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NOTE: The President spoke at 2:35 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to Representative Hinojosa's wife, Martha Lopez Hinojosa, and their daughter Karen; Zeke and Livia Reyna and Alonzo and Yoli Cantu, luncheon hosts; Texas State Senator Carlos Truan; and former Texas State Attorney General Dan Morales.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on the Extension of Normal Trade Relations Status With Albania

February 9, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

I am submitting an updated report to the Congress concerning the emigration laws and policies of Albania. The report indicates continued Albanian compliance with U.S. and international standards in the area of emigration. In fact, Albania has imposed no emigration restrictions, including exit visa requirements, on its population since 1991.

On December 5, 1997, I determined and reported to the Congress that Albania was not in violation of paragraphs (1), (2), or (3) of subsection 402(a) of the Trade Act of 1974 or paragraphs (1), (2), or (3) of subsection 409(a) of that Act. That action allowed for the continuation of normal trade relations (NTR) status for Albania and certain other activities without the requirement of an annual waiver. This semiannual report is submitted as required by law pursuant to the determination of December 5, 1997.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
February 9, 2000.

Message to Congress Reporting on Rescissions and Deferrals

February 9, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974, I herewith report three rescissions of budget authority, totaling $128 million, and two deferrals of budget authority, totaling $1.6 million.

The proposed rescissions affect the programs of the Department of Energy and the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The proposed deferrals affect programs of the Department of State and International Assistance Programs.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
February 9, 2000.

Message to the Senate Transmitting the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade With Annexes

February 9, 2000

To the Senate of the United States:

I transmit herewith, for the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade, with Annexes, done at Rotterdam, September 10, 1998. The report of the Department of State is enclosed for the information of the Senate.

The Convention, which was negotiated under the auspices of the United Nations Environment Program and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, with the active participation of the United States, provides a significant and valuable international tool to promote sound risk-based decision-making in the trade of certain hazardous chemicals. Building on a successful voluntary procedure, the Convention requires Parties to exchange information about these chemicals, to communicate national decisions about their import, and to require that exports from their territories comply with the import decisions of other Parties.

The United States, with the assistance and cooperation of industry and nongovernmental organization, plays an important international leadership role in the safe management of hazardous chemicals and pesticides. This Convention, which assists developing countries in evaluating risks and enforcing their regulatory decisions regarding