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In the aftermath of the terrible casualties caused by poison gas in World War I, the Geneva Protocol banned the use in war of chemical and biological weapons.

More recently, the international community has worked to build on this achievement. The 1972 Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) banned the development, production, and possession of biological and toxin weapons, and the 1993 Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) did the same for chemical weapons. Today, 135 countries are parties to the CWC, and 143 are parties to the BWC. The United States has ratified both agreements, and our commitment to them has enjoyed strong bipartisan support.

Today, one of the greatest threats to American and global security is the danger that adversary nations or terrorist groups will obtain and use chemical or biological weapons. The international agreements we have reached banning these weapons are a critical component of our effort to protect against this threat.

In my 1998 State of the Union Address, I called on the international community to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention with a new international inspection system to help detect and deter cheating. Significant progress has been made in Geneva at the Ad Hoc Group of BWC States Parties toward achieving this goal. We urge all participants in this process to work toward the earliest possible conclusion of a BWC Protocol that will further strengthen international security.

On this 75th anniversary of the Geneva Protocol, I call on the countries of the world who have not yet done so to join the Geneva Protocol, CWC, and BWC. I call on all parties to strictly adhere to these agreements and to work to strengthen them. It is more urgent than ever that, true to the words of the Geneva Protocol, their prohibitions "shall be universally accepted . . . binding alike the conscience and the practice of nations."

Statement on the Ethiopia-Eritrea Cease-Fire Agreement

June 18, 2000

Today in Algiers, Ethiopia and Eritrea signed an agreement to cease hostilities. This is a breakthrough which can and should end the tragic conflict in the Horn of Africa. It can and should permit these two countries to realize their potential in peace, instead of squandering it in war.

I commend the Organization of African Unity, and especially its chair, Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, for leading the negotiation of this agreement. I am grateful to my envoy, former National Security Adviser Anthony Lake, to Assistant Secretary of State Susan Rice, and to my senior adviser on African affairs, Gayle Smith, for their tireless pursuit of a peaceful resolution to this conflict. The United States has supported the OAU in this effort, and we will continue to do so. I have asked Tony Lake to return to Algiers to work with the OAU as we enter the next round of negotiations.

I hope this commitment by Ethiopia and Eritrea to stop the fighting also signals their commitment to build the peace. I urge them to use the next round of talks to produce a final, comprehensive, lasting agreement, so they can get on with the work of pursuing democracy and development for their people. Ethiopia and Eritrea are America's friends. If they are ready to take the next step, we and our partners in the international community will walk with them.

Memorandum on Suspension of Limitations Under the Jerusalem Embassy Act

June 16, 2000

Presidential Determination No. 2000–24

Memorandum for the Secretary of State

Subject: Suspension of Limitations Under the Jerusalem Embassy Act

Pursuant to the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, including section 7(a) of the Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995 (Public Law 104–45) (the "Act"), I hereby determine that it is necessary to protect the national security interests of the United States to suspend for a period of 6 months the limitations set forth in sections 3(b) and 7(b) of the Act.

You are hereby authorized and directed to transmit this determination to the Congress,