

Week Ending Friday, December 31, 1999

**Statement on Providing Disaster Assistance to Venezuela**

*December 23, 1999*

Today I authorized a \$20 million draw-down of emergency disaster assistance to support relief operations in Venezuela. This assistance, to be drawn from existing Department of Defense inventories, will augment the \$5.5 million we have already committed to Venezuela. These funds will support continued search and rescue operations by U.S. military helicopters now on the scene, airlift of food, shelter, and medicines, water purification systems, and other critical needs.

As I told President Chavez when I spoke to him by telephone on Tuesday, we are deeply saddened by the loss of life and devastation that has taken place in Venezuela. The heroic response of the Venezuelan people to this calamity has left a profound impression on all of us. Through the efforts of our military and USAID, we will continue to do everything possible to help the people of Venezuela. Providing this assistance is not only the right thing to do; it also promotes our interest in ensuring stability in a nation that is a key partner in the hemisphere.

At this holiday season, the people of Venezuela are in our thoughts and prayers.

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

**Memorandum on Providing Disaster Assistance to Venezuela**

*December 23, 1999*

Presidential Determination No. 2000-09

*Memorandum for the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense*

*Subject:* Drawdown Under Section 506(a)(2) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as Amended, to Provide Emergency Disaster Relief Assistance to Venezuela

Pursuant to the authority vested in me by section 506(a)(2) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, 22 U.S.C. 2318(a)(2) ("the Act"), I hereby determine that it is in the national interest of the United States to draw down articles and services from the inventory and resources of the Department of Defense, for the purpose of providing international disaster relief assistance to Venezuela.

I therefore direct the drawdown of up to \$20 million of articles and services from the inventory and resources of the Department of Defense for the Government of Venezuela for the purposes and under the authorities of chapter 9 of part I of the Act.

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

**William J. Clinton**

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

**The President's Radio Address**

*December 25, 1999*

Good morning. Hillary, Chelsea, and I join millions of American families celebrating Christmas today. For Americans of many faiths, this is a season of renewal, of light