

Week Ending Friday, September 10, 1999

**Statement on the Middle East
Peace Process**

September 3, 1999

I am extremely pleased that the leaders of Israel and the PLO have reached an agreement that will allow them to resume implementation of the Wye River accords and restart permanent status talks on an accelerated basis. I congratulate the two leaders for their vision in seizing this opportunity. It shows that when both sides are willing to work together, their fundamental requirements can be met, confidence can be built, and the process can move forward.

I thank the Egyptian Government, especially my good friend President Hosni Mubarak, for helping to facilitate the agreement. I am grateful to Secretary of State Albright and her team. Their personal involvement made the difference in helping the two sides to bridge remaining gaps and reach consensus.

This truly is a new beginning. A lasting, just, and comprehensive peace in the Middle East is now a step closer. The Israelis and Palestinians are doing their part to bring it about. We must do ours. Today I call on the Congress to fund fully the commitments we made when the Wye accords were first signed.

NOTE: This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

**Executive Order 13136—
Amendment to Executive Order
13090, President's Commission on
the Celebration of Women in
American History**

September 3, 1999

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, and in accordance

with the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act, as amended (5 U.S.C. App.), in order to extend the life of the President's Commission on the Celebration of Women in American History ("Commission") to provide additional time to develop support systems and test the viability of the recommendations included in the Commission's report to the President, it is hereby ordered that section 2(c) of Executive Order 13090 is amended by deleting "March 1, 1999." and inserting "December 31, 2000." in lieu thereof.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
September 3, 1999.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 10:37 a.m., September 7, 1999]

NOTE: This Executive order was published in the *Federal Register* on September 8. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

**Message on the Observance
of Labor Day, 1999**

September 3, 1999

Warm greetings to all Americans across our country as we celebrate Labor Day.

For more than a century, we have set aside this day to honor our nation's working men and women whose energy, talent, creativity, and determination have built the foundations of freedom and prosperity that generations of Americans have enjoyed. Through the decades, America's workers have built a strong economy and strived to bring justice and dignity to the workplace.

Today all Americans owe a debt of gratitude to our nation's labor force. Since 1992, we have experienced the longest peacetime economic expansion in American history, with nearly 20 million new jobs, wages rising at twice the rate of inflation, the highest

percentage of home ownership, the shortest welfare rolls, and the lowest peacetime unemployment rate since 1957. We have fully restored fiscal soundness to the federal budget, with a budget surplus of at least \$99 billion—the largest dollar surplus in American history.

With America's robust economy, we have the opportunity—and the responsibility—to address the needs of our nation's working families. We must take advantage of this unique moment in time to reform Social Security and Medicare to preserve them for our children. We must ensure that these programs are there for our children in the 21st century just as they were there for our parents and grandparents in the 20th century. And we must raise the minimum wage to make certain that our workers are able to earn a decent income.

As we observe this last Labor Day of the 20th century, let us rededicate ourselves to this important effort. On behalf of a grateful nation, I salute America's working men and women and send best wishes for a wonderful holiday.

Bill Clinton

NOTE: This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

September 4, 1999

Good morning. I'm speaking to you today from Waterman Elementary School in Skaneateles, New York, where children, like those all across America, are now getting back to the basics of reading, writing, and arithmetic.

When we took office in 1993, Vice President Gore and I charted a new economic course for America that took Washington back to basics—budget discipline, expanded trade, investment in our people. Today we received more good news that this strategy is working. The latest economic report shows that unemployment has now dropped to 4.2 percent, the lowest rate since January of 1970. In the last 6½ years, we've created 19.4 million new jobs, the longest peacetime expansion and the largest budget surplus in history. With this good news, it is more clear

than ever that the course we've charted for the economy is right for America. Now we must use this moment of great promise to meet our large, long-term challenges—to increase opportunity and responsibility for our citizens and to strengthen our national community.

Making the most of this moment requires us to meet the challenges of the aging of America by saving Social Security and strengthening and modernizing Medicare with a prescription drug coverage. It requires us to secure America's long-term prosperity by paying down our debt and getting new investment to areas still untouched by our recovery. And it requires us to continue to pursue an ambitious course to give all our children a world-class education; more and better prepared teachers; modernized schools connected to the Internet; a new commitment to higher standards, to ending social promotion, to more after-school and summer school programs, to ending Federal subsidies for failure, and for supporting proven strategies for turning around schools that aren't working. That, too, is the right course for America.

The risky tax plan passed by the majority in Congress is not the right course for America, and it would make it impossible to pursue these other objectives. I don't believe we should squander our surplus after being in debt for 30 years and quadrupling our national debt in just 12. I don't think we should do something that would imperil our prosperity or jeopardize our children's future by forcing crippling cuts in education, by failing to add a single day to the life of Social Security and Medicare, by failing to seize this opportunity to get America out of debt for the first time since 1835, or to give more investment to those communities that need it so much—the cities, the small towns, the rural areas left behind.

Instead, we can meet our most pressing national priorities and still have sensible tax cuts and extend our prosperity into the places it has yet to reach. That's the plan I have proposed. I believe that's what the American people want, and that's what I'll work with Congress, with Members of both parties, to achieve.