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get it if you're really poor, or you can only get it if you buy into Medigap.

Now, let me tell you why this is such a big deal. The average 65-year-old in America today has a life expectancy of 82 to 83 years. The average 65-year-old woman has a life expectancy higher than that. The fastest growing group of American seniors are those over 85. So to knowingly lock ourselves into a program that would get 50 percent more expensive as you got older and older and needed more and more medicine and had less and less money, does not make much sense. We have given them a good program. It is the right thing to do. And so I would like to ask all of you to help all of these Members of Congress on the stage and to tell the people in Washington, "Look, this is not a partisan issue." You know, a lot of people say, "We don't want to do this. This is an election year." Look, they can name this prescription drug program after Herbert Hoover, Calvin Coolidge, and Warren Harding. It's fine with me. [*Laughter*] I don't—put some Republican's name on it. I don't care. Just do it, because it's the right thing to do for the seniors of this country.

So I would just implore you, help us pass this. Write to your United States Senators. Tell them it's not a partisan issue. Tell them what life is like. Tell them it's not right for seniors in Ohio to pay 30 to 50 percent more for medicine than seniors in Canada pay for the same medicine that's made in America in the first place. Tell them it's not right for you to need something you can't have, so you get sick, but then when you show up at the emergency room, it gets paid for.

We can afford this. Everybody in America has worked hard for it. We've got this budget in good shape. We can make a commitment to our future. If you think this is necessary now, imagine what it's going to be like when the number of seniors doubles in 30 years.

That's the last point I want to leave you with. Look how many seniors there are in Cleveland today. In 30 years, the number of people over 65 will double, and Donna Shalala and I hope to be among them. [*Laughter*] And you think about it. And then the average age in America will be well over 80.

Now, if we have to take care of all these people by waiting until they get sick and they go to the hospital, instead of worried about hospitals closing, 30 years from now you'll worry about the city going bankrupt because everybody will be in the hospital. We've got to be healthier. We've got to keep people healthy. We need to keep them playing tennis, like Lawyer Shalala there, but we also need to be able to give people medication to keep them out of the hospital and to manage people in a way that will maximize their health. This will be a huge issue.

So I implore you, this country—this is the first time we've been in shape to do this in 35 years. We can do this now. And we can do it now and take care of the future. We can help the seniors of today and take a great burden off of tomorrow. But we need your help to do it.

Again, I implore you, talk to your Members of Congress, talk to your Senators. Tell them it's not a partisan issue; it's an American issue. It's a human issue, and it's a smart thing to do.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:55 p.m. in the Louis Stokes Wing of the City Public Library. In his remarks, he referred to Wanda Golias, who introduced the President; Andrew Venable, Jr., director, City Public Library; former Representative Louis Stokes; Edna Shalala, mother of Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala; Sandy Alomar, Jr., catcher, Cleveland Indians; 6-year-old Kayla Rolland, who was shot and mortally wounded by a 6-year-old classmate in Mount Morris Township, MI, and her mother, Veronica McQueen; and Wayne LaPierre, executive vice president, National Rifle Association.

Statement on the North Atlantic Treaty Organization

March 13, 2000

On March 12, 1999, in Independence, Missouri, the Foreign Ministers of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. One year ago, America became safer, NATO became stronger, and Europe more stable and united.

Today we take the opportunity to reaffirm that the first new members of NATO shall

not be the last. From the Baltic Sea to the Balkans, in the heart of Europe, and wherever NATO's partners are found, there are many countries that share our democratic values and our determination to defend them. As they become able to meet the responsibilities of NATO membership and to contribute to the security of the transatlantic area, we will support their aspirations to become our Allies.

NATO is erasing arbitrary lines of division across Europe. That is essential if we are to meet our goal, shared by our administration and a broad bipartisan coalition, of a Europe undivided, democratic, and at peace for the first time in history. We will also continue to deepen our partnership with Russia and Ukraine, who play essential roles in the new Europe.

At the NATO Summit in Washington in April 1999, the Allies laid out a roadmap to membership. We are helping aspiring allies intensify their participation in the Partnership For Peace, encouraging them to follow Membership Action Plans to achieve greater inter-operability with NATO, and engaging with them in a full set of consultations and cooperative measures. In these ways, aspiring countries are demonstrating their commitment to closer ties with NATO and preparing for possible membership in the Alliance. They are also embracing economic and political reforms as well as defense policies that strengthen their democracies and contribute to peace and security in Europe. We urge them to continue pursuing their Membership Action Plans, the surest path to joining NATO, with even greater dedication in the months ahead.

On this occasion, we thank our Allies, new and old, for working with us to make sure NATO does in the next half century what it has done in the last: unite our strength to deter war and defend our common interests. NATO's door is open to those who will help us do that in the future.

Notice—Continuation of Iran Emergency

March 13, 2000

On March 15, 1995, by Executive Order 12957, I declared a national emergency with respect to Iran pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701–1706) to deal with the threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States constituted by the actions and policies of the Government of Iran, including its support for international terrorism, efforts to undermine the Middle East peace process, and acquisition of weapons of mass destruction and the means to deliver them. On May 6, 1995, I issued Executive Order 12959 imposing more comprehensive sanctions to further respond to this threat, and on August 19, 1997, I issued Executive Order 13059 consolidating and clarifying these previous orders. The last notice of continuation was published in the *Federal Register* on March 12, 1999.

Because the actions and policies of the Government of Iran continue to threaten the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States, the national emergency declared on March 15, 1995, must continue in effect beyond March 15, 2000. Therefore, in accordance with section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)), I am continuing the national emergency with respect to Iran. Because the emergency declared by Executive Order 12957 constitutes an emergency separate from that declared on November 14, 1979, by Executive Order 12170, this renewal is distinct from the emergency renewal of November 1999. This notice shall be published in the *Federal Register* and transmitted to the Congress.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
March 13, 2000.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 12:18 p.m., March 13, 2000]