

We're committed to this; we have to pass this now. But this needs to be a long-term commitment to partnership on the part of the Federal Government. And I want you to help us pass it in Congress. I want you to help us work with you to implement it. And I want you to continue to make sure that we are aware of exactly what's happening in your backyard.

I think this is very important to the future of the entire country, that we prove we can do this together. And this is something that every single one of you will always be proud of having taken a leadership role in.

Thank you very much, and goodbye.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 1:15 p.m. from the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Gary Locke of Washington and his wife, Mona Lee. The transcript made available by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Vice President Al Gore; Governors John A. Kitzhaber of Oregon, Gary Locke of Washington, and Tony Knowles of Alaska; Representative Norman D. Dicks; California State Secretary of Resources Mary D. Nichols; Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission Chairman Billy Frank, Jr.; County Executive Ron Sims, of King County, WA; and Mayor Paul Schell of Seattle, WA.

### **Statement on Assistance to Colombia in the Aftermath of the Earthquake** *January 27, 1999*

On behalf of all the people of the United States, I want to express our deepest sympathies to the people of Colombia who have lost loved ones or suffered injuries in Monday's devastating earthquake. It appears that more than 1,000 people were killed and more than 3,000 were injured. Entire neighborhoods lie in ruins, leaving many homeless.

I have spoken by telephone to President Pastrana and assured him that the United States will do its part to support relief and recovery. Already, a 62-member U.S. search and rescue team has arrived in Colombia, at the request of the Colombian Government, to help find and assist survivors. Today we are making available through USAID \$2 million for immediate disaster relief, including airlifts of blankets and shelter materials and other emergency needs identified by our two

Governments. We will deploy a new team of technical advisers to bolster Colombia's rescue efforts. And with the strong support of the United States, the Inter-American Development Bank has already pledged \$10 million for rebuilding.

We will stay in close contact with the Colombian Government to determine how else we can help. As with the response to Hurricane Mitch in Central America, I know the people of the United States will want to assist in the wake of this tragedy. I say to Colombians what I said to Central Americans: *Ayudaremos a nuestros hermanos*—we will help our brothers and sisters. It is the right thing to do, and it supports our interest in a stable, democratic, and prosperous hemisphere.

As I said in October when President Pastrana visited the White House, his Presidency represents a new beginning for Colombia, a new opportunity that Monday's tragedy cannot and must not undermine. We will continue to work closely with him as he leads Colombia toward a more peaceful and prosperous future.

### **Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Terrorists Who Threaten To Disrupt the Middle East Peace Process**

*January 27, 1999*

*Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)*

As required by section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c), and section 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), 50 U.S.C. 1703(c), I transmit herewith a 6-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to terrorists who threaten to disrupt the Middle East peace process that was declared in Executive Order 12947 of January 23, 1995.

Sincerely,

**William J. Clinton**

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate.