

Statement on Action on Japanese Whaling Practices

September 13, 2000

Following Secretary Mineta's certification that Japan is undermining international whaling protections with its expanded whaling program, I am today directing that Japan be denied future access to fishing rights in U.S. waters and directing members of my Cabinet to consider additional steps we might take, including possible trade sanctions.

Strong international cooperation has allowed the recovery of many whale species once pushed to the brink of extinction. We must work to ensure that these protections are upheld. I hope that the steps we take today will encourage Japan to reverse its actions and respect the strong international consensus that has helped bring back some of Earth's most majestic creatures.

Statement on the Northern Ireland Peace Process

September 13, 2000

I was encouraged by today's historic first visit to the White House by the leaders of Northern Ireland's new Government, established under the Good Friday accord. First Minister David Trimble and Deputy First Minister Seamus Mallon conveyed to me their absolute commitment to make the new political institutions work for the benefit of all the people of Northern Ireland. Although the institutions have only been fully operating for a matter of weeks, elected representatives from across the party spectrum are working together on issues—from economic development to the environment to health and education—that hold the key to a better life for their constituents, who now hold them accountable under devolution of power.

While difficult issues relating to implementation of the Good Friday accord remain, I am convinced following today's meeting that all the parties can work together to overcome their differences and that they fully recognize the importance of doing so to ensure that these historic achievements are not lost. The ongoing violence reminds us of the

need for all parties to carry out their obligations under the accord, and for those with political aims to pursue them through exclusively peaceful means.

I am grateful for the invitation extended to me to visit Northern Ireland. I reaffirm my desire to continue to support the peace process in any way we can.

Thanks to courageous and determined leadership, the people of Northern Ireland face a brighter future now than at any time in the last three decades. As those in zones of conflict around the world search for hope, they need look no further than Northern Ireland, whose leaders have proved that risks for peace are worth taking.

Statement on the Congressional Effort to Override the Veto of the "Marriage Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2000"

September 13, 2000

Through 7 years of tough choices and fiscal discipline, we have changed record deficits to surpluses, paid down the debt for 3 years in a row, and put America on course to be debt-free by 2012. As today's vote demonstrates, the majority in Congress still seems to be determined to knock America off this path of fiscal discipline with a 10 year tax plan that will drain nearly \$2 trillion from the surplus and drive us back into deficits.

I urge Congress to work with me on a middle-class tax cut to help Americans send their children to college, provide long-term care for elderly or disabled relatives, make child care more affordable, and provide targeted marriage penalty tax relief. If the majority in Congress is serious about paying down the debt, they should abandon the failed tax plan they continue to advocate and work with me to pass tax cuts targeted to America's families, strengthen Social Security and Medicare, create a voluntary Medicare prescription drug benefit, invest in education, and keep America on course to be debt-free by 2012. This is the best approach for America.

NOTE: The President vetoed H.R. 4810, the "Marriage Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2000", on August 5.

Memorandum on Improving Hate Crimes Reporting

September 13, 2000

Memorandum for the Attorney General

Subject: Improving Hate Crimes Reporting

Unfortunately, each year our country experiences a number of hate crimes. We have all heard about the heinous incidents such as the dragging death of James Byrd, Jr., in Jasper, Texas, in June 1998. In October of that same year, Mathew Shepard, a gay college student, died after being beaten and tied to a fence. In July 1999, Benjamin Smith went on a racially motivated shooting spree in Illinois and Indiana. At the end of this rampage fueled by hate, Ricky Byrdson, an African American who was a former basketball coach at Northwestern University, and Won-Joon Yoon, a Korean graduate student at Indiana University, were killed, and eight others were wounded. In August 1999, Joseph Iletto, an Asian American and U.S. postal worker, died at the hands of a gunman in Los Angeles. This same gunman also injured five persons, including three children, at a Jewish community center. Finally, this year there were two rampages in Pennsylvania in which several people of various ethnic, racial, and religious backgrounds were killed or injured. These crimes affect the entire Nation, the communities in which they occur, and the victims and their families in ways fundamentally different from other crimes. People are targeted simply because of who they are—whether it is because of their race, religion, color, sexual orientation, gender, or disability.

During my Administration, we have worked hard to fight hate crimes. I established the National Church Arson Task Force in June 1996 to oversee the investigation and prosecution of arson at houses of worship around the country. I held the first-ever White House Conference on Hate Crimes in November 1997. At the conference, I announced that the Department of Justice would establish Hate Crimes Working Groups in the U.S. Attorneys' districts across the country. These working groups, essentially Federal-State-local partnerships, typically include representation from the U.S.

Attorney's Office, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), State and local law enforcement and prosecutors' offices, educators, and community groups. The groups work to ensure close coordination on hate crimes investigations and prosecutions among responsible law enforcement agencies; promote training of police, investigators, and prosecutors in identifying and dealing with hate crimes; encourage victims to report hate crimes; and educate the public about the harm they cause. In April of this year, I held a strategy session with some representatives of these Hate Crimes Working Groups at which law enforcement officials—at the Federal, State, and local levels—reported that they coordinate closely on hate crimes investigations and prosecutions.

In 1998, the last year for which FBI figures are available, 7,755 hate crimes were reported—nearly one hate crime every hour of every day. Of these hate crimes reported, 56 percent were motivated by race, 18 percent by religion, and 16 percent by sexual orientation. However, there was certainly an under-reporting of hate crimes.

Today, I announced a new report, "Improving the Quality and Accuracy of Bias Crime Statistics Nationally: An Assessment of the First Ten Years of Bias Crime Data Collection," which was funded by the Department of Justice. This report noted that over 10,000 city, county, and State law enforcement agencies now participate in the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Hate Crime Data Collection Program. Although 83 percent of participating agencies reported that no hate crimes had occurred in their jurisdiction during the previous year, follow-up surveys with line officers showed that 31 percent of those agencies had investigated one or more incidents of hate crimes. These data indicate a disconnect between what line officers believe are hate crimes and what is reported to the FBI. Extrapolating from this data, the report estimates that between 5,000 and 6,000 additional agencies may have encountered hate crimes that were not reported to the national program. In addition, the report noted that 85 percent of law enforcement officers responding to a survey believed that hate-motivated crimes are