

in which nuclear techniques contribute to a better world.

The NPT also calls for parties to “pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament.” Remarkable progress in nuclear disarmament has occurred since the end of the cold war. Under the START process, the United States and Russia have committed to reduce deployed strategic nuclear warheads by approximately two-thirds from cold war levels. We have agreed to a START III framework that would cut these arsenals by 80 percent from those peaks, and we will intensify our efforts to work with Russia to bring this agreement into effect. Already, the United States has eliminated some 59 percent of our overall nuclear weapons, and many U.S. facilities once dedicated to the production of nuclear weapons have been shut down, deactivated, or converted to other uses. Our nuclear weapons are no longer targeted against any country; our Army, Marine Corps, and surface and air Navy no longer deploy nuclear weapons; and our bomber force no longer stands on alert.

NATO has reduced the number of nuclear warheads dedicated to its sub-strategic forces in Europe by 85 percent, and NATO’s dual capable aircraft, the Alliance’s only nuclear forces, are no longer maintained on alert status, and their readiness levels have been reduced from minutes to weeks.

The United States and Russia are cooperating to ensure no further production of weapons-usable material, the safe storage of existing quantities of such material, and internationally supervised elimination of surplus stocks of nuclear materials.

We will continue the U.S. moratorium on nuclear testing and work to establish a universal ban through the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. The Conference on Disarmament should take the next essential step for global nuclear disarmament by negotiating a fissile material cutoff treaty now, without conditions.

The United States is committed to the ultimate elimination of all nuclear weapons. Achieving this goal will be neither easy nor rapid. Accordingly, the United States rededicates itself to work tirelessly and expedi-

tiously to create conditions that will make possible even deeper reductions in nuclear weapons and, ultimately, their elimination.

Proclamation 7280—Save Your Vision Week, 2000

March 6, 2000

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Sight is a precious gift that enables us to experience the wonder of the world around us; but few of us think about what we would do if we lost our vision. Unfortunately, millions of Americans must face this challenge because of conditions like cataracts, glaucoma, diabetic eye disease, or age-related macular degeneration.

Our most powerful tool in the battle against vision loss is early detection. A dilated eye examination can reveal signs of many eye diseases and disorders long before a patient experiences pain or any other noticeable symptom. Through early intervention and treatment, the vision loss accompanying such diseases can be reduced, postponed, or even prevented. Protective eyewear can also play a vital role in saving vision, particularly for individuals who use chemicals or operate machinery.

There is hope as well for people who suffer from low vision. Affecting 1 in 20 Americans, low vision is an impairment that cannot be corrected by standard glasses, contact lenses, medicine, or surgery, and interferes with one’s ability to participate in everyday activities. While it can occur in people of all ages and backgrounds, low vision primarily affects the growing population of people over 65 years old; other higher risk populations, including Hispanic and African Americans, are more likely to develop low vision at an earlier age.

While vision loss usually cannot be restored, vision rehabilitation techniques and products can make daily life much easier for people with low vision. From improved lighting in stairways and closets to talking clocks and computers to large-print labels on appliances, there are numerous products and services that can help people with low vision

maintain their confidence and independence, and improve their overall quality of life.

Every day, physicians and researchers make progress in the search for better treatments—and ultimately a cure—for vision loss. In this new century, emerging technologies will improve upon existing visual devices and techniques, and new medications will ensure more effective treatment of eye diseases and disorders. By investing in research and technology and committing to regular comprehensive eye examinations, we can ensure a brighter, healthier future for ourselves and our children.

To remind Americans of the importance of safeguarding their eyesight, the Congress, by joint resolution approved December 30, 1963 (77 Stat. 629; 36 U.S.C. 138), has authorized and requested the President to proclaim the first week in March of each year as “Save Your Vision Week.”

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim March 5 through March 11, 2000, as Save Your Vision Week. I urge all Americans to participate by making eye care and eye safety an important part of their lives and to ensure that dilated eye examinations are included in their regular health maintenance programs. I invite eye care professionals, the media, and all public and private organizations dedicated to preserving eyesight to join in activities that will raise awareness of the measures we can take to protect and sustain our vision.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this sixth day of March, in the year of our Lord two thousand, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

William J. Clinton

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Remarks Following a Meeting With Congressional Leaders and an Exchange With Reporters

March 7, 2000

Gun Control Legislation

The President. Good afternoon. Given what I want to talk about today, it seems fitting that I am speaking to you in the briefing room we have just named for Jim Brady.

Last spring, the brutal shootings at Columbine gave a life and death urgency to the call for strengthening our Nation’s gun laws. The Senate responded to that call, in spite of fierce pressures by the gun lobby. With a tie-breaking vote by the Vice President, the Senate passed an amendment to close the gun show loophole and pass other commonsense provisions that require child safety locks and ban the importation of large capacity ammunition clips.

Unfortunately, the House narrowly defeated the McCarthy amendment to close the gun show loophole and passed a much weaker bill than the Senate did. Now, for the past 8 months, the leaders in Congress have done virtually nothing to complete a final bill.

That’s why I called upon Senators Hatch and Leahy and Representatives Hyde and Conyers to come to the White House this morning. I met with them in the Oval Office for nearly an hour. We had a very good discussion. My message was simple: Congress has kept the American people waiting long enough. I want Congress to finish the gun bill and send it to me by the anniversary of the Columbine tragedy, April 20th.

In the meeting this morning, I told the leaders the final bill needs to close the loophole that allows criminals to buy firearms at gun shows, without opening any new loopholes in the process.

I said I wanted a ban on the importation of ammunition clips that allow shooters, including those in Littleton, to spray bullets across a wide killing zone in a matter of seconds. And I said a final bill needs to require child safety locks and should hold adults accountable when they allow young people to get their hands on deadly guns, two measures