

We have a chance this year to get a comprehensive test ban treaty so that there will be no more nuclear testing. That will dramatically reduce the chance that any kind of nuclear weapon will ever be used against anybody in the entire world again. The United States will have to lead that fight if it's going to get done. That's one example.

And the last challenge we face is to make our Government inspire more trust and work better. We're going to continue this reinventing Government move that the Vice President has led so brilliantly. We are going to continue to downsize the Government. It's already the smallest it's been in 30 years. But we're going to try to keep it strong.

I read today something that my friend James Carville wrote in his new book, which will be coming out pretty soon. He said, "You know, people always say the Government can't do anything right." He said, "Well, for 30 years we spent half your money—half your money for 30 years—on just three things: defense, Social Security, and Medicare. You be the judge. We won the cold war. We cut the poverty rate among seniors in half. And if you get to be a senior citizen in America today because of Medicare, you have a higher life expectancy than any group of elderly people anywhere in the world. I think we got our money's worth, and I think we have to continue to give the American people their money's worth for what we do in public life."

We do have more to do. I hope the Congress will finally give me that line-item veto they've been promising in their Contract. That's one thing in there I like. And I hope they will finally pass a genuine bipartisan campaign finance reform bill to give even more power back to the American people.

I want to leave you with this. I want you to think about it Monday, when you try to figure out whether you want to go to the trouble to go out or not. We can pass campaign finance reform. We can pass all kinds of reforms. But whether this country really works depends upon you, what's in your mind and what's in your heart.

There is no call for the cynicism which exists in America today. This country is doing some things that are very important better than any other country in the world. This

country has problems. As long as people exist on the face of the Earth, there will be problems. Cynicism is a cheap and poor excuse for inaction and the evasion of personal responsibility. As long as you're cynical about somebody else, you don't have to pick up your own shovel and start digging. And it's wrong. It's wrong.

So I say to you, for the United States of America, the best is yet to come. For the children in this audience, the age of possibility will give them more chances to live out their dreams than any generation of Americans has ever had. But it won't work unless we make sure everybody has got a chance at that dream, unless we give our people the power to make the most of their own lives, and unless we remember that we cannot afford cynicism, and we have to go forward together.

It's the most important lesson I have learned again and again and again in 3 years as your President. I will never knowingly do anything to see the American people divided again or to coddle the cynics again. We need to stand up, rear back, and seize our future.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:25 p.m. at the North Iowa Area Community College. In his remarks, he referred to David Buettner, president, North Iowa Area Community College and Deo Koenigs, Iowa State Representative.

Statement on Signing the Farm Credit System Reform Act of 1996

February 10, 1996

Today I have approved H.R. 2029, the "Farm Credit System Reform Act of 1996," which will reform and expand the activities of the Federal Agricultural Mortgage Corporation (Farmer Mac), as well as provide regulatory relief to members of the Farm Credit System.

This bill should lower the cost of credit for farmers and ranchers by passing along the benefit of Farmer Mac's lower interest rates to local banks. Other changes also will make it more attractive for county and regional banks to participate in the Farmer Mac program, which will link these local banks to national and international credit markets.

This bill is an example of the kind of re-inventing government that I have encouraged in all areas of government. Under this new law, banks and farmers will have less paperwork, and the auditing programs will be freer to target areas of major concern.

As Farmer Mac takes on new business responsibilities as a mortgage purchaser and an issuer of securities, it will be important for the Farm Credit Administration and the Treasury Department to monitor the use of these new authorities to ensure the continued safety and soundness of this government-sponsored enterprise. Similarly, the relevant congressional committees have requested the Farm Credit Administration, working with the Treasury, to conduct periodic evaluations of Farmer Mac.

I also note that H.R. 2029 maintains a common board of directors for the Farm Credit System Insurance Corporation and the Farm Credit Administration, which serves as a regulator of the system. As previously proposed by the Administration, the Congress should reconsider this structure in the future to provide more independence for the board.

I am pleased to sign this bill in order to expand opportunities and lower costs for the ranchers and farmers of America.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
February 10, 1996.

NOTE: H.R. 2029, approved February 10, was assigned Public Law No. 104-105.

Statement on Signing the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1996

February 10, 1996

Today I have signed into law S. 1124, the "National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1996." This Act authorizes appropriations for Department of Defense military activities, including military construction, and defense activities of the Department of Energy. It also provides, extends, or amends various authorities relating to national defense programs and activities.

I vetoed the original version of this legislation, H.R. 1530, on December 28, 1995. Since that time, the Congress has addressed my three central national security concerns about the earlier bill. First, the Congress deleted the provisions requiring deployment by 2003 of a costly missile defense system designed to defend against a long-range missile threat, which our intelligence community does not foresee in the next decade. Such a course of action would have prevented us from deploying the best possible technology if a real threat were to emerge at a later time. Moreover, implementation of the system called for in H.R. 1530 would probably have been inconsistent with the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty.

Second, the Congress deleted the requirement that the President submit a supplemental appropriations request within a defined time period after commencement of certain contingency and other operations, such as the ongoing military operations in Bosnia. The Act does, however, continue to contain unwarranted restrictions on the manner in which such operations may be funded.

Third, the Congress deleted the restriction on the President's authority to make and implement decisions relating to the operational or tactical control of elements of the U.S. armed forces, a restriction which clearly infringed on the President's constitutional authority as Commander in Chief.

The Act also includes a number of provisions of great importance to our national defense and to the men and women in our armed forces, authorizing critical defense programs to be continued and new ones to be initiated. The Act authorizes the full 2.4% increase in pay and allowances for our military personnel. It authorizes the Military Housing Privatization Initiative, which provides new authority to acquire and improve military housing and supporting facilities through the use of private expertise and capital. It authorizes necessary military construction and NATO infrastructure programs. It continues the Department of Energy's science-based Stockpile Stewardship program. It provides for the sale of the Elk Hills Naval Petroleum Reserve.

The Act also contains the Administration's proposal to allow the United States to extra-