You know this is true. This is true. I've been working this for 20 years. I can say it's one of our continuing difficulties here. So that's what we're trying to do.

Now, I don't believe that the leaders in Congress can explain why they thought the 100,000 teachers was a good idea last year and this year they're against it. I don't believe they can explain why we have a measure here that we know has succeeded in turning around failing schools in more than one State—that, I might add, the Republican Governors have come out and endorsed—that they won't fund.

They also are opposed to our proposal to help build or modernize 6,000 schools. Now, they also are opposed to funding our troops-to-teachers program, which has been very successful but very limited, trying to get retired military people to go into the schools

in the areas where there's a teacher shortage. Very important where we need more male teachers, particularly for role models. It's a very important issue here.

Although, I might say, because the military has opened up more opportunities for women, more and more women are staying as career officers and coming out, too, and enlisted people. But this is a really successful program. And I asked them to make it much bigger because we've got to hire 2 million new teachers, as Dick Riley has been telling me for years, as so many retire. So we've got a large number of teachers retiring, more and more kids coming into the schools; we've got to hire more teachers.

But again, for reasons I do not understand, there was no funding for our troops-to-teachers program to get more of these good people who are leaving the military, many of them quite young, in their forties, to go into the schools and give 20 more good years or more to the education of our children.

So the labor and education appropriations bill that the Congress is about to consider shortchanges education. You should also know that now they're proposing to make across-the-board cuts in everything from the FBI to national defense to the environment to education. Now, if that bill passes, I will veto it, because I think we need more teachers, more accountability, and more investment in education.

I do not believe that the proper response to America's education challenge is fewer teachers, no accountability, and across-the-board cuts in education. I want to hire 100,000 more teachers, 50,000 more police. I want to protect the environment. I want us to invest in education strategies that work.

Look, we've got the first back-to-back surpluses in 42 years. The debate you're hearing over the budget is because, for the first time in decades, it is now possible for us to separate the budget that comes from—the surplus that comes from your Social Security taxes from the surplus that comes from other things. All these years before last year, all these years, for 20 years, you've been seeing what the deficit was. If you took away the surplus we got from people paying more into Social Security than they were taking out, which was a way of preparing for the baby boomers, the deficit would have been much bigger.

So for the first time—you need to know that's why we're having this—you must think this is crazy, why—they've got a surplus, and they're cutting stuff. What is going on here? What you need to know is that leaders of both parties agreed at the beginning of this year that they would not spend the Social Security surplus anymore and only spend money coming out of the non-Social Security surplus.

Now, the good news is that that helps us pay down the debt. It doesn't do anything for Social Security, however, unless you take the interest savings from paying down the debt and put it into the Social Security Trust Fund, as I have recommended, so we can take it out to 2050 and take care of all the baby boom retirement, take a big burden off all your minds. That's another issue that I want to do.

But—so, the reason we're having this budget fight is that our prosperity and this surplus made it possible for the first time in two decades to segregate out the Social Security surplus. We've been spending the Social Security surplus up here since who shot John. [*Laughter*] And economically, there's no difference in the two. It's just a good thing to set it aside, because it helps us to pay the debt down. And then it will make it easier, I hope, for Congress next year, if not this year, to agree with me to take the interest savings from paying the debt down and put it into Social Security, which so far, they haven't done—which leaves a much smaller amount of money to fund things. And this Congress has already spent $18 billion more than that, and they tried to say they weren't spending the Social Security surplus, trying to blame us with wanting to, which is a miracle how they got that done. [*Laughter*]

But you need to know, and when you go back home, I can imagine the American people must be totally bum-fusseled—keep announcing surpluses, and we keep having budget fights. That's what's going on here. They committed to start right now not spending the Social Security surplus. So I said, "Okay, if you want to do that and you want to spend all this money on defense and we're

going to adequately fund education, the environment, and health care, then here's what we ought to do. Here's some corporate loopholes we ought to close. We ought to make the polluters pay for their toxic waste dumps. And I think we ought to have an increase in the cigarette tax, and that's good health policy anywhere.'' That's what I said.

They said, ''Na, we don't want to do any of that.'' So they did things like say the census was an emergency. We've seen it coming for 10 years; most emergencies are something of a surprise. [*Laughter*] They said that—I mean, this is a strange world up here. [*Laughter*] I want you to know what's going on here. They also said that a lot of the ordinary expenses of the Pentagon—I mean, people go to work over there every day—they've said that these are emergencies, even though the cold war's over. Just showing up for work is an emergency. [*Laughter*] I mean, this is—because if they can—you know, they take this stuff off the books, and then that helps them play these budget games.

And then when I say, ''But you're not spending enough on education, and we've got to fund the Middle East peace process, and we've got to fund our efforts to take down and destroy nuclear weapons in Russia, make the world a safer place, and we've got to fund our responsibilities to the United Nations,'' then they go out and say, ''Oh, Bill Clinton wants to spend the surplus for foreign aid,'' run all these little ads and stuff. It's a strange world up here.

And what I'm saying is—you all laughed when I said this before, I referenced that movie, ''Independence Day,'' but, you know, if we were being attacked by space aliens, we wouldn't be playing these kind of games. These kind of games are only possible because the economy is strong and the American people are self-confident, and people believe, therefore, that this is a moment when they can do frivolous things that they otherwise would never consider doing to try to get short-term political advantage. But it's a huge mistake, because our children are still out there and they are bigger and more diverse than ever before as a group and they have these massive challenges. And all of you have proved that we can give them a world-class education. So we don't have any excuse anymore. You show up in town, and you say, ''Look, all children can learn. Look what we did. We don't have any excuse.''

So I will say again, this should not be a partisan issue. We can find a way through this budget business. It's about accounting and taking modest, difficult measures. But we cannot sacrifice our responsibility to meet these big, long-term challenges, because we have never had a chance like this in our lifetime. Everybody in this audience that's anywhere remotely my age, you just think about it. Think about it.

We spent the 1930's trying to survive the Depression. We spent the 1940's trying to survive World War II and get ready for the cold war. We spent the 1950's and the 1960's trying to survive the cold war, dealing with the civil rights crisis and then dealing with Vietnam, and it drug into 1975. And then we had the oil price shocks and all of our economic problems that went all the way into the 1980's. The Berlin Wall fell 10 years ago. We spent the early part of this decade turning the economy and the social problems around of this country and getting us in a position where we could literally explode. That's where we are now.

You represent proof positive that we can give every American child the education that he or she deserves, not only to thrive in the new century but to ensure the success of the United States. And your dedication to tomorrow and the fact that every day you have to get up and think about not only today's lessons plan but what these little children are going to turn out like—that is the attitude we need here in Washington, across party lines.

So I ask you all—you have shown us the way—do what you can to effect the attitudes here. Do what you can to be heard here, and say, ''Let's take this way beyond partisan politics. There's plenty to argue about down the road, but our children deserve our best. And our best should be driven by what our local principals and our local educators say, what the education research says, what we know works.''

You have proved to us what works. All I'm trying to do is to figure out how to spread it more quickly and give people who are in

real economic binds the opportunity to access things that others regularly take for granted.

We could be going into America's greatest years. I believe we are. But we dare not squander this magic moment.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:23 a.m. in the International Ballroom Center at the Washington Hilton Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Ruth Summerlin, principal, Beaufort Elementary School, Beaufort, SC. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

The President's News Conference With President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria

October 28, 1999

President Clinton. Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Please be seated. President Obasanjo, Mrs. Obasanjo, members of the Nigerian Government, welcome to the White House.

The President has served his country in many ways, including a previous term as President, which was distinguished by his insistence on a peaceful transition to a successor chosen by the people. His recent election marks an even bigger turning point.

Since its birth in 1960, Nigeria's progress has been thwarted over and over again by military leaders with little concern for the 110 million people. For years, its most courageous citizens were jailed or killed; its vast wealth was lost to waste and corruption; its potential to lead its region and the continent toward a better future squandered.

In an early poem, ''Flowers For My Land,'' Nigeria's Nobel laureate, Wole Soyinka, wrote that his beloved country had become a garden of decay. But President Obasanjo's election in May has signaled a new day for Nigeria and new hope for Africa, a fitting capstone to a decade of remarkable democratic revolutions from Poland to South Africa, to the important transition now underway in Indonesia.

It is very much in America's interests that Nigeria succeed, and therefore, we should assist them in their success. We intend to increase our assistance to Nigeria to expand law enforcement cooperation and to work toward an agreement to stimulate trade and investment between us. We intend to do what we can to help Nigeria recover assets plundered by the previous regime.

But we must do more to realize the promise of this moment for Nigeria and for Africa. I want to mention just three issues.

First, we need to recognize that barriers to trade are barriers to opportunity for Africans working hard to catch up to the global economy and for Americans who want to work with them. That's why it is vital that the Senate approve the ''African Growth and Opportunity Act,'' which is now pending and on which I spent much of the afternoon working.

A second concrete step we can take, as President Obasanjo has reminded us, is to help relieve the crushing debt burden that is making it so hard for developing nations to get on their feet. It is neither morally right nor economically sound to say that young democracies like Nigeria, as they overcome the painful legacy of dictatorship or misrule, must choose between making interest payments on their debt and investing in the health and education of their children. As Nigeria undertakes its reforms, I will support generous debt rescheduling through the Paris Club and encourage other countries to take further steps.

Finally, we must keep doing our part to bring an end to Africa's remaining conflicts. Many of you have heard about the unspeakable atrocities visited upon the people of Sierra Leone. Nigeria spent billions of dollars leading the international force that ended civil wars there and in Liberia. And for that, the whole world is in its debt.

Now in Sierra Leone as well as in Congo and hopefully soon in Eritrea and Ethiopia, we have a precious opportunity to work with Africans to make peace last. African countries are assuming the largest burden and the greatest risks. All they ask is that we support their efforts, through the United Nations and their own regional organizations. The United States must not let them down.

That is another reason why it is so vital that we honor our obligations and pay our debts to the United Nations. If we fail to

give others the tools to share the burdens of leadership in these situations, peace agreements we helped to forge may falter, and America would be left with an unacceptable choice in future conflicts, a choice between doing nothing or acting all alone.

I don't want to leave our children that bleak choice, and I intend to keep working with the Congress to get the resources to recognize our mutual responsibilities with others so that we can prevent it.

President Obasanjo once said, "I am uncrushed by the past and hopeful of the future. There can be no freedom in fear." Those succinct words define the essence of democracy and its faith in the capacity of free people to overcome life's obstacles, a universal faith valid no matter where expressed.

Nigeria is a pivot point on which the future of all Africa and much of the world will turn. I am very glad that that country is in the hands of this leader today.

Mr. President, the floor is yours.

President Obasanjo. Mr. President, it is just for me to take this opportunity on behalf of my government and the people of Nigeria to express a deep appreciation for your concern and for your support for the new dispensation in my country for democracy. We thank you for your commitment and the commitment of your country to ensure that democracy will continue to be nurtured and to be sustained in our country and in our part of the world.

We believe that democracy is a process and not an event. And therefore, we must continue to work to expand, to widen, and to deepen the process of democracy, which we are committed to do. We also thank you for the understanding you have shown for the commitment and the sacrifice which our country and our people have made and which we continue to make for peace and stability in our subregion and our region of Africa. We do this knowing and believing that peace is indivisible, and if there is no peace in any part of our subregion, it has implication for us.

We also thank you for the commitment you have made that, while we make our commitment, you will continue to support our commitment, because our own commitment, which will make peace and stability an enduring feature of that part of the world, is a significant contribution to the world of peace, to the world of harmony, to the world of order and stability, which is so dear to all of us and which, of course, is of strategic importance and interest of the United States of America.

We thank you for the fact that you agree with us that in this day and age there should be no part of the world where any section of a society or a community should feel threatened for misgovernance, and we pledge, as we have done before, that whatever needs to be done to ensure humanitarian intervention to save life—dear life—we will join hands with you to ensure it.

Thank you for the reception and the hospitality we have enjoyed here. And we look forward for the opportunity to reciprocate on our land. Thank you.

President Clinton. Thank you.

We will now alternate questions between the American and the Nigerian press members here, and I will call on the American reporters and then the President will call on the Nigerians who have questions. And we'll start with Terry [Terence Hunt, Associated Press]. Go ahead.

Vice President Gore's 2000 Campaign

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. A domestic question. Mr. President, Vice President Gore last night felt compelled to say in New Hampshire, even though no one had asked anything about you, to say, "I understand the disappointment and anger that you feel toward President Clinton, and I felt it myself." Did the Vice President express that anger and disappointment to you at any time, and do you think that you have been a drag on the Vice President's campaign and a reminder of the Lewinsky impeachment issue?

President Clinton. No. You know, I think a lot of people who may not like me may hold it against him, but I don't think you hold him responsible. I don't think mature people hold one person responsible for another person's conduct. Do you?

I think if there had been some example of official misconduct in office which he had been a part of, that would be a different thing. But the American people are inherently fair. And insofar as they do blame him,

I hope they give him some of the credit for the longest peacetime expansion in history and the lowest unemployment rate in 29 years and the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years and the lowest poverty rates in 20 years and the lowest crime rates in 30 years and the first back-to-back budget surpluses in 42 years and a lot of credit for the smallest Federal Government in 37 years. So I would expect he should get some credit for that, and most Americans kind of like that.

If you ask Americans what kind of changes they want—I've told you before, if somebody polled me in one of these things and said, ''Do you want more of the same, or do you want change,'' I would vote for change. You ask them what kind of changes they want. I bet you they will tell you they want to make better schools; they want more accessible health care; they want us to save Social Security and Medicare; they want America to continue to be safer; they want sensible gun restraint measures. And I think that's what the election will be about.

You know, people are not dumb. They vote for what is in their interest. And sometimes some of your fraternity get them—try to get them confused about what they should be voting on or what they should vote against, but in the end, they almost always get it right, and they vote for what's best for themselves and their children. Otherwise we wouldn't still be here after over 200 years. So that's what I think.

In terms of what he said, he hasn't said anything I hadn't said. He also said some other things that were, I noticed, omitted in the way you characterized the questions. But I was quite pleased with those other things he said. So I think the American people will make a decision based on what's in their interest.

I don't think—by the way, I don't think they ought to vote for him on the fact that we had a great record, either, except that the great record in evidence of what he can do and where he will lead. We get hired to work here. It's a privilege to serve. But if you do have a good record, it is certainly evidence of what you can do and what you will lead. And he has a great record and has been the most accomplished Vice President in history by a good, long ways.

You know, even my adversaries admit that I gave him a kind of partnership and a level of responsibility never before remotely equaled in the history of this country. And I think that is worth something in an election, because it shows what you can do.

But the public will make up their own mind based on what's best for them and their children and not be deterred by other people who would like the election to be about something other than what's best for them and their children.

President Obasanjo. Yes, the Nigerian side.

President Clinton. Otherwise, I don't have an opinion about that. [*Laughter*]

President Obasanjo. The Nigerian side, your question could be to me or to the President.

Q. I have two questions.

President Obasanjo. You are being greedy. [*Laughter*]

Q. Thank you.

The two questions: First of all, I want to thank President Clinton for going to Africa and for bringing African issues to the front burner of American policy initiatives. I want to tell you that the 2.5 million Africans in this country, they respect you, and they admire you. Thank you.

President Clinton. Thank you.

Return of Looted Assets/Slavery in Africa

Q. Then I have to ask my question. [*Laughter*] The first question is, Nigeria has spent a lot of money, President Clinton, in peacekeeping in Sierra Leone and in Liberia. As of yesterday, I believe that is about $8 billion. And at the same time, Nigeria lost a lot of money through of lot of—I mean, our leaders looting the treasury and bringing the money not only to the U.S. but to Switzerland. What is the U.S. going to do about it, to recover that money, the money in this country and the money that is in Switzerland? That is the first question.

And then the next question is for the President of Nigeria, President Obasanjo. As we enter the 21st century, the next millennium, Africans in the Sudan—black Africans are being held slaves. The OAU has not done anything about it. And we would like to know, as the President of the largest African

country in Africa, what the Government of Nigeria is going to do to ensure that there is no African who is a slave as we enter the 21st century.

Thank you.

President Clinton. Well, first I'll answer the question you asked me. I think it's important that we do whatever we can to help Nigeria recover money that was looted from the country and that belongs to the people of Nigeria. The Attorney General came to our meeting today, Attorney General Reno, and we are working with the Government of Nigeria, and I will do whatever we can legally do to help recover funds that are in this country and whatever we can do to assist in recovering funds that may be in Switzerland or elsewhere.

You know, we have—we may have to get some help, some voluntary help from the Swiss. You know, the laws are different in different countries, but we think there are quite a number of things we can do here, and we're committed to working with the Nigerian Government to do that.

President Obasanjo. Thank you very much. The only thing I can add to that is that the Swiss authorities have already frozen some accounts in Switzerland, and other steps that have to be taken will be taken as a result of what they have done so far.

The issue of Sudan—I don't think you would be absolutely right to say that the OAU has done nothing about it. Maybe what the OAU has done about it has not achieved the desired result. But let me say this: Over the last 20 years that I was—well, less 3 years and a few months—that I was away in special custody—[*laughter*]—I have been seized with the Sudan problem.

Personally, I know it very well. I've dealt with all the leaders in the Sudan since I left public office in 1979 until now. And I also know that there are other African leaders who are concerned about the problem, particularly the IGAD leaders—that is the organization in the Horn of Africa. And even right now, they are prescribing solutions; they are suggesting and making recommendations to the two sides.

And our own position, Nigeria's position is that we should not have too many cooks; that will spoil the soup. We shall do everything together. And since IGAD is doing a good job, we should work through them; we should support them. And that is what we are doing. And we believe that that way there will be no diversion; there will be no distraction; and eventually we will get the right solution to the problem of Sudan.

But I agree with you. Anywhere in Africa or, indeed, anywhere in the world, there should be no situation of slavery or slave trade at this time, at this stage, at this point in the last year of the dying years of the 20th century, on the eve of the 21st century.

President Clinton. Lori [Lori Santos, United Press International].

Middle East Peace Process

Q. In Oslo, sir, what are you expecting from your meetings with Chairman Arafat and Prime Minister Barak? And what are the next steps, and are you looking for any concrete results?

President Clinton. Well, first of all, I think it's a good thing that we're going to have this trilateral meeting, and it's just another step along the way. They've been making good progress, and they're working hard.

I wouldn't want to raise expectations excessively about what the results of this meeting will be, but they have put themselves on an aggressive timetable, and they have a lot of tough issues to work through. And since the United States has, at least in my time, primarily played a role as a facilitator, with greater or lesser degrees of intensity and initiative—including the Wye talks, where no one slept for 9 days—I think that it's best for me not to speculate about what the substantive results will be.

Let me say this: I believe that both these leaders want to make peace. I believe they're committed to it. And I believe they know they're down to the difficult issues now. But I also believe they're imagining what a final agreement would look like, what they could live with, and what would be good for the other side, and mostly, what would preserve the integrity of their principles and the long-term peace of the region.

So I'm looking forward to the meeting. I'm looking forward to honoring the memory of Yitzhak Rabin. I think he would be very

proud of what Prime Minister Barak and Mr. Arafat are doing now.

President Obasanjo. The Nigerian side?

President Clinton's Commitments to Nigeria

Q. Mr. President, in your statement here you were full of thanks to President Clinton for the support he has expressed to you, probably, during discussions today. Would you give us some of the specific commitment that he made to you during your discussions?

President Obasanjo. Well, the same specific commitment he made to me during our discussion, he has made here. He will support efforts to have resources taken away illegally from Nigeria, to recover them. He will support our efforts to lift the burden of debt, so that we can have a breather to be able to consolidate our democracy. He will support our efforts to be able to be strong enough internally, as a country, and within our subregion and our region, so that we can contribute to peace and stability in our region and in our subregion. He will support efforts to deal with crime, to fight against crime and narcotic traffic in our country.

Those are some of them, and I think for those commitments he deserves to be thanked. I don't know what you think.

President Clinton. Can I just say, also—I don't believe you said this exactly, Mr. President. I did make it clear that we have requested from the Congress funds sufficient to increase our bilateral aid to Nigeria, somewhere between 3 and 4 times what it was before. And that's part of—and I vetoed the first bill that the Congress passed, and we're fighting now to try to get more funds in the aggregate for our foreign assistance programs. And this is one of the reasons that I want the money. And I believe that—I may be wrong, but I believe that both Republicans and Democrats in the United States Congress understand that Nigeria's future is very important to our own.

Arshad [Arshad Mohammed, Reuters].

Situation in Chechnya

Q. Mr. President, Russia appears to have intensified its offensive against Chechnya this week with heavy bombardment and with ground troops approaching the capital, Grozny, from three directions. Do you think that this offensive may ultimately backfire on Russia and lead to greater bitterness among the Chechens toward Moscow and, ultimately, sow deeper seeds of conflict both in the region and also possibly that may bring itself back to Russian soil?

President Clinton. I think it depends upon whether, ultimately, there is a political solution or not or whether the Russian Government attempts to find a military solution. I have never believed that, ultimately, there could be a solution to any of these problems that was not a political one, that recognized the extraordinary, complex tapestry of ethnic and religious groups across the belly of Russia and just to the south.

As you know, it's an explosive part of the world—not just in Chechnya, but we've had difficulties in Dagestan; the Georgians have had their challenges; we had the terrible, terrible shooting in Armenia yesterday and the loss of the Prime Minister and seven others.

So, you know, it has been our experience—that's all I can tell you—it's been our experience that in every place where there are genuine ethnic and religious difficulties and particularly when they're combined, that sooner or later people have to stop fighting and start talking and that any military strategy ought to be designed to do nothing more than to create the conditions within which a negotiated settlement can be reached, because in the end I think that's what will have to happen.

And what the United States hopes, since we also have a big stake in the success of democracy and freedom and prosperity in Russia, is that we will see a minimization of the casualties and that we will hasten the day when there will be a negotiated solution that all the parties can live with.

Inducement To Invest in Nigeria

Q. Mr. President, you have the largest democracy in Africa. What are the initiatives you have to make it sustainable over some time? Also as far as debt consolidation is concerned, what are some of the measures your Government is doing to attract businesses and investors to invest in Nigeria?

President Obasanjo. Well, to invite investment into Nigeria, we have to create conducive environment for business to thrive. We have to create conducive environment for investors to want to invest in Nigeria because investors have choices. Therefore, we should make them choose to come to Nigeria.

And what are we doing? First of all, we are eliminating corruption as a way of life in Nigeria. Few—not many if at all any honest businessmen will want to rush into a corrupt atmosphere to do business. So we have to remove corruption, and we are doing that. We have to provide a level playing ground for all participants, so that there is equity, there is fairness, there is justice, and you can go in and compete. That we have done. The rules and regulations must be clear, so that you know what it is. There must be transparency. There must be openness. That, too, we have done, particularly in competition, so that when you do lose out, you are at least satisfied that the one who gets it is a better hand or has presented a better case or a better offer.

Again, we have to provide an environment that is reasonably—reasonably—devoid of crime. We are fighting against crime—crime—in such a way that lives and properties can be safe and secure, in such a way that investment can be secure. These and all the things we are doing—the rule of law, so that when you have to seek arbitration by the court, you can be sure that you get a fair deal from the court—we are doing all that we need to do to make the investors feel that all of the things put together, Nigeria is a better place to invest than any other place of comparative economic situation.

President Clinton. If I could just say, if I were in the audience, I would be applauding what the President said because, you know, I've spent a great deal of my time for 7 years trying to create economic opportunities for the American people and even trying to create special incentives for people to go to some of the poorest areas in our country, in our empowerment zone program that the Vice President has run for 6 years now. And everything he said is right. Nigeria is a great country. You have a large population, vast resources, good location, all that oil. You have to be well-governed and competitive.

What he said was absolutely right. I can just tell you as an outsider, Nigeria will be a very appealing place to people all over the world if they are convinced it is well-governed and serious about development. And in the end, the President—he's also a good salesman. He's out here working some of those opportunities while he's here in America, and I've been impressed.

John [John Palmer, NBC News], go ahead.

Enforcement of Gun Laws

Q. Mr. President, I have a domestic question. I don't know how much of an opportunity you have these days to listen to the radio. But the National Rifle Association is conducting quite a campaign, saying that we really don't need any new gun laws, if your administration would just enforce those that are on the books. How has your administration done in enforcing these laws, and how do you answer that rather serious charge?

President Clinton. Let me just say what they do. What they do is, they say, our prosecution for gun law violations, our volume is down. What they don't do is to look at the total prosecutions for gun law violations, the volume of which is up. The number of total gun law violations is up.

Now, what we have done, ever since Attorney General Reno came to the Justice Department, as a local prosecutor in a big urban prosecutorial district in Miami, we have worked to properly allocate the resources of the Justice Department and local prosecutors. And we have worked with all of our U.S.—excuse me, U.S. Attorneys, to do the same thing. So it's just not accurate to say, if you look at total prosecutions of existing laws, that they're down. That's the first thing I want to say.

Second thing I want to say is, the average sentence in America, I believe, is longer than it is in any other country in the world, except one, maybe. And the percentage of people we have behind bars is higher, I believe, than any other country in the world. There are two possible exceptions. We might be as low as third, but I think we're first.

Now, the last thing I want to say about that is, they made this argument before. This

is the argument they made against the Brady bill. Remember, they said two things: All you've got to do is really prosecute the existing laws; and the Brady bill won't do any good because criminals don't buy their guns at gun stores. Those were the two arguments they made.

Well, 5 years later we've got 400,000 people who haven't been able to buy guns because of the Brady bill, and we've got the lowest crime rate in 30 years. And you know, we've been all for enforcement. I'm trying to get more prosecutors right now. We've put 100,000 police on the street, I would remind you. I'm not against enforcement. But that is not an excuse for America to keep being the only major country in the world that still has gaping loopholes in its protections to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and children.

And let me just say one thing. I know I've said this till a lot of you are sick of me saying this, but I'm going to say it until I leave here and after I'm gone. If their arguments were right we would not have the kind of accidental death rate by guns that we do. The accidental death rate by gunshots of children in the United States is 9 times higher than the rate of the next 25 largest industrial economies put together.

We have not done enough to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and children. We can do more without interfering with the right to hunt and the right to sport shoot. And they're just wrong. It sounds clever. You know, it's interesting, the NRA, they're normally with the conservatives; they like it when you have States' rights, you know. So here we worked out a deal, and the local prosecutors do more cases which ought to be in the local courts, and we take the hard cases and put them in the Federal courts that take more time, more cost, or multi-State cases, and they conveniently take the Federal number and overlook the rest.

And I might say, I think in times past, maybe administrations that did not want to enforce—did not want to pass the Brady bill, did not want to have the assault weapons ban, did not want to close the loopholes in the background checks, might have gone out and filed a lot of cases to say, "Well, this is what we're doing." The evidence is in. We have the lowest crime rate in 30 years. And the assault weapons ban and the Brady bill played a big role in it.

So the NRA is fighting a rearguard action that's just wrong. They were wrong on the Brady bill, and they're wrong today. You don't have to take my word for it. Look at the evidence and ask yourself why, if you can enforce your way out of this, every other country in the world with an advanced economy still has a lower murder rate and a drastically lower rate of accidental killings by guns? You know, they never talk about that, because they can't.

Debt Relief for Nigeria

Q. My question is for either of the two Presidents. Specifically, with all emphasis on that word, the debt relief that has been proposed for Nigeria, is it consolation, partial or total, or rescheduling?

President Obasanjo. Well, let me put it this way: The best thing that I would want to have is not to have debt at all. But when you look at it, since 1985 or thereabout, when the total debt we had was about $6 billion, we really haven't added much debt to it. And our debt stands at about $28–$30 billion today. And all that is essentially interest rescheduling and all that.

So when you talk about rescheduling, I'm apprehensive. When you talk of remission, even staying of interest for some time will be one way. But we cannot—we cannot—talk of being able to do what we need to do to nurture, to sustain democracy, and to give our people democracy dividend, bearing the burden of debt that is hanging over us at this point in time.

President Clinton. Let me answer the question, and I will try to be—I'll be very candid with you. First of all, you must understand this is not a question for the United States only to resolve. I have a much more aggressive attitude, generally, on debt relief than many of my counterparts do in other parts of the world, although not all of them. There are others who agree with me. And I have a more aggressive attitude than some people in our Congress do, although I hope I can persuade them before we go home this year.

Under the present framework, Nigeria is not eligible for total cancellation of debt because of its assets, its petroleum assets. As the President pointed out to me today, if you had a different measure, if you measured the real per capita income of individual Nigerians or some of the other social indicators like infant mortality, it would present, I think, a more accurate picture of what life in Nigeria is like today.

Here is my view. Right now, we ought to get whatever relief we can, because you need to—even the rescheduling relief is worth something. It takes a burden off your back now and gives you a chance to get some breathing room and doesn't raise the questions of creditworthiness, so that we can get more investment into Nigeria and more loans into Nigeria as well, if they're necessary.

Then I think, frankly, that the more the President succeeds in the program that he's outlined, the more we will be able to work with the rest of the world to deal with the long-term interests of Nigeria and the long-term health of Nigeria. But the reason I said rescheduling today is I have concluded that that's really worth something to you, and that's all we can do right now, because of the standard by which the highly indebted poor countries are measured.

But if you look at what's happened to Nigeria's oil resources and what's happened in the previous years and what people are really living on, you could make a compelling case for more relief. And I think what we should do is take what we can get now and pocket it and try to get some more investment into your country and keep working to support the reforms that the President has outlined and just keep working to get more relief as we go along. That's what I think is the only realistic hope. And I am certainly open to that. And I think the more other world leaders get to see this President, get to see what's going on, the more likely we'll be to succeed.

We'll take one more each. Yes, go ahead. I didn't know who I pointed at—[*laughter*]—all three of you should stand up and shout. Give me a selection. I'll decide which one I want to answer. [*Laughter*]

Q. We could do it in unison.

President Clinton. All right, go ahead.

Federal Budget

Q. Mr. President, it's late in the congressional budget process, and I'm wondering, is there any prospect at this point of a Government shutdown, and are there any of your priorities on which you will insist on be nonnegotiable in the talks that are occurring right now?

President Clinton. I do not believe there will be a Government shutdown. I would be very surprised if there is one. But neither do I think we should just have continuing resolutions for the next year and a half. Somehow we have to come to terms with this.

Just today—I don't know if you saw it—the Congressional Budget Office said that the budget passed by the Republican majority is, even with the one percent across-the-board budget cut which you've already heard the Secretary of Defense and others say would have a very bad impacts, is still $17 billion short and would require more than 4 percent more to be cut across the board, just as I told them all along.

So we're going to have to work together to get a budget that works. And all this sort of smoke and mirrors that they have been doing and claiming that we and the Democrats were trying to spend the Social Security surplus, when they were spending it all along, is not helpful.

Most Americans, as a matter of fact—and this is a service all of you could do for the country, actually. I just spoke to a bunch of educators today, and they all came up afterward and thanked me for explaining what was really going on, because most Americans can't figure out why, if we keep announcing bigger and bigger surpluses, why we're having a budget fight, and why we're having across-the-board cuts.

And of course, it's because both parties made a commitment at the beginning of this session that from this day forward we wouldn't spend the Social Security surplus, which could have been done without tough choices had it not been for the magnitude of the natural disasters and the farm crisis and the size of the defense increases that the Congress wanted, even over and above the substantial defense increases that I recommended.

So that's why we've got this problem. We can solve this problem. I am committed to doing it. But I think it would be a great mistake for us to walk away from here and abandon the commitment we made just last year to 100,000 teachers. We ought to get the 50,000 police started, just like we started the 100,000 police before, because it gave us the lowest crime rate in 30 years, and now we can look forward to being the safest big country in the world. And we need to adequately fund our environmental budget and get those riders out of there, those antienvironmental riders out of there.

I never though I'd get 100 percent of what I wanted. I think they're making a big mistake not beginning the prescription drug benefit on Medicare and not adding any days to the life of the Medicare or the Social Security Trust Fund. But because I vetoed the tax cut, we can come back to all that early next year. But we shouldn't walk away from here having dismantled our commitment to 100,000 teachers, not dealing with the 50,000 police, not dealing with the environmental issues. And I'm prepared to work with them.

I don't want a partisan fight on this. This is crazy for us to be having a big partisan blowout because they both made a commitment not to spend the Social Security surplus, and then it turned out to be harder than necessary, and all of it is being mixed into a sort of a combustible political mix. We need to sit down like grownups, go out and tell the American people the truth, and work through this. We can find the offsets. We don't have to spend the Social Security surplus. We can do this. And I hope they will work with me to do it.

Demographics in Nigeria

Q. According to a recent United Nations world population prospect report, 45 percent of Nigeria's 1.29 million population is under age 15, and an additional 18 is in the 15 to 24 years category. What this means is that we have about 63 percent of Nigeria's population which is under the age of 24. President Obasanjo, what does this mean to today's Nigeria and the country's future?

President Obasanjo. Well, to today's Nigeria it means that, simple—37 percent, if you take all the remainder as working, which is not the case—that 37 percent of Nigerians are working to keep 100 percent of Nigerians alive, because you know it, from age one to about age 24, you are preparing yourself for life. It's either you are in school, or you are learning a trade, or you are in the university or something of that nature. Now, that puts strain on Nigerians that are working if they are working. But are they really working? That's another question.

Then, for future, if we are able to train them, ah, the future is bright. There you will have that large population, if everything else is all right, that will be vibrant, educated, talented, and going places for Nigeria, well-governed, the economy buoyant. You can't ask for anything better. So if we train, we look after them and we prepare them adequately, good for future. But for now, it's a strain, and we have to bear out this strain.

President Clinton. Thank you.

NOTE: The President's 183d news conference began at 4:25 p.m. in Presidential Hall (formerly Room 450) in the Old Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Stella Obasanjo, wife of President Obasanjo; 1986 Nobel Prize for Literature recipient Wole Soyinka; Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority; Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel; and murdered Prime Minister Vazgen Sarksyan of Armenia. President Obasanjo referred to OAU, the Organisation of African Unity, and IGAD, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development.

Statement on the Crash of Navy Blue Angels

October 28, 1999

I am deeply saddened that today America lost two of its bravest and most distinguished Naval aviators in a tragic crash of a Navy jet belonging to the Blue Angels.

As a nation we all owe our military servicemembers a tremendous debt of gratitude.

At this time of great loss—a loss that we all share—my heartfelt prayers go to their families, their shipmates, and to the entire Navy.

Memorandum on Labor-Management Partnerships

October 28, 1999

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: Reaffirmation of Executive Order 12871—Labor-Management Partnerships

When I became President, I believed that cooperation between Federal agencies and their unions could help create a Government that works better, costs less, and makes a positive difference in the lives of the American people. That is why I issued Executive Order 12871, Labor-Management Partnerships, and directed agencies to form partnerships with their unions; involve employees and union representatives as full partners in identifying and resolving workplace issues; provide training in consensual methods of dispute resolution; negotiate with unions over the subjects set forth in 5 U.S.C. 7106(b)(1); and evaluate bottom-line results achieved through partnership.

With your hard work and support, we have made great strides over the past 6 years. In many agencies, unions and management are working side by side on the tough challenges facing the Government and its employees. I am very proud of this success, but I am also convinced that we can do even more. I believe the time has come to redouble the Administration's efforts to create genuine labor-management partnerships. Therefore, I am taking new steps to reaffirm my strong commitment to partnership and to renew my call for agencies to work with their unions to achieve the important objectives of the Executive order.

First, I direct agencies to develop a plan with their unions at appropriate levels of recognition for implementing this memorandum and the Executive order. Every effort should be made to develop a plan that helps the agency and its employees deliver the highest quality service to the American people. Whenever possible, workplace issues should be resolved through consensus using interest-based problem-solving techniques.

Agencies should aggressively seek training, facilitation, and mediation assistance that can help foster an environment where partnerships can succeed and thrive.

Second, agencies are directed to report to me, through the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), on the progress being made toward achieving the goals of this memorandum and the directives set forth in the Executive order. Reports must be submitted by April 14, 2000, and annually thereafter, and must be prepared with the involvement and input of the unions. Agencies shall describe the nature and extent of their efforts to comply with the Executive order and shall identify specific improvements in customer service, quality, productivity, efficiency, and quality of worklife that have been achieved as a result of partnership. These reports will not only help me assess our progress toward establishing successful partnerships, but will provide best practices that can assist unions and agencies in their efforts to develop effective partnership-building strategies. Finally, I am directing the Office of Personnel Management to analyze the information contained in these reports and, in coordination with OMB, to advise me on further steps that might be needed to ensure successful implementation of this memorandum and Executive Order 12871.

This memorandum is intended only to improve the internal management of the executive branch and is not intended to and does not create any right to administrative or judicial review, or any other right, substantive or procedural, enforceable by a party against the United States, its agencies or instrumentalities, its officers or employees, or any other person.

William J. Clinton

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this memorandum.

Proclamation 7245—National Adoption Month, 1999

October 28, 1999

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

This month, as families across America look forward to the holiday season that is fast

approaching, we remember with special concern the thousands of children in our Nation who are growing up without the unconditional love and security of a permanent home. Our Nation's foster care system plays an invaluable role in providing temporary safe and caring homes to children who need them, but permanent homes and families are vital to giving these children the stability and sustained love they need to reach their full potential.

My Administration has worked hard to promote adoption by assisting adoptive families and breaking down barriers to adoption. We have helped remove many economic barriers to adoption by providing tax credits to families adopting children, and the Family and Medical Leave Act that I signed into law in 1993 gives workers job-protected leave to care for their newly adopted children. The Adoption and Safe Families Act I signed in 1997 reformed our Nation's child welfare system, made clear that the health and safety of children must be the paramount concern of State child welfare services, and expedited permanent placement for children. It also ensured health coverage for children with special needs and created new financial incentives for States to increase adoption. We also took important steps to help ensure that the adoption process remains free from discrimination and delays on the basis of race, culture, and ethnicity. We are now working to break down geographic barriers to adoption by using the Internet to link children in foster care to possible adoptive families.

We have new evidence that our efforts are bearing fruit: the first significant increase in adoptions since the National Foster Care Program was created almost 20 years ago. A new report from the Department of Health and Human Services shows that from 1996 to 1998, the number of adoptions nationwide rose 29 percent—from 28,000 to 36,000—and should meet our national goal of 56,000 adoptions by the year 2002. In addition, the First Lady and I were pleased to announce this past September the first-ever bonus awards to States that have increased the number of adoptions from the public foster care system. We also announced additional grants to public and private organizations that remove barriers to adoption.

To follow through on this record of achievement, I have urged the Congress to safeguard the interests and well-being of young people who reach the age of 18 without being adopted or placed in a permanent home. Under the current system, Federal financial assistance for young people in foster care ends just as they are making the critical transition to independence. We must ensure that when these young people are old enough to leave the foster care system, they have the health care, life skills training, and educational opportunities they need to succeed personally and professionally.

As we observe National Adoption Month this year, we can take pride in our progress, but we know there is more work to be done. Let us take this opportunity to rededicate ourselves to meeting those challenges, and let us honor the many adoptive parents whose generosity and love have made such an extraordinary difference in the lives of thousands of our Nation's children.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim November 1999 as National Adoption Month. I urge all Americans to observe this month with appropriate programs and activities to honor adoptive families and to participate in efforts to find permanent, loving homes for waiting children.

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

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:31 a.m., October 29, 1999]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on November 1.

Radio Remarks on Emergency Agricultural Assistance

October 29, 1999

Today, as provided for in the agriculture appropriations bill I signed last week, I am designating $8.8 billion in emergency assistance to our Nation's farmers and ranchers. This assistance will hasten payments to farmers who are recovering from the second year in a row of low commodity prices and crop and livestock losses from severe drought and flooding.

This is only a one-year temporary fix for the overall problems facing our farmers. They are the lifeblood of our land. Again I call on the Congress to enact a permanent fix to the severe shortcomings in the 1996 farm bill.

NOTE: The President's remarks were recorded at approximately 6:20 p.m. on October 28 in the Map Room at the White House for later broadcast. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 29. These remarks were also made available on the White House Press Office Actuality Line.

Remarks on Action To Preserve Privacy of Medical Records and an Exchange With Reporters

October 29, 1999

The President. Thank you, Secretary Shalala. I would like to thank you for all the work that you and so many people in your Department have done on this issue. I thank the representatives of the various groups who are here with me today for their concern for, and commitment to, the issue of medical records privacy. These health care and consumer advocates support what we are trying to do to protect the sanctity of medical records. I believe the American people will support us as well.

Every American has a right to know that his or her medical records are protected at all times from falling into the wrong hands. And yet, more and more of our medical records are stored electronically, and as they have been stored electronically the threats to our privacy have substantially increased. So has the sense of vulnerability that so many millions of Americans feel.

To be sure, storing and transmitting medical records electronically is a remarkable application of information technology. Electronic records are not only cost effective; they can save lives by helping doctors to make quicker and better informed decisions, by helping to prevent dangerous drug interactions, by giving patients in rural areas the benefit of specialist care hundreds of miles away. So, on balance, this has been a blessing.

But as Secretary Shalala just said, our electronic medical records are not protected under Federal law. The American people are concerned and rightfully so. Two-thirds of adults say they don't trust that their medical records will be kept safe. They have good reason. Today, with the click of a mouse, personal health information can easily and now legally be passed around without patients' consent to people who aren't doctors, for reasons that have nothing to do with health care.

A recent survey showed that more than a third of all Fortune 500 companies check medical records before they hire or promote. One large employer in Pennsylvania had no trouble obtaining detailed information on the prescription drugs taken by its workers, easily discovering that one employee was HIV positive. This is wrong. Americans should never have to worry that their employers are looking at the medications they take or the ailments they've had.

In 1999 Americans should never have to worry about nightmare scenarios depicted in George Orwell's "1984." I am determined to put an end to such violations of privacy. That's why I'm honoring the pledge I made in the State of Union Address and using the full authority of this office to create the first comprehensive national standards for protection of medical records.

The new standards I propose would apply to all electronic medical records and to all health plans. They would greatly limit the release of private health information without consent. They would require health plans to inform patients about how medical information is used and to whom it is disclosed. They would give patients the right to see their own health files and to request corrections. They would require health plans and providers to

strengthen internal safeguards. They would create new criminal and civil penalties for improper use or disclosure of the information.

These standards represent an unprecedented step toward putting Americans back in control of their own medical records. These standards were developed by Secretary Shalala and the Department of Health and Human Services. Over the next 60 days the Secretary and her Department will take comment from the public before we finalize the standards.

Again, on behalf of all the families in this country, I thank you Madam Secretary for this work.

Now let me say something that I think is now well known. I am taking this action today because Congress has failed to act and because a few years ago Congress explicitly gave me the authority to step in if they were unable to deal with this issue. I believe Congress should act. Members of Congress gave themselves 3 years to pass meaningful privacy protections, and then gave us the authority to act if they didn't. Two months ago their deadline expired. After 3 full years there wasn't a bill passed in either Chamber.

Even as we put forward our plan today, I think it is important to point out there are still protections, some of them, we can give our families only if there is an act of Congress passed. For example, only through legislation can we cover all paper records and all employers.

So today again I ask congressional leaders, please help protect America's families from new abuses of their privacy. You owe the American people a comprehensive medical privacy law. As we have found out in working through this order, the issues are complex; difficult decisions have to be made. But we will work with you in a bipartisan fashion. We can do this together, and we owe it to our families to protect their privacy in the most comprehensive way possible.

Thank you very much.

Nomination of Carol Moseley-Braun

Q. Mr. President, Senator Helms has offered to schedule a hearing on Carol Moseley-Braun's nomination next week if you will ensure that the IRS, the White House, and the Justice Department produce a bunch of documents by Monday. Do you see that as a serious offer, or do you think he is just toying with your nominee?

The President. I don't know. First of all, I have asked our White House staff to review the request for information and evaluate it in terms of what would be proper to forward to the committee and whether there are some things that wouldn't be. I think we should at least take the request seriously because, I think, if she gets a hearing, she will be confirmed. And I don't think it's right for one of our strongest allies, New Zealand, to be denied an Ambassador or for a former Senator—in my judgment, did a good job in the United States Senate, to be denied the opportunity to serve because of a previous dispute with the chairman of the committee over the proper handling of a patent for the Daughters of the Confederacy. I think that that's, you know, not an appropriate basis on which to determine whether someone should serve as an Ambassador or not.

So I hope we can work it out, and I am going to—like I said, I have asked the White House staff to evaluate Senator Helms' request and to see whether it's possible for us to do.

Kosovo

Q. Mr. President, in Kosovo this week, an attack on Serb civilians has led some military officials to conclude that the peacekeeping force may need to be expanded. Do you agree with that, sir?

The President. Well, I think they have been doing a good job on the whole. But I think they have to be in a position to protect the civilians and to act appropriately when people come under fire. We actually have been in the process of reviewing not only that but also the progress of political developments there.

I am not sure that more forces will solve the problem. What we see—let me just say that what we see in Kosovo—and this is not surprising—is that there are a lot of communities that are doing quite well. And so they don't arise to the level of news coverage most days. You know, they are just good, old-fashioned people in small towns doing their business.

The peacekeepers have found that there are several communities where the local officials themselves are clearly in control, clearly have the support of the local population, and clearly committed to minimizing civilian violence or the exposure of civilians to violence, whatever their ethnic group. Then there are some places that need more people.

So the first thing I would say in response to your question is, as regards to all these kinds of incidents but particularly that one which concerned me, we ought to make sure that we have deployed the resources that we have there in the best possible way before we make any decision that more are needed. Of course, we have a representative on the ground there, a leader that represents the United Nations, and he can give us some guidance about whether they need more people.

Republican Debates

Q. Did you watch the Republican debates last night and what do you think about the fact that George W. Bush was not there?

The President. They all have to make their own decisions, and I didn't watch it. I kind of—I look at them wistfully. I really—I did, you know, a slew of them. I don't think I missed a single one in '92, and I enjoyed them all. [*Laughter*]

I do think they're useful. And even though, very often, they are not news events because you see that the similarities to the candidates are greater than their differences, and that's why, you know, Senator Bradley and Vice President Gore are Democrats and the other five are Republicans.

But I think it is useful to participate in them because you get a feel for what the issues are in specific States and also how people react, and they are, I think, a good thing. I think they strengthen democracy; they get people interested; and they make people more interested in voting.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:28 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to former Senator Carol Moseley-Braun, nominee for Ambassador to New Zealand; Gov. George W. Bush of Texas, Republican candidate for President; and former Senator Bill Bradley, Democratic candidate for President. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala.

Remarks to Supporters of John Street for Mayor in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

October 29, 1999

The President. Thank you.

[*At this point, there was a disruption in the audience.*]

The President. I'll make you a deal. I'll ignore them if you will. We observed their free speech rights. Do you think they will observe ours?

Now, let me say, first, to all of you——

[*The disruption continued.*]

The President. Come on. Now, wait a minute, folks. I know something about this. You all relax here. I know something about this. They got their say. Now you give me mine, and you all think about where we are. Come on, let's go. That's actually——

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Let me say this. That's actually a very—don't boo them. That's actually a very serious issue. That's actually a very serious issue that we're working very hard on. Unfortunately, like so many serious issues that I have to deal with, it can't be solved by emotion at a rally. But it's an important issue that is worthy of the concern of the people of Puerto Rico and the people of the United States, and therefore, I appreciate their being here.

Let me say to all of you, I think that you know, every one of you, how much I have loved this city and how grateful I am to you and to the people of Pennsylvania. In 1992 and 1996 and 1998 and 1999, no place in America has been better or kinder to me and our administration and my family than the city of Philadelphia. And I will never forget that.

I want to thank your mayor for his leadership and his friendship. I thank the city council president. I thank chairman and Congressman Brady and Congressman Fattah and Congressman Borski, three wonderful people and great Members of the House of

Representatives. I thank my great friend Senator Ted Kennedy for being here today.

You know, in a long and richly textured life in public service, I've had a lot of wonderful moments. But when Ed Rendell called me and told me that I was the first Democrat to equal President Kennedy's victory margin in Philadelphia, I was very moved.

Senator Kennedy's family lost three of its sons to public service, the President, Robert Kennedy, his oldest brother Joseph in World War II. But I can tell you this: Edward Kennedy has redeemed the sacrifice of his family in service to the people of Massachusetts and the people of America. He is one of the finest and ablest and most productive people in the history of the United States Senate.

Now, I want to thank all the other people who are here who have done so much for John Street, the religious leaders, the labor leaders—nobody ever says this from a podium—I want to thank the fundraisers, the people in the business community and others, who stuck by John Street when people said they wouldn't do it and gave him a chance to be competitive.

You know, I remember once when I was running for office in 1984, and President Reagan came in to campaign for my opponent. And I was—and he was very popular in my State. You remember, he was getting reelected by a big margin. And he came in, and he campaigned against me, and then he got 62 percent in the election, and so did I. And it made me always a little apprehensive. So I want you to know I come here not as President to tell you how to vote, but I hope you will listen to me as someone who has tried to be a good friend to Philadelphia, to talk about why.

You know, I'm not running for anything anymore. I kind of hate it, but I'm not. And I want you to listen to me not about how but why. I have the whole rest of my life to try to be a good citizen and give back to the American people for all of the chances they've given me to serve. And I have some things that I wanted to come to Philadelphia to say to all of you in this hall, because the harder you work between now and Tuesday, the bigger the margin of victory will be—and to those beyond this hall, who may hear or see or read about what we say here today, who may be still trying to make up their mind.

First thing I want to say is, I follow this race very closely in the press, and I know something about—I think—the fact that you can't always tell what's going on, exactly, from what you read, you know? Now, John Street—so I read that there was this campaign for mayor of Philadelphia, and the Democrat was a very good man, but he didn't have any vision, and he wasn't very charismatic. And I don't know who they were talking about, but that guy that introduced me had vision and charisma when he was up here speaking a few minutes ago.

But I want you to listen to my argument, because if you think that our administration—if you think that Bill Clinton and Al Gore have been good for the people of Philadelphia, what I want you to understand is, none of it would have been possible if we hadn't had a partnership. And when I ran for President in 1992, and the people of this city and this State voted for me, I said—and let me say, times have been good for a good long while now, so a lot of people don't remember what it was like before the Clinton-Gore administration, or before Rendell and Street. They don't remember. So let me remind you.

It was a time of severe economic distress. It was a time of deepening social division. It was a time of political drift, and the whole enterprise of Government had been discredited in the eyes of many people. So I said, "Give me a chance, and I will pursue some new ideas designed to give opportunity to everybody, to challenge every citizen to be a responsible citizen, and to create an American community of all people, and to give you a Government that is smaller, that actually does a good job for you in what we're supposed to do, which is to empower people and families and communities to control their own destiny and seek the future of their dreams. Now, it was just an argument, just like when you voted for Rendell and Street. It was just an argument. You took that chance on them. But it's not an argument anymore. The evidence is in. And what I want to say to you is, when people say you ought to throw all this away, let me remind you of what they're saying.

In America, we have 19½ million new jobs, the longest peacetime economic expansion in history, the highest homeownership in history, the lowest unemployment rate in 29 years, the lowest African-American and Hispanic unemployment rates ever recorded, the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years, the lowest poverty rates in 30 years, the lowest teen pregnancy rates in 30 years, the lowest inflation rates in 30 years, the first back-to-back budget surpluses in 42 years, the lowest crime rates in 32 years, with the smallest Federal Government in 37 years. You took a chance, and you were right in 1992 and 1996.

Now, in Philadelphia, in Philadelphia, after years of deficit spending, under this administration you've got seven balanced budgets in a row. You have the first job growth in Philadelphia in 30 years. You have declining crime and welfare rolls. You have people working together across racial lines. Look around this place today. So I say to you—and Ed Rendell has said that John Street's the most qualified person ever to run and that he couldn't have done anything he's done as mayor without him.

Now, just because you've done a good job doesn't mean you're automatically entitled to an election. I remember I was running for Governor for the fifth term, and I'd been in 10 years. And I went out to the State fair in my home State, and this old boy in overalls came up to me and said, ''You gonna run again?'' [*Laughter*] And I said, ''Well, if I do, will you vote for me?'' He said, ''Yeah, I guess so. I always have.'' [*Laughter*] And I said, ''Well, aren't you sick of me after all these years?'' He said, ''No, but nearly everybody else I know is.'' [*Laughter*] And I got hurt, and I said, ''Well, don't you think I've done a good job?'' He said, ''Yeah, but you got a paycheck every 2 weeks, didn't you?'' [*Laughter*]

So it's not enough, but you've got to think about it before you throw it away. And one of the things I will say about the job John Street has done is, it is evidence of what he can do and where he will lead the city. So if he says to you—if he says to you, we ought to invest in education; if he says to you, we've got a plan to make our streets safer; if he says to you, we ought to take Congressman Fattah's mentoring program, his GEAR-UP program, which says to middle school kids, if you stay in school and you learn your lessons, here's the money you can get to go to college, and every one of you can go; if he says to you he's going to do these things, at least you have some evidence that he will. And it's a whole lot of evidence, 8 long years of evidence, success and progress and change in people's lives.

And let me say, he talked about the tax issue. Well, what he didn't say that I want to tell you is, they're lowering taxes. And we've cut taxes in Washington. But what we said is, we will cut taxes, all right, but we want to make sure that tax cuts are fair, that the working poor get the biggest break. We want to make sure that we don't get the budget out of balance because financial help is critical to social progress. The Democrats ought to be the party of fiscal conservatism because when you've got low interest rates and balanced books, you have more jobs, higher wages, lower mortgage payments, lower car payments, lower college loan payments, and a better future.

Now, John Street understood that before a lot of members of our party did, that by making Philadelphia fiscally conservative and paying its bills and making sure people knew that they could do business here, he was doing something progressive to create jobs and give people a chance to build their own lives, to bring some money into the city coffers and the State coffers, so we could invest in people and their future. So that's the position we're in in Washington.

They wanted to have a tax cut that could throw away the whole surplus that wasn't attributable to your Social Security taxes. And I said, ''We can't afford it.'' Now, they can't even pay the bills without the tax cut, without getting into the Social Security. You've got the same debate here.

Now, who are you going to believe? I think you can believe the guy on tax cuts, number one, John Street has a plan for modest tax cuts, and number two, he's balanced the books for 7 years. I don't think it's even close. It's not even close, who you're going to believe.

On the education issue, they say they're for vouchers, because they feel bad that a

lot of poor kids don't get a good education. Well, I feel bad about it, too. And if I had given up on the public schools, I might be where they are. But let me tell you something. We know if you give parents and children a choice of where their kids go to school, we know if you impose high standards and you have accountability, and then you help failing schools, we know if you give every kid who needs it an after-school program and a summer school program—so, yes, don't just promote them whether they know anything or not, but don't blame them if the system is failing them. Give them the after-school programs. Give them the summer school programs. Give them the opportunities they need.

We have evidence—evidence that that helps more kids more quickly than the voucher program, which takes needed money away from the schools when there is not enough in the first place. There is evidence about this.

So if you have evidence on the main issue of education, and you have evidence on the main issue of tax cuts and fiscal responsibility and the economy, what is the deal here? [*Laugher*]

Let me tell you, I read some of these editorial arguments. They say, John Street has done a great job; we wouldn't be here without him; give him a gold watch and send him home. Well, let me tell you something. This is a young, vigorous, brilliant, committed public servant. You heard him up here today. You heard him up here today. His heart is on fire for the children and the future of this city. He has all the experience in the world.

And I say, remember what it was like before. Remember how far we have come. Reward his record because it's in your interest to have somebody who can produce that record do what he talked about doing in your future from this podium today.

Now, I'm telling you, there is a difference in the way we approach it. Today I signed another continuing resolution to keep the Government in Washington open for another week because Congress still can't pass a budget because they can't figure out what to do. They want you to believe they're for certain things, but they don't want to pay the price for being for them. And I'm trying to say, let's put party aside and at least pass a budget. John Street's proved he could do that.

I want them to do that in Washington. I want you to think about this. I've, on purpose, not given you a big, whoop-de-do political speech. I want you to think about the arguments. What will it say to the people and the children of Philadelphia if on Tuesday, the message coming out of the election is, "Well, old John did a good job, and boy, he had some good ideas about the future, but I had something else to do, and I couldn't be bothered to vote, so he lost." What will it say?

You think about this in your churches on Sunday when you're talking to people about their responsibilities. What will it say? How will you ever say—how will you say to these little kids here, you work hard now and you do a good job and you might grow up to be mayor or Governor or Senator or President, because you will be judged on the job you do? What will it say if you stay home or anybody you know stays home, after the job this man has done, and you don't elect him the mayor of this great city? Don't you do that.

And what will it say—what will it say if the message coming out of the normally Democratic wards is: Well, he's done a great job, but the other fellow sang a good song? [*Laughter*] And I want to give him that. I think he's run an adroit campaign. I compliment him. My hat's off to him. And I know something about singing a good song. I've sung a few myself over the years. [*Laughter*] But in the end—in the end what matters is, can you stand and deliver?

What message will it send to the children of this city and their future if, after the record this man has amassed, the competence he has demonstrated, the character he has demonstrated, the leadership he has demonstrated, and the program he has outlined—which is plainly in the interests of the people of this city—he is not elected?

I'm telling you, you have a great opportunity here to lift him up on Tuesday night and say, "We are proud of what we have done these last 8 years. We are proud that we did it together across all racial and religious and neighborhood and income lines. We are proud we did it together, and we are proudly

going into the future with someone we trust and we know can lead us to a brighter tomorrow.''

Thank you, and God bless you. Help him, now.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:20 p.m. at La-Salle University. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Edward Rendell, city council president Anna Verna of Philadelphia, and Republican mayoral candidate Sam Katz.

Statement on Emergency Agricultural Assistance

October 29, 1999

I am pleased today to designate $8.8 billion in emergency assistance for our Nation's farmers and ranchers, to help them recover from the second year in a row of low commodity prices and, for many, crop livestock losses from severe drought and flooding.

While this assistance will not adequately address all of the needs in our farm-based communities, I have taken this step in order to hasten payments to farmers and ranchers who simply cannot wait for the legislative improvements we have sought. I continue to be concerned that the income assistance in the Act is not targeted to producers most in need.

As with last year's disaster assistance, these funds provide only a one-year, temporary fix for the overall problems with the farm safety net. That is why I call on the Congress to enact a permanent fix to the shortcomings in the 1996 farm bill. A major step toward that goal can be achieved this year through crop insurance reform legislation if the Congress will act.

I want to thank Secretary of Agriculture Glickman for his work on behalf of American agriculture. I know he and his staff are hard at work right now setting the process in place so that most of the payments will be available within just a few weeks.

Notice—Continuation of Sudanese Emergency

October 29, 1999

On November 3, 1997, by Executive Order 13067, I declared a national emergency to deal with the unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States constituted by the actions and policies of the Government of Sudan. By Executive Order 13067, I imposed trade sanctions on Sudan and blocked Sudanese government assets. Because the Government of Sudan has continued its activities hostile to United States interests, the national emergency declared on November 3, 1997, and the measures adopted on that date to deal with that emergency must continue in effect beyond November 3, 1999. Therefore, in accordance with section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)), I am continuing the national emergency for 1 year with respect to Sudan.

This notice shall be published in the *Federal Register* and transmitted to the Congress.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
October 29, 1999.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:31 a.m., October 29, 1999]

NOTE: This notice was published in the *Federal Register* on November 1.

Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Sudan

October 29, 1999

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency

is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent the enclosed notice, stating that the Sudanese emergency is to continue in effect beyond November 3, 1999, to the Federal Register for publication.

The crisis between the United States and Sudan that led to the declaration on November 3, 1997, of a national emergency has not been resolved. The Government of Sudan continues to support international terrorism and efforts to destabilize neighboring governments, and engage in human rights violations, including the denial of religious freedom. Such Sudanese actions pose a continuing unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to maintain in force the broad authorities necessary to apply economic pressure on the Government of Sudan.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
October 29, 1999.

Memorandum on Assistance to the Iraqi National Congress

October 29, 1999

Presidential Determination No. 2000–05

Memorandum for the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense

Subject: Determination to Authorize the Furnishing of Drawdown Assistance to the Iraqi National Congress Under Section 4(a)(2) of the Iraq Liberation Act of 1998

Pursuant to the authority vested in me as President of the United States, including section 4(a)(2) of the Iraq Liberation Act of 1998 (Public Law 105–338) (the ''Act''), and consistent with Presidential Determination 99–13 of February 4, 1999, I hereby direct the furnishing of up to $5 million in defense articles from the stocks of the Department of Defense, defense services of the Department of Defense, and military education and training in order to provide assistance to the Iraqi National Congress.

The Secretary of State is authorized and directed to report this determination to the Congress and to arrange for its publication in the *Federal Register*.

William J. Clinton

Message to the Senate Transmitting the Ireland-United States Tax Convention and Documentation

October 29, 1999

To the Senate of the United States:

I transmit herewith for Senate advice and consent to ratification the Convention Amending the Convention Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of Ireland for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with Respect to Taxes on Income and Capital Gains signed at Dublin on July 28, 1997. The Convention, which was negotiated pursuant to the Senate's resolution of October 31, 1997, granting advice and consent to the 1997 Convention, modifies the tax treatment of dividends received from Real Estate Investment Trusts.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to this Convention and give its advice and consent to ratification.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
October 29, 1999.

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.

October 25

In the afternoon, the President traveled to New York City. In the evening, he returned to Washington, DC, arriving after midnight.

The President announced his intention to reappoint Senators Edward M. Kennedy and

Orrin G. Hatch and U.S. Circuit Court Judge Morris (Buzz) Arnold as members of the Board of Trustees of the James Madison Memorial Fellowship Foundation.

October 26

The President announced his intention to nominate James D. (J.D.) Bindenagel for rank of Ambassador during his tenure as Special Envoy for Holocaust Issues.

The President announced his intention to nominate Thomas A. Fry III to be Director of the Bureau of Land Management at the Department of the Interior.

The White House announced that the President will make state visits to Greece on November 13–15 and Turkey on November 15–17, before attending the summit of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in Istanbul, Turkey, on November 17–19. Following the summit, he will visit Florence, Italy, November 20–21 and Bulgaria, November 21–23.

October 27

In the morning, the President met in the Oval Office with President Romano Prodi of Italy, in his capacity as President of the European Commission.

The President announced his intention to appoint Bernard J. Hansen as Commissioner of the U.S. Section of the Great Lakes Fisheries Commission.

October 28

In the morning, the President met with President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria in the Oval Office, and in the afternoon, they met again in the Cabinet Room.

The President announced his intention to nominate Bobby L. Roberts to be a member of the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science.

The President announced his intention to nominate Martin S. Indyk to be Ambassador to Israel.

The President announced his intention to nominate Edward S. Walker, Jr., to be Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs at the Department of State.

October 29

In the morning, the President traveled to Philadelphia, PA.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Atlanta, GA, and in the evening, he returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to nominate N. Cinnamon Dornsife to be the U.S. Executive Director to the Asian Development Bank with the rank of Ambassador.

The President announced his intention to nominate Bruce A. Morrison to be Chairman and member of the Federal Housing Finance Board.

The President announced his intention to nominate J. Timothy O'Neill to be a member of the Federal Housing Finance Board.

The President announced his intention to nominate Anthony S. Harrington to be Ambassador to the Federative Republic of Brazil.

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

The following list does not include promotions of members of the Uniformed Services, nominations to the Service Academies, or nominations of Foreign Service officers.

Submitted October 26

Anna Blackburne-Rigsby,
of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for the term of 15 years, vice Eric T. Washington.

Thomas J. Motley,
of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for the term of 15 years, vice Robert Samuel Tignor, term expired.

Submitted October 27

James D. Bindenagel,
of California, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, for the rank of Ambassador during his tenure of service as Special Envoy and Representative of the Secretary of State for Holocaust Issues.

Thomas A. Fry, III,
of Texas, to be Director of the Bureau of Land Management, vice Patrick A. Shea, resigned.

Martin S. Indyk,
of the District of Columbia, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Israel.

Edward S. Walker, Jr.,
of Maryland, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Career Minister, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Near Eastern Affairs), vice Martin S. Indyk.

Submitted October 29

Anthony Stephen Harrington,
of Maryland, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Federative Republic of Brazil.

N. Cinnamon Dornsife,
of the District of Columbia, to be U.S. Director of the Asian Development Bank, with the rank of Ambassador, vice Linda Tsao Yang.

Bruce A. Morrison,
of Connecticut, to be a Director of the Federal Housing Finance Board for a term expiring February 27, 2007 (reappointment).

J. Timothy O'Neill,
of Virginia, to be a Director of the Federal Housing Finance Board for a term expiring February 27, 2004 (reappointment).

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 October 23 [1]

Transcript of a press briefing by National Economic Council Director Gene Sperling on the President's radio address on financial modernization

Released October 25

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Released October 26

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Transcript of a press briefing by Education Secretary Richard Riley, Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt, and Deputy Attorney General Eric Holder on Republican proposal for an across-the-board cut of 1.4 percent in Federal spending

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that President Clinton will visit Istanbul, Turkey from November 17–19 to attend a summit meeting of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

Released October 27

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Released October 28

Transcript of a press briefing by Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Martin Baily on the gross domestic product report

Released October 29

Transcript of a press briefing by Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala on action to preserve privacy of medical records

Acts Approved by the President

Approved October 25

H.R. 2561 / Public Law 106–79
Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2000

[1] This briefing took place on October 22 but was embargoed for release by the Office of the Press Secretary until 10:06 a.m., October 23.

S. 322 / Public Law 106–80
To amend title 4, United States Code, to add the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday to the list of days on which the flag should especially be displayed

Approved October 26

S. 800 / Public Law 106–81
Wireless Communications and Public Safety Act of 1999

Approved October 27

H.R. 356 / Public Law 106–82
To provide for the conveyance of certain property from the United States to Stanislaus County, California

Approved October 28

H.R. 1663 / Public Law 106–83
National Medal of Honor Memorial Act

H.R. 2841 / Public Law 106–84
To amend the Revised Organic Act of the Virgin Islands to provide for greater fiscal autonomy consistent with other United States jurisdictions, and for other purposes

Approved October 29

H.J. Res. 73 / Public Law 106–85
Making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2000, and for other purposes

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