

exempt facility bonds. Under the leadership of the Vice President, we want to increase the number of empowerment zones to give more businesses incentives to move into these areas.

Future Challenges

America's small business community is both the symbol and the embodiment of our economic freedom. That is why my Administration has made concerted efforts to expand small business access to capital, reform the system of Government regulations to make it more equitable for small companies, and expand small business access to new and growing markets.

This is an important report because it annually reflects our current knowledge about the dynamic small business economy. Clearly, much is yet to be learned: existing statistics are not yet current enough to answer all the questions about how small, minority-owned, and women-owned businesses are faring in obtaining capital, providing benefits, and responding to regional growth or downsizing. I continue to encourage cooperative Government efforts to gather and analyze data that is useful for Federal policy-making.

I am proud that my Administration is on the leading edge in working as a partner with the small business community. Our economic future deserves no less. The job of my Administration, and its pledge to small business owners, is to listen, to find out what works and to ensure a healthy environment for small business growth.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
May 6, 1999.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on Telecommunications Payments to Cuba

May 6, 1999

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 1705(e)(6) of the Cuban Democracy Act of 1992, 22 U.S.C. 6004(e)(6), as amended by section 102(g) of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity

(LIBERTAD) Act of 1996, Public Law 104-114, 110 Stat. 785, I transmit herewith a 6-month periodic report on telecommunications payments made to Cuba pursuant to Department of the Treasury specific licenses.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
May 6, 1999.

Remarks on Departure for Houston, Texas, and an Exchange With Reporters

May 7, 1999

The President. Good morning. Tomorrow I will be visiting some of the communities that were so terribly damaged by the tornadoes this week. Our thoughts and prayers are with the people of Oklahoma, Kansas, and Texas, with the people of Tennessee who also endured terrible storms and destruction.

Before I leave, I'd like to make comments on a couple of other matters. First, on the new economic report issued today: We received more good news for our working families. Unemployment is 4.3 percent, with 234,000 new jobs added last month alone. African-American unemployment is at its lowest level on record. And real wages, after declining 4.3 percent in the 12 years before I took office, have now risen over 6 percent in the last 6 years. The American economy continues to see a remarkable combination of strong growth, job creation, and low inflation. Our economic strategy continues to be the right strategy for prosperity, and it is the one we should follow as we work to strengthen Social Security and Medicare for the 21st century.

It's worth remembering that the move from economic stagnation to sustained prosperity is not the only turnaround our Nation has seen in the last 6 years. We also see the crime rate falling, the welfare rolls falling, the teen pregnancy rate falling, drunk driving going down, a host of other social ills now easing, even though for so long they seemed destined only to worsen.

The American people, in homes and communities all across this country, are working hard at the grassroots level to turn around

every one of these social problems, and others are doing their part. That is the kind of national commitment we need to protect our children from violence. I believe, more than anything else, we need a grassroots effort which involves every single American, from the White House down to the smallest community, a national campaign that draws out everyone's commitment, all our resources, and depends upon everyone taking responsibility.

On Monday, as you know, we'll have a White House meeting here, a strategy session to seek out the best ideas for this effort, from people who can really make a difference, parents and young people, teachers and religious leaders, law enforcement, gun manufacturers, representatives of the entertainment industry, and those of us here in Government. Together, we will talk about how we can shield children from gratuitous violence, keep parents involved in their children's lives, reach out to troubled young people early enough, and do more to keep guns out of their reach.

We will not ask who takes the blame but how we can all take responsibility, and I will challenge everyone there and everyone in America to do their part. We know this kind of sustained, organized effort can work. Let me just give you one example. Four years ago, I asked for a national campaign to reduce teen pregnancy. Today, under the leadership of Governor Tom Kean, former Governor of New Jersey and now the president of Drew University, that campaign is finding what works, spreading it to other communities, working with the media to send the right message to our children.

Two years ago, I called for a national effort by businesses to hire people off welfare, to make sure the welfare reform effort would work. Today, under the leadership of Eli Segal, the Welfare to Work partnership has grown to 10,000 companies that have helped us move more than 400,000 people from the welfare rolls to the job rolls.

Time and again, we have seen when citizens, businesses, communities, nonprofits, and government take responsibility to work together, we can overcome any challenge. We are turning the tide on all kinds of social problems. Now we must turn our intense ef-

forts to this issue of violence. We have remarkable Americans who have been working on it for sometime now, with real success in community after community; you will hear from them on Monday. But obviously, in the aftermath of what happened in Colorado and the school shootings of the last 2 years, we have to do more. I'm very much looking forward to this meeting and to getting to work with Americans all over our country to give our children the safe childhoods they deserve.

Thank you very much.

Military Pay Raise

Q. Mr. President, will you accept a military pay raise as part of the emergency supplemental, the Kosovo emergency—supplemental bill?

The President. Well, as you know, we're supporting a military pay raise, and I don't think there's any difference in when the Congress and I think it should take effect. So there may be some—I have to get briefed on this—you know, I've been gone to Europe, but my understanding is, the only difference in the two bills is at what point they fund it and whether they take it out from under the ceilings of next year's budget, not when the military actually gets it.

So I think we're all—my view is, at least when I left to go to Europe, we were all for the same pay raise going into effect at the same time. And I understand why Congress wants to advance fund it, and I'd like to see the bill loaded up with as little extraneous spending as possible. But we are going to give a military pay raise. We're all committed to it, and we just have to work out what the best way to do it is.

Kosovo Peacekeeping Force

Q. Mr. President, do you insist that the American Commander of NATO be in charge of whatever forces wind up as peacekeepers in Kosovo?

The President. Well, I think the best thing for me to say now is what—I think it will work best if we have a system like we had in Bosnia where there was U.N. approval; NATO was the core of the force; but there was Russian participation; there was

Ukrainian participation; there was participation from a lot of other countries, and the command issues were worked out by and large in three different segments of the country, where primary responsibility was taken in one section by the United States working with Russia, in another by Britain, and another by France. There may be some other way to do it in Kosovo; I don't want to pre-judge all the details.

The important thing—I don't want neither to add nor subtract from the basic conditions that we have said we believe are necessary to make this work. That is, the refugees go home to safety and autonomy, Serb forces out, and an international security force in, with NATO at the core. Anything I say today, while we're working hard to try to push this and to try to gain more converts and get more people involved in this, would be, I think, a mistake, except to say I think that what we did in Bosnia was functional.

But I think it's important for the United States and for our Allies neither to add nor subtract from the basic conditions that we have said all along are absolutely essential to make this work.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:38 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

May 2

The President had a telephone conversation with President Boris Yeltsin of Russia concerning the May 3 visit of Special Envoy and former Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin of Russia.

May 3

In the morning, the President met with Prime Minister Kiezo Obuchi in the Oval Office and, later, in the Cabinet Room.

In the afternoon, the President met with Special Envoy and former Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin of Russia in the Oval Office concerning the situation in the Balkans.

Later, the President met in the Oval Office with civil rights leader Jesse Jackson and his delegation, whose personal appeal won the release of three American infantrymen held prisoner by Serbian authorities.

The President announced his intention to nominate Alberto J. Mora to be a member of the Broadcasting Board of Governors.

The President announced his intention to appoint Daniel Lamaute to serve as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

The President announced his intention to appoint Paul F. Cole and Alan L. Wurtzel as members of the National Skill Standards Board.

May 4

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Brussels, Belgium, arriving the following morning.

The President announced his intention to nominate Larry C. Napper for the rank of Ambassador during his tenure of service as Coordinator for East European Assistance.

The President announced his intention to nominate Edward E. Kaufman to be a member of the Broadcasting Board of Governors.

The President announced his intention to nominate David B. Dunn to be Ambassador to Zambia.

The President announced his intention to nominate James Lewis as Director of the Office of Economic Impact and Diversity at the Department of Energy.

The President declared a major disaster in Oklahoma and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by tornadoes and severe storms May 3–4.

The President declared a major disaster in Kansas and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and tornadoes on May 3.