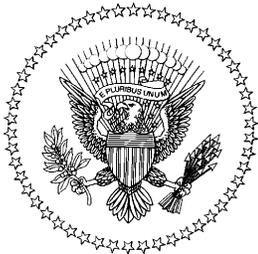


Weekly Compilation of
**Presidential
Documents**



Monday, September 13, 1999
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Editor's Note: The President was in Auckland, New Zealand, on September 10, the closing date of this issue. Releases and announcements issued by the Office of the Press Secretary but not received in time for inclusion in this issue will be printed next week.

WEEKLY COMPILATION OF PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

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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.

So as America goes back to school and Congress returns from its summer recess, our elected representatives have this big assignment and other important ones, as well. First, we must show we have learned the lessons of Littleton. To protect our children, Congress must pass commonsense measures to prevent youth violence and keep guns out of the wrong hands.

Now a full month has passed since House and Senate conferees met to work on this legislation; nearly 5 months since the shootings at Columbine. I'm still waiting, and America is still waiting for Congress to act. It shouldn't take another tragedy to shake them from the summer slumber.

Today I'm sending a letter to the Republican leadership urging Congress to take immediate action to send me a balanced bipartisan juvenile crime bill that closes the gun show loophole, requires child safety locks for guns, and bans the importation of large-capacity ammunition clips. If Congress passes it, I'll sign it.

To protect the 160 million Americans who rely on managed care, Congress should pass a strong, enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights. There's a bipartisan bill ready for action. The American Medical Association has endorsed it. So have more than 200 other medical and consumer organizations. It's high time for Congress to act, and if Congress passes it, I'll sign it.

With the number of students at historic levels, Congress should make the investments in education our children deserve. Here again legislation is ready. As part of my balanced budget, I've proposed to build new schools and fix old ones across our land. Congress should pass the proposal and fulfill the commitment it made last year to hire 100,000 well-prepared teachers to reduce class size in the early grades. Congress should also pass my proposal to stop social promotion and provide more funds for after-school and summer school programs and to turn around failing schools. If Congress passes these important educational measures, I'll sign them.

Maintaining our prosperity, paying down the debt, saving Social Security and Medicare, protecting our children, protecting patients' rights, bringing success to struggling communities and to all our children—these

are big assignments. But in every one of these areas, there is legislation ready for approval, ready for my signature, as soon as Congress proves it's ready to act.

If we work together in the weeks and months ahead, we can make this season not only one of action but of real achievement for the American people.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at noon on September 3 at Belle H. Waterman Elementary School in Skaneateles, NY, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on September 4. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 3 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Juvenile Crime Legislation

September 3, 1999

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. Leader:)

As the Congress returns this coming week, I urge you to make it your first order of business to send me a juvenile crime bill that includes the Senate-passed gun measures.

The time is long past due to complete work on this bill. Before the Congress went on its recess, I asked the conferees to meet during the break and finish work on the bill. A full month has passed since the conferees first met, and I urge you now to finish the job and act immediately on this vital legislation.

The tragic shooting in Los Angeles just a few short weeks ago is the latest reminder that we must do all we can to keep guns out of the wrong hands. You have the opportunity to send me a balanced and bipartisan juvenile crime bill that helps prevent youth violence and includes the Senate-passed gun provisions to close the gun show loophole, require child safety locks for guns, and bar the importation of large capacity ammunition clips. These provisions will help save lives, and the Congress should make them the law of the land without further delay.

As millions of our Nation's children return to school, we have a responsibility to do everything we can, as quickly as we can, to

keep them safe. The American people are waiting: don't let another day pass.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Trent Lott, Senate majority leader. This letter was embargoed for release until 10:06 a.m. on September 4. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

Remarks at Camp David, Maryland, and an Exchange With Reporters

September 4, 1999

Middle East Peace Process

The President. The new agreement which will be signed today between the Israelis and the Palestinians represents a wonderful opportunity to move the peace process forward. It is a product of hard work and the growing understanding by Israelis and Palestinians alike that the fulfillment of one side's aspirations must come with, and not at the expense of, the fulfillment of the other side's dreams.

The two sides have both strong positions to be reconciled and shared interests to be pursued together. They know there's no sense in an endless tug-of-war over common ground.

The United States has been honored to support these efforts for peace, from the signing of the Oslo agreement on the White House lawn almost exactly 6 years ago, to the Wye River accords achieved with the help of the late King Hussein, to the peace between Israel and Jordan itself in 1994, down to the present agreement. Our success in these endeavors, of course, goes back to the Camp David accords under President Carter in 1978.

Today I want to pay tribute to Prime Minister Barak for fulfilling his promise to seek a just and lasting peace for the people of Israel and to Chairman Arafat for his courage in taking yet another step toward mutual respect and recognition. I am grateful for Egyptian President Mubarak's extraordinary efforts in this instance. He had a critical role in facilitating this agreement. And, of course, I want to say a special word of thanks to Secretary Albright and her team for going the

extra mile to help the parties bridge their final gaps and reach consensus.

There is much hard work ahead for all of us. The United States pledged in the Wye River accords that we would help both sides minimize the risks of peace and we would help to lift the lives of the Palestinians. I ask Congress now to provide the funds we need to keep that promise.

Final status talks are now set to begin. We will do everything we can to be supportive all along the way and to achieve our larger goal—a just, lasting, and comprehensive peace in the entire region, including Syria and Lebanon. I hope today's progress is seen by leaders in the Middle East as a stepping stone toward that larger goal. Our commitment to reaching it will never waver.

Thank you very much.

Reinvestigation of 1993 Waco Incident

Q. Mr. President, were you concerned that incendiary devices were used at Waco—or are you concerned?

The President. Well, let me say I support the Attorney General's decision to seek an independent investigation, and I think that's what ought to happen and we ought to see what the investigation turns up. We ought to find out what the truth is and let you and the American people know.

Q. Do you still have confidence in the Attorney General and the Director of the FBI?

The President. Yes, I certainly have confidence in the Attorney General. You know, she's told us what happened; and she's told us she asked some questions that she didn't get the right answers to.

And I think that with regard to the Director, I don't think that it's—there is going to be an independent investigation, which she supports and which he has said he supports. I don't think it serves any purpose for the rest of us to assign blame until the investigation is conducted and the evidence is in. I think he did the right thing in saying he thought there ought to be an independent investigation, and I think that that's all we can ask of him. And she is now going to appoint an appropriate person to do it, and I think we ought to let them do their job.

East Timor

Q. Mr. President, are you pleased at the outcome of the voting in East Timor?

The President. Yes, I'm pleased because so many people voted, and I'm pleased because the outcome was so unambiguous. I believe it's 78½ to 21½; that's about as clear an expression of public opinion as you could ever expect.

Now, I'm very concerned about the continuing violence. The people who lost the election should recognize that they lost it fair and square, and we should now find a way to go forward peacefully. I respect the fact that the Government of Indonesia supported the referendum and has said that it will abide by these results. It isn't often that a country is willing to do such a thing. But I think it is also important that the Indonesians do everything they can to keep the peace and to prevent the bloodshed that we now see in East Timor. They have a capacity, I think, that would enable them to do that.

We will work with the United Nations; we will do everything we can to support it. But this was a truly historic occurrence and one that may provide some guidance, some indication, some hope for people throughout the world. It would be tragic, indeed, if the referendum which was so heavily supported by the people—not only the 78 percent who voted for independence but just the huge percentage of the citizens that showed up to vote—it would be tragic if all that came out of it was more and more violence and killing of innocents.

So I think it's important that they, the United Nations, and all of us who support them do everything we can to minimize the bloodshed and to facilitate an orderly and honorable transition. And we will support that.

Legislative Agenda

Q. Now that you're—[inaudible]—your vacation and Congress is going to come back, what are you hoping to accomplish as far as the legislative agenda?

The President. Well, I'm quite optimistic, actually, in view of some of the developments of the last few weeks. I hope we can pass the Patients' Bill of Rights. There is now a bipartisan bill that has been supported by the

American Medical Association and 200 other health professional, health consumer groups. I hope now that those who have been opposing it in the congressional leadership will change their position and let us go forward.

I'm very hopeful that we will pass juvenile justice legislation that will adopt the commonsense measures to keep guns out of the wrong hands that the Senate adopted. I'm very hopeful that in the end we will get a budget agreement that will enable us to extend the life of Social Security, extend the life to the Medicare Trust Fund, and provide for prescription drugs and pay down the debt of the American people. And there are many other things that are going on.

I would like to emphasize, since this is Labor Day and all the children are going back to school, I'm also especially hopeful that we can be successful with our education agenda. This is the occasion, this year, 1999, as we see in every 5-year period, when we have to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. And back in January, at the State of the Union Address, I asked the Congress to change the terms in which we give money to States and school districts to stop subsidizing failure, to end social promotion, to dramatically increase our commitment to after-school and summer school programs, and to proven strategies that turn around failing schools.

We've seen all over the country where there is a systematic effort to turn these failing schools around, they work. And if we do that, plus the charter schools, plus the school modernization program and hooking them all up to the Internet, and our continuing commitment to hire more teachers, I think that this could be one of the most productive years that we have had since I've been President.

It's in the nature of divided government that things that happen that are positive tend to happen late in the process. So I am not at all pessimistic. I'm quite hopeful that we can get over this difference we have over the tax issue, that they will accept an affordable tax cut that will provide—my tax proposal provides about as much relief to middle class Americans as theirs does at a much, much lower cost and permits us to achieve these other objectives.

So I'm going to work as hard as I can with members of both parties to get that done as they come back. I'm looking forward to it, looking forward to talking to the leaders of the Senate and the House in both parties, and going back to work.

President's Vacation and Home Purchase

Q. Mr. President, after all you have done in the last 2 weeks, do you need a vacation? [*Laughter*] And how do you like your new house?

The President. Yes, even by my standards this was a fairly active vacation, you know. Hillary is keeping me busy. And we had a lot of—we also had finalized the house. I love this house. It's a beautiful old house, and the older part of it was built in 1889. The people who lived in it for the last 18 years have taken wonderful care of it. It was obviously a place that has been lovingly tended to. And it will be a good place to wake up in the morning—lots of light. I like the neighbors; they were nice. And so I'm looking forward to it; I know that Hillary is. And I'm very pleased that we were able to find it.

And I'd also like to say, since you asked me the question, a special word of thanks to all the people who opened their homes to Hillary or to Hillary and me, to people on our behalf, as we were looking for a place. As you might imagine, the circumstances for them were somewhat unusual, the publicity for them—most of them—was somewhat—was unprecedented. And I was very touched by the way we were received.

And I had a wonderful vacation. I liked it all. But I had to come up to Camp David to get a little rest this weekend.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel; Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority; and President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt.

Remarks at Coleman Place Elementary School in Norfolk, Virginia

September 6, 1999

Wow! Let's give her a hand. She was great. [*Applause*] Come on, more. [*Applause*] I asked Le'Shia when we went up here, I said, "Are you going to have a good time?" She said, "Yes, I am." [*Laughter*] I think she's got a good future in politics if she keeps it up.

Well, good afternoon to all of you and happy Labor Day. I want to thank you for coming out today. I want to thank those who are here—my longtime friend and former colleague as Governor, Senator Chuck Robb; and Congressman Scott and Congressman Sisisky. They are working to pass legislation in Washington which would make what we do today part of a national movement so that all of our children could have what Le'Shia says she wants and the children here deserve. And I think we owe Senator Robb and these Members of Congress our support for their leadership for our children.

I also want to thank our wonderful Secretary of Education, Dick Riley, who, as Chuck Robb said, worked with us nearly 20 years ago—the three of us were working together. He just finished a big bus tour all across the South, celebrating the start of a new school year and the rededication of the American people and our educators and our families to higher standards and better performance for all of our children.

I want to thank your mayor; your superintendent; your board president; our principal here, Jeanne Tomlinson, who showed me around; and the teachers who visited with me; the great labor leaders John Sweeney and Bob Georgine, who are here; and the presidents of the American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association, Sandra Feldman and Bob Chase; the Norfolk Federation of Teachers president, Marian Flickinger; the Tidewater Central Labor Council president, Jerry Hufton; the Virginia State AFL-CIO leader, Jim

Leaman; Cheri James of the Virginia Education Association; and all the State legislators who are here. Will you raise your hand, all the members of the legislature who are here? We've got a ton of legislators who are here.

I wanted to do that to show you that what we are here about—the education of our children and the modernization of our schools—has broad and deep support, and I am profoundly grateful to all of them.

Tropical Storm Dennis

Before I get into my remarks—most of what needs to be said has probably already been said—but I want to just say a word, if I might, about the harm that Virginia has sustained from Tropical Storm Dennis and from the tornadoes that have devastated parts of your State.

On Saturday in Hampton, which is quite near here, 150 homes were destroyed and 6 people were injured. As we pray for their swift recovery, we are also already working on those who lost their homes and to help them get their homes and their property back. FEMA is on the ground in Hampton, and I want to say a special word of thanks to the State and local officials for their prompt and very able action, which might well have saved lives.

I also want you to know that, as has been requested, I have declared a major disaster for the Commonwealth of Virginia, and have ordered Federal aid to be made available to help the State and local recovery efforts.

School Modernization

Now, this is a remarkable day. This is Labor Day, which is really misnamed. Labor Day really means “no-labor day.” [Laughter] It's supposed to honor the working men and women by giving them a day off. So all of you had to show up here, and the leaders of American labor and education, the leaders of Virginia labor and education, have shown up here—many of them swinging hammers when they'd rather be swinging in hammocks.

I want to thank the students who have made even a greater sacrifice; they have shown up at school a day early. [Laughter] And I see several, like Le'Shia, in their school

uniforms, a policy that my family and I and our administration heartily support.

I want to thank those of you who work here at this school and throughout this district. Your superintendent has already spoken eloquently. But there are tremendous gains which Norfolk students have made on your achievement tests, improving at greater than the statewide average, and I applaud you for that.

I want to thank those who have helped this school achieve its improving excellence. I know your principal has gotten the Navy to donate computers and wire the rooms so that they can all be connected to the Internet, which is what we're trying to do for every schoolroom in America by our new millennial year, next year. I thank them. I thank the union electricians who are finishing the job today.

And let me say I'm also very pleased that the Norfolk district has taken advantage of the Federal e-rate program, which was spearheaded and developed by Vice President Gore. It enables districts to purchase network equipment and other services, and where appropriate, to get cheaper rates to hook up to the Internet, because we want there to be no digital divide in our schools. The poorest children in America deserve to be a part of America's high-technology future. And we're determined to see that it will happen.

Let me also say that I'm very pleased that Norfolk has been able to hire 33 new teachers this fall, thanks to funds that we won with the support of all three of these Members of the Congress last fall when Congress agreed to support my plan to hire 100,000 new highly trained teachers around America.

All this shows that when we work together, when we put our children ahead of politics and leave politics at the schoolhouse door, we can make progress. President Kennedy once said that the time to fix the roof is when the Sun is shining. We are here, literally, fixing buildings today at a time when it may be a little overcast, but surely the Sun has been shining on America.

We have the longest peacetime expansion in our history during these last 6½ years I

have been privileged to serve as your President, 19.4 million new jobs, the lowest unemployment rate in 29 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 32 years, the lowest crime rates in 26 years. We had a \$290 billion deficit when I took office; it was projected to be \$100 billion more than that this year. Instead, we have a \$99 billion surplus with more to come, thanks again to Senator Robb, the Members of Congress who are here, and others who supported our program.

I say this because now the big debate in Washington is, what are we going to do with our prosperity. There is a huge debate about this. Well, first of all, I think we ought to ask ourselves whether we've got any roofs in America that need to be fixed while the Sun is shining, before the rain comes again. I believe that we need to look at the great, long-term challenges of America. And I'll just mention three today.

One, how do we keep this economic prosperity going and spread it to the people in the communities that have still not felt the positive effects of these recoveries? That's a big issue. Two, how do we deal with the challenge of the aging of America? The number of people over 65 will double in 30 years as we baby boomers retire. And I can tell you, my generation—and I'm the oldest of the baby boomers—is determined that our retirement will not impose a huge burden on our children and their ability to raise our grandchildren. We don't want that to happen. And third, how can we meet the challenge of giving all of our children, from increasingly diverse backgrounds, a chance at the future that they deserve, beginning with a world-class education? And they, these children, are the first generation of American children to be larger than the baby boom generation.

Now, I think we ought to meet those challenges. I think we ought to use this moment to get America out of debt for the first time since 1835 and guarantee long-term economic prosperity with low interest rates and more investment and higher incomes and more jobs for all our people. I believe we ought to give tax incentives to people to invest in the poorest neighborhoods in America, whether they're on Indian reservations or in the Mississippi Delta, or in the inner

cities. We ought to give people the same incentives to invest in markets here in America we give them today to invest overseas in developing countries.

I just finished a tour around America called the new markets tour. And I want to say a special word of thanks to a man who has been in business here many years who flew down with us today, Ron Dozoretz, for his efforts to help me bring economic opportunity to people who haven't had it. But let me tell you something—all of you know this—we may have the lowest unemployment rate in 29 years. We may have the lowest welfare rolls in 32 years. We may have the longest peacetime expansion in history. But you know as well as I do there are still people and places that have not been part of our recovery.

Now, in Washington, all of the experts worry how we can keep this expansion going without inflation. How can we keep creating jobs and raising incomes without inflation? The easiest way is to put people to work who don't have jobs and turn them into consumers and taxpayers. That means no inflation and continued economic growth. And that is what I am committed to.

The second thing we ought to do is recognize that if the baby boomers don't want to be a burden on their children and their grandchildren, then we ought to take this opportunity—the best we will ever have in our lifetime—to fix Social Security and Medicare and add a prescription drug coverage to the Medicare program and strengthen it so it will be there for the baby boom generation.

And the third thing we have to do if we want our children to have a good future is, to have enough investment in defense, in science and technology, in the environment, and especially in their education.

Now, I'm not against cutting taxes, but I think we ought to take care of the big, long-term challenges of America. If you pay the debt off, interest rates will be lower and that'll be worth more to most average people and most wealthy people than a tax cut. If you, on the other hand, return to deficits and have a big tax cut at a time when the economy's going, the interest rates will go up and take the tax cuts away and higher home mortgage rates, higher car payment rates, higher

college long rates, higher credit card rates. But if we say, okay, here's what it takes to get us out of debt, to save Social Security and Medicare, to invest in education, and the other things for our future, then we can give the rest of it back to the American people in a tax cut that they can use for retirement, for education, for child care, for the things that the American people need. But let's take care of first things first.

In my lifetime, the United States has never had an opportunity or an obligation like this to prepare for the retirement of the baby boomers, to prepare for the future of the largest and most diverse generation of children our country has ever produced, to get this country out of debt, and keep a generation of prosperity out there as a beacon of shining hope to children from all backgrounds in America. We ought to take this chance to deal with the long-term challenges of the 21st century for America.

Now, one of the tax cuts that we can afford, that meets more than one objective, is the one I have proposed that would help school districts build, renovate, or expand 6,000 schools. I've already said that Senator Robb is the sponsor of the bill in the Senate to do that. Two representatives here, Bobby Scott and Norm Sisisky, and others are helping us in the House. We now have 222 Members of the House—that's a majority—so we have some Republicans along with the Democrats helping us; there's a bipartisan effort there. But why are we trying to do this?

A lot of you here who are older people remember the end of World War II when, in this school district, so many people came home with so many kids, they had to put up Quonset huts for people to go to school in. Now, there are those who say to me, "Mr. President"—I've had Members of Congress say—"it's a laudable thing you want to do, but the Federal Government's got no business helping local school districts build schools; most States don't even do that, and it's a State and local responsibility."

Well, normally, that might be true, but just like World War II, these are not normal times. Harry Truman, in 1950, signed legislation to help school districts that needed it build the necessary facilities to get the kids out of Quonset huts. It happened right here

where we are standing, and it ought to happen again because we have a bigger challenge now than we had in 1950.

Your school district has already invested \$45 million to expand and modernize schools, but as your superintendent told you today, it's still not enough. The window frames of this building are so old that if you tried to powerwash the windows, the glass would pop out. [Laughter] The electric service in the classrooms is so inadequate that if you plugged a new computer into the wall, the circuit breaker might cut off. When the door opens in some of these trailers, and it's raining, the kids sitting near the door get wet. When it's winter and the kids in the trailers need to go to the bathroom, they have to put on their coats and walk across the parking lot through the snow, or the rain and the freezing, to the main building.

Now, folks, we have to fix this. You can say this is a Norfolk problem, but Chuck Robb told me there are 3,000 trailers in Virginia alone. This is a national problem. I was in a grade school in Florida the other day that had a dozen trailers out behind the main building. One little school. I have seen this everywhere. And if we can meet this big, long-term challenge to America, don't we have the obligation to do it? What is more important than the education of our children and their future?

And let me say this. You can say if you want, and it would be true, that buildings don't make an education, that education is not a money problem—that's one of my laws of politics, by the way. When somebody tells you it's not a money problem, they are never talking about one of their problems. [Laughter] They are always talking about somebody else's problem. All these legislators are laughing at me when I say that. That's true. Of course, it's the magic with the teachers and the kids and the parents' support. But we now have evidence—there is a serious study which shows that children in adequate and well-furnished classrooms do better on achievement tests than kids from the same socio-economic backgrounds who go to places where the windows are broken and the paint is chipped and the facilities are inadequate and you can't hook them up to the Internet. So I say, let's give all of our kids

a chance to maximize their God-given potential.

Now, here's the problem that we're about to confront in Congress when the Congress comes back. They passed a tax cut that's too big to do this. And in order to fund their tax cut, they have to do one of two things, both of which they said they won't do. They either have to get into the surplus produced by your Social Security taxes, which they promised to save to pay the debt down, or they have to cut what we're already spending on education, on the environment, on health care, on technology and research. That's what the problem is.

So that's why they haven't sent me an education bill. I guess if I had that choice I wouldn't send one to the President either. [Laughter] They don't want to cut education when they said they wouldn't. They don't want to eat up the Social Security surplus when they said they wouldn't. And they can't figure out what to do. But I'll tell you this, if their tax cut passes and they respect the Social Security surplus, here's what would happen.

Today, we're helping 12 million kids in poor communities to make more of their education. If their plan passes, 6 million of them wouldn't get help anymore. Today, we help a million kids to learn to read by the third grade. If their plan passes, half of them wouldn't get help anymore. Today, we're almost at our goal of a million kids in Head Start. There were some Head Start teachers out there when I was driving in today—if their plan passes, over 400,000 of them would lose their support. It means larger classes, fewer students, more trailers, and more leaky roofs.

Now, I don't believe the American people want that. We can have a tax cut, but we've got to do first things first. Let's look after the long-term needs of the country, fix the economy long term, deal with Social Security and Medicare, deal with education, figure out what's left and then give it back to the people in a tax cut. Let's deal with our responsibilities to our children and our future first. I have put forward a plan that does that.

Back in 1950, when he sent his school construction program to Congress, President Truman said this—49 years ago; it sounds

pretty good still today. "The Nation cannot afford to waste human potentialities, as we are now, by failing to provide adequate elementary and secondary education for millions of children." Equal opportunity in education is America's ticket to the future. It is a bedrock value in this country. It is indispensable to the 21st century for individuals and for our Nation alike. Fifty years ago it was Quonset huts; today it's trailers and broken buildings.

Ladies and gentlemen, I thank all of you who worked to fix this building. I ask you to leave here on this Labor Day committed to fix all the buildings. I thank you for the applause you gave Le'Shia, and I thank all of her fellow students and their families for being here. I ask you to leave here thinking about all the little boys and girls like them all across America. I have been back and forth across this country, and I have seen the conditions that exist here today everywhere, in the largest cities and the smallest towns. There is nothing more important.

Here in Norfolk we honor our military, which has made such a major contribution to this community. I want to thank the Navy Band for being here today, by the way. Thank you very much.

There are those who believe that—and I saw some of their signs outside—that we don't need a strong military today because the cold war is over. I can tell you that's not true either. We still have significant challenges to your security. But I also want you to understand something I know you know, which is, maybe more than anything else, the future security of the United States of America will rest upon our ability to give every single child in this country the ability to do well in a global economy, in a global society, to live up to his or her dreams. That's what we're here on this Labor Day to support.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:28 p.m. on the playground. In his remarks, he referred to student Le'Shia Jamison, who introduced the President; Mayor Paul D. Fraim of Norfolk; John O. Simpson, superintendent, Norfolk Public School District; Anita O. Poston, chairman, Norfolk Public School Board; John J. Sweeney, president, AFL-CIO; Robert A. Georgine, president, Building and Construction Trades Department, AFL-

CIO; James R. Leaman, secretary-treasurer, Virginia State AFL-CIO; Cheri James, president, Virginia Education Association; and Ronald I. Dozoretz, founder, FHC Health Systems.

Remarks at a Labor Day Picnic in Newport News, Virginia

September 6, 1999

Thank you very much. Let me just begin by saying how grateful I am for the wonderful reception you have given me. You know, I can't tell you how much I appreciate the kindness and friendship that you have given to me and my family, my Vice President and his family, and our administration, through two Presidential elections and 6½ years of our 8-year term. I thank you.

I want to thank Congressman Sisisky and Delegate Crittenden here, who gave a pretty good reason for keeping Senator Robb in office, and I hope you'll listen to her.

I want you to know what we were doing before we came here. We were actually working on a school, to highlight one of the things I'm trying to get this Congress to do, which is to pass a bill that would help us to build or modernize 6,000 new schools so our kids, whether they're rich or poor, will have world-class places to go to school in.

So I want to thank the Secretary of Education, the national head of the AFL-CIO, John Sweeney and Secretary Riley, and the leaders of our two great teachers' organizations, the NEA and the AFT, Bob Chase and Sandy Feldman. They're all over here with me. Give them a hand. *[Applause]*

Now, you know, somebody asked me the day before yesterday why I was coming down here. They said, "You're not running for anything anymore; you can't." And I said, "Well, yes, but I haven't lost my memory, and those people gave me two great terms as President. I wanted to go down and thank them."

And these two guys are—I want you to take care of Bobby Scott. He is a great resource for you and for the country. And I want you—you know, every time Senator Robb runs, he has a challenging race. You know why? Because he sticks up for you, that's why. Because he makes the hard decisions for the long run, because he was one of those guys who stood up in 1993. We

didn't have a vote to spare. If he had changed his vote, I would have lost that economic plan that's given us 19.4 million jobs and the biggest surplus in history. And they tried to beat him 2 years later because he stood up for you. Because he believes we all ought to go forward together. And I've known him for nearly 20 years now, and he's always standing up. So next time the election comes around, I want you to stand up for him. Will you do it? *[Applause]*

Now, let me say this. This is Labor Day, so I want to make some remarks about labor. There are a lot of big issues in this country today, but when I got elected President, it was after 12 years of people in the other party running the White House saying they were pro-business and good for the economy, and we had the worst recession since the Great Depression and the biggest deficit in history, and we quadrupled the debt in 12 years.

I said I'm pro-business, but I'm pro-labor, too. I don't think you can help the economy if you hurt the working people. Guess what? We beat off all their efforts to weaken unions. We beat back all their efforts to hurt the fundamental interests of working people. We passed the Family and Medical Leave Act. We raised the minimum wage once. We helped people with child care who were working more, and we got 19.4 million jobs, record numbers of new small businesses every year, the lowest minority unemployment rate ever recorded. It works. If you take care of ordinary people, it works.

So on this Labor Day, as we go back to work, I'd like to just mention some things that relate to you. Number one, we ought to raise the minimum wage again. Number two, we ought to do a better job of enforcing the law that says there should be equal pay for equal work between men and women. Number three, we ought to do more to help workers with children at home, working full-time, succeed by helping them with their child care expenses more. Number four, we ought to give investors, people with money, the same tax incentives to invest in poor neighborhoods in America we give them to invest overseas in poor neighborhoods, because we all know that not every neighborhood has been fully benefited by this economic expansion. I've been out there across

the country, in the cities, in the small towns, in the rural areas, on the Indian reservations, up and down the Mississippi River. You know as well as I do that in every part of America, there are still people in places who would work or work harder and better if they had a chance to do so, and I am determined to see that we don't stop this until everybody's involved. Number four, we ought—before we have this big tax cut the Republicans have proposed—we ought to take care of the big challenges facing America. We ought to make sure Social Security and Medicare are going to be all right when all the baby boomers retire. We've got the largest number of children in our schools in history, and they're more diverse than ever before. We ought to make sure they've got a world-class education before we give the money away. And I think that we ought to get this country out of debt for the first time since 1835, before we give the money away.

Now, let me tell you why that ought to matter to you. Because if the Government is not borrowing money, that means that you're not in competition with the Government; that means you can borrow cheaper; that means home mortgages are lower; that means car payments are lower; that means credit card payments are lower; that means college loan payments are lower; that means more businesses, more jobs, a stronger economy for the future. That's why I want to get America out of debt, because it's good for little people.

You know, I'll be retired pretty soon; debt will be good for me. I've got a good pension; I can buy those Government bonds all day long. I can make money out of debt. You'll make money if we get out of debt and your interest rates are lower and the economy grows more. And I want these children to have a good economy to grow up into. So you just remember this. Nothing that has happened in this country in the last 6½ years that I have achieved as President could have been possible without others, beginning with the people that work with me, starting with the Vice President, going to the people in Congress like Senator Robb and Bobby Scott and Norm Sisisky; and going all the way down to the grassroots in America, the people like you that voted for us.

So, on this Labor Day, as you leave here, if somebody asks you, what did the President say, tell them he said, "We had an idea and it worked. That helping ordinary people works, and it requires people like you to be good citizens and keep people like them in office. And if you do, it will keep right on working."

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:10 p.m., at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to State Delegate Flora Davis Crittenden.

Remarks at Brooke Grove Elementary School in Olney, Maryland

September 7, 1999

Thank you so much. You know, when I was in grade school, we used to joke that our favorite class was assembly. [*Laughter*] But you've been out here so long, and it's so hot, I'm not sure it's true anymore. [*Laughter*] I will try to be brief.

I want to, first of all, say how greatly honored I am to be here with Governor Glendening and Senator Sarbanes and Congressman Cardin and your Representative, Congresswoman Morella; with Senator Miller and the other members of the Maryland legislature; with your principal, Eoline Cary; Jerry Weast, the Montgomery County superintendent. I want to thank the teachers in the classes whom I visited, Ms. Tepper and Ms. Husted, and their students, who asked good questions and got me to read a book, a book about friendship, which I could use a little of myself from time to time. [*Laughter*] I want to thank the teachers, the parents, and the students. And I want to thank Nancy Grasmick, and Reggie Felton, the chair of the Montgomery County School Board, and all the people in Maryland for their dedication. And I thank you, Robin Davis, for your introduction and for your devotion to teaching. And we have also on the stage with us Jessica Goldstein, who is another one of the reading specialists, also hired under our program.

Most of all, if I might, I'd like to say a special word of thanks to my friend of over 20 years, the Secretary of Education, Dick

Riley. I think plainly the finest Education Secretary this country has ever had. And I really thank him for his leadership.

I knew before I came here that this was a blue ribbon school. Now that I've been here, I know why. I loved walking down the halls; I loved reading the posters on the walls; I loved talking to the students and watching the instruction. Education is the priority in this school. Education must be America's priority, as well.

We now have in our schools, starting last year for the first time since the end of World War II, we've got a group of students in our schools bigger than the baby boom generation, the largest number of children ever in the schools of the United States. And as all of you know, it's also the most diverse group of students ever—racially, religiously, culturally. We have the largest number of students in our schools whose first language is not English, by far in the history of the country. And yet, we know that in a global society our diversity can be an enormous asset if, but only if, we can give every one of our children a world-class education. And we don't have a moment to lose.

I'm here because for 6½ years we have worked very hard to raise standards, to raise expectations, to raise accountability, and to raise the level of support so that every child in America could have an education like the children of Brooke Grove Elementary get. And I think that's what all of you want.

As I indicated, Dick Riley and I have been working on this issue for more than 20 years now. Both Hillary and I made it our first priority when I was Governor of my State for 12 years. Earlier this year I proposed an education accountability plan based on what I have seen working for more than a decade now, to help raise standards, make good schools even better, and have specific initiatives to help turn around schools that aren't making the grade—to provide more funds for after-school and summer school programs for the kids who need it; to expand early reading programs; to reach our goal of connecting every classroom and library in the country, in every school, to the Internet by the year 2000. We now have HOPE scholarships, more Pell grants, other student loans, grants, and tax credits, which have literally opened

the doors of college to virtually every single American.

And last fall, as you've heard, we persuaded a huge bipartisan majority in Congress to come together across party lines and put a downpayment on hiring 100,000 well-prepared teachers to lower class sizes in the early grades, teachers like Robin Davis and Jessica Goldstein, and over 160 others in Montgomery County alone, part of the 30,000 teachers nationwide who are now meeting their students this year, under this initiative.

Everybody knows what Robin said: Students learn better, especially early, in smaller classes. Now we have research which confirms that those early learning gains are maintained by the children all the way through high school. We're not talking about some theory, here. You heard a teacher with 20 years of experience stand up and say what she just said. We now have academic research, objective evidence, that we now have no excuse not to act on.

We have to have more teachers for these swelling classrooms, to get the classes down in the early grades. Just yesterday I talked to a friend of mine who had just come back from a major city in the Midwest, where he had visited an elementary school where the average class size was 37. That is wrong. We can do better. Our children's future is at stake. And I saw the kind of learning in these classes today that we need for every single school in the country.

So why are we here? Because it's budget time again on Capitol Hill. [Laughter] And last year, right before the election, we had this truly astonishing and heartwarming coalition of forces across party lines to say, "Okay, we'll support the 100,000 more teachers. We'll make the 30,000 downpayment." We didn't have enough money to hire them all in one year and sustain it, but we could do nearly a third in one year.

So now it's budget time again in Washington. And the question of whether we will continue to move toward our commitment of 100,000 teachers is one of the major questions there. It is all caught up in what you've read about tax cut debate, should there be one and, if so, what size should it be?

But the larger question is this. We have waited, for a person my age, a lifetime—a lifetime—for the kind of economics we have today. Compared to the day I took office, we've gone from the biggest deficit to the biggest surplus in history, the longest peacetime expansion in history, a 29-year low in unemployment, a 32-year low in welfare, a 26-year low in the crime rate, and we have money. We have some money. Now, the question is, what are we going to do with our prosperity?

There is broad agreement that we ought to save the money that you have given in your Social Security taxes to pay down the debt and to keep it for Social Security. There is a huge disagreement about what to do with the rest. The leadership of the Republican Party wants to give it all, virtually all of it in a tax cut. If we do, it means we can't add any time to the life of the Social Security Trust Fund or the Medicare Trust Fund or add the prescription drug coverage that, I think, are necessary as we look forward to the baby boomers' retirement.

I can tell you, folks, I'm the oldest of the baby boomers. One of our biggest worries, my whole generation, is that because we are so big, and bigger than our children's generation, that we will retire and impose such a burden on our children that they won't be able to do right by our grandchildren. We can avoid that now if we save Social Security and Medicare. We're not just doing it for the older people; we're doing it for the children and their future. I think it's important to do that.

I think it's important to pay the debt down. We can get this country out of debt for the first time since—listen to this—1835, when Andrew Jackson was President. Now, what's that got to do with these children? You all read the press; you all see these people speculating how long can these economic good times go on, how can we keep it going without inflation. If we pay our debt down, it means the Government's not borrowing money; it means there is more for you to borrow; it means home loans, it means car loans, it means credit card loans, it means college loans, it means business loans will be less costly—they will be cheaper. That means there will be more investment, more jobs,

and higher incomes, and greater prosperity for a whole generation of Americans. It's important, and we ought to do it.

And finally, we ought to figure out what we need to do to invest in the things that are critical to these children's future, in the environment, in research, in health care, in defense, and most important, in education. And when we do that, then I think we ought to give the rest of it back to you in a tax cut. But we ought to, first of all, think about the long-term welfare of the country—save Social Security and Medicare, get the country out of debt, invest what we have to do in education and other things, then give the rest in a tax cut. Don't put the cart before the horse and then figure out what in the wide world we're going to do.

Let me give you an idea of the differences, because that's what we did and we proposed a substantial tax cut for middle class Americans. We still have the money in our balanced budget to expand Head Start, to help State and local schools build or modernize 6,000 schools. You don't have that problem here, but a third of our schools are in terrible shape.

I was in a 75-year-old school in Virginia yesterday where they cannot hook the classrooms up to the Internet because the circuits go out every time they put the pressure on the system. And that's important. To help communities expand or start after-school programs and summer schools programs; to help have higher accountability and standards for schools but provide extra help to turn around schools that aren't doing it; and to finish the job of putting the 100,000 teachers in the classroom in ways that also enable us to help improve teacher quality and skills and new technologies.

Now, last month, Secretary Riley announced funds to help improve our teacher force. Today we're releasing another \$33 million to create teacher quality partnerships in 22 States, to help recruit, train, and license new teachers and support them once they're in the classroom. We have to work on teacher quality, but you can't have a quality teacher unless you have a teacher in the first place.

Here is the arithmetic problem. If their budget passes with a tax cut, it will require us to reduce our investment in education, in

Head Start, early reading, and other programs by about 50 percent over the next 10 years. And over and above their tax cut, even this year they have put themselves in a position where they are going to have to cut education now. Either they have to dip into the Social Security surplus, something they said they wouldn't do, or cut next year's education budget by nearly 20 percent.

Now, this is basic arithmetic, the kind of things you learn in Brooke Grove. It's basic arithmetic that if schools have record enrollments for 4 years in a row and a third of the schools are in need of repair, you need more teachers and better schools. It's basic arithmetic when 2 million teachers are about to retire, and all the evidence says smaller classes produce higher learning, that you need more teachers, especially in the early grades. It is basic arithmetic, in other words, that if we want the kind of America for our children that they deserve in the new century, we must invest more, not less, in education.

And let me say, this should not be a partisan issue. I think in most communities in America, it isn't. Congresswoman Morella's presence here today and the truly fine record she has established in education proved that Republicans and Democrats can get along on this issue. This is a dispute we're having with the leadership. But it is not too late.

The nature of things in Washington is everything gets done in the 11th hour. It's now about 10:30. [*Laughter*] And I'm here because I want America to see what you have done, and because I want America to believe that what you have done can be done in every classroom in this country, and because I want America to say, "Let's put first things first." Nothing is more important than our children. Let's take care of them, their economic future, what will happen to their parents and grandparents, and America will do fine.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:02 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Parris N. Glendening of Maryland; State Senate President Thomas V. (Mike) Miller, Jr.; Nancy S. Grasmick, State superintendent of schools; Reginald M. Felton, president, Montgomery County Board of Education; teachers Dale Tepper and Barbara Husted;

and reading specialist Susan Robin Davis, who introduced the President.

Statement on the Conclusion of the Independent Counsel's Investigation of Henry G. Cisneros

September 7, 1999

Henry has been a dedicated public official who served the American people and this administration with distinction. He is also a good friend. I am pleased that this matter is finally behind him, and I wish him and his family all the best.

Message on the Observance of Rosh Hashana, 1999

September 7, 1999

Warm greetings to all who are celebrating Rosh Hashana.

During this season of renewal and redemption, Jews from across the nation and around the world heed the sound of the shofar announcing the beginning of the High Holy Days and gather together with family and friends to celebrate the creation of the world and the beginning of the new year.

Rosh Hashana is a time for rejoicing, but it also is a time for serious prayer and reflection. Jews give thanks for their blessings and repent for their mistakes. They resolve to change what they can to make the new year better than the last.

Regrettably, this past year saw too many examples of hatred and violence inspired by ignorance and prejudice. We all can learn from the Jewish people's strong dedication to civil rights and tolerance, and we all must redouble our efforts to combat the forces of intolerance that still linger in our society.

As we celebrate Rosh Hashana, I urge all Americans to join the Jewish community and to come together as a nation to speak out against hate crimes and to appreciate our common humanity. Together, we can work to ensure that the tragedies of the past year are not repeated and that the coming year is filled with happiness and peace.

Hillary joins me in extending best wishes for a meaningful observance.

Bill Clinton

**Remarks Honoring the 1999
National Basketball Association
Champion San Antonio Spurs**

September 7, 1999

Thank you very much. Please be seated, everyone.

Welcome to the White House. I want to say a special word of welcome to Peter Holt, to Gregg Popovich, obviously, to the San Antonio Spurs. We're also joined today by four Members of the House of Representatives from the great State of Texas: Congressmen Gonzalez, Rodriguez, Bonilla, and Edwards. And we thank them for being here.

I want to acknowledge the team captains, Avery Johnson and David Robinson, who is the only graduate of the Naval Academy playing in the NBA. That's important, because I have to stick up for the service academies here. It's part of my job, you know. *[Laughter]* I'd also like to offer a special word of welcome to Sean Elliott. He's had a tough few months; we're glad to see him here. Thank you very much. Thank you.

Everybody who works around here at the White House and who knows me knows that I am a basketball fanatic. You know, I live for the NCAA finals and the NBA finals, and I follow basketball very closely. And I've been fortunate enough to be good friends with two or three reasonably successful basketball coaches, who have taught me a little about the game.

And it's really—it's a lot like politics. You get ahead, and then you get behind. *[Laughter]* Then you try to get ahead again. And normally, you don't know whether you're going to win until right before the end of the game.

And I like this team. They started 6 and 8, and finished 46 and 7. And when we were watching the NBA, the semifinals and the finals—and I always have people come over and watch the games with us—and one night Hillary and I were watching with a bunch of our friends, one of whom was from one of the other towns you were playing, Coach. *[Laughter]* And he kept cheering and cheering and cheering. And finally, Hillary looked at him and said, "Now, tell the truth. Don't you think the Spurs are the best team in bas-

ketball this year?" And he said, "Well, of course." *[Laughter]*

And I don't think there's much more you can say. This is a team with enormous talent, enormous dedication, a steel will, and a great heart. And they won because they deserved to win. And I think all of us who love this sport, not just people from San Antonio or from Texas, were elated by their success, because they deserved it, and they earned it. And I'm glad to welcome them all to the White House today.

Thank you very much.

[At this point, Peter Holt, chairman, Gregg Popovich, coach and general manager, and team member Avery Johnson made brief remarks.]

You know, there's a thousand things I'd like to say. *[Laughter]* I identify with a lot of people on the scene. You know, when the commentators kept saying, every time Avery was not guarded, he scored. Did you notice that? And they kept referring to one person who made the mistake of saying he really didn't belong in the NBA and could never lead a team to a championship. You know, when I was Governor of Arkansas, that's what they said about me when I was running for President. I identify with that. *[Laughter]*

And then every time things were slightly in doubt, the television camera would do this close-up on Tim Duncan's eyes—*[laughter]*—and I knew they were going to win. I'm trying to develop that killer look. *[Laughter]* We're about to enter all these tough budget negotiations, and I'm trying to visualize what Duncan looked like when it got really close, you know. *[Laughter]* But if any of you guys want to stay around and help me through the next month, you're welcome to do it. *[Laughter]* Government scale's a little low for you, but it's rewarding work—it's rewarding work. *[Laughter]*

Let me just say one thing, seriously. I don't want to talk about the contents of it. But one of the most interesting telephone conversations I ever had in my life—with someone I had never met, especially—was with Coach Popovich, when I called to congratulate him. And I realized that he was a man with a keen understanding of human nature, and the human spirit, and what it really takes to make

good things happen. And I want to thank you publicly for that conversation and for your remembering what we talked about as we walked in today. I'd say you've got a good chance to repeat.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:08 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to team members Sean Elliott and Tim Duncan.

Satellite Remarks Launching the NetAid Website

September 8, 1999

Thank you, Mr. Secretary-General. I am delighted to share this historic moment with you, with President Mandela, with Prime Minister Blair, and all our friends supporting NetAid.

The launching of this website represents a truly important new front in the struggle against poverty. Information technology has been vital to the prosperity achieved by many nations this decade, including ours. The people of the world have never communicated better or more easily, and that has spawned countless new ideas and opportunities.

But it's also a fact that this prosperity has been very uneven within and among countries. The democratic promise of the Internet, therefore, is not yet fulfilled, because vast populations around the world still have no access to computers at all. Through USAID, the United States Government has pledged millions of dollars to build Internet access in other countries, especially in Africa. But the gulf between the haves and the have-nots is growing much too quickly.

Today we build a bridge across that gulf. NetAid is the creation of a remarkable partnership combining the international reach of the United Nations development program and the powerful resources of the private sector.

I want to thank Cisco Systems' John Chambers as well as the other technology companies. Thanks to them, one of the largest websites ever built has been created to spread information about extreme poverty and to help concerned citizens do something about it. The site will be available around

the world, including places where Internet access has been limited, so that a farmer in Africa can find out more about fighting drought; a woman hoping to start a business in Bangladesh can find investors from other countries; a school in Indiana can raise money for a school in Indonesia.

I commend all the sponsors of NetAid for their generosity and vision. And like millions of people, I'm looking forward to the simultaneous concerts on October 9th.

Some people say the rise of the Internet will inevitably bring the world together; some say it will inevitably widen the gap between rich and poor nations. But nothing is inevitable. We have a choice about the future we will build. NetAid sends a powerful signal that we intend to make the Internet an instrument for bettering all our lives, not just those wealthy enough to afford a computer. The millennium should be a time for joining and common purpose. Today we do just that. NetAid will make our global village more responsible and a lot more global.

Now, it is my honor to be the first person from North America to log on to the site. And thank you very much.

Back to you, Mr. Secretary-General.

NOTE: The President spoke by satellite at 12:20 p.m. from Room 459 in the Old Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan; former President Nelson Mandela of South Africa; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; and John T. Chambers, president and chief executive officer, Cisco Systems, Inc. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks on Health Care Legislative Priorities

September 8, 1999

Thank you very much. Dr. Copeland; Mrs. Copeland; Secretary Shalala, thank you for your outstanding leadership; Surgeon General Satcher; OPM Director Lachance; to all the advocates here for seniors, for children, for people with disabilities; representatives of the various health care organizations.

I am of the opinion that there's really not much left for me to say. *[Laughter]* You know, since I've been in this office and this

wonderful old house, I've tried to use this room as sort of a classroom for America, to bring people here who actually have first-hand experience of the challenges we face, the opportunities we have, and to try to provide them this microphone and these cameras and this bully pulpit to speak to America and to bring more of America here to Washington, DC.

We've had a lot of very moving events here, but Dr. Copeland, I don't think anybody has ever done a better job of bringing the reality of what it's like to deal with the health care challenges of ordinary people from all walks of life on a daily basis as you have today. And I thank you very much for that.

Secretary Shalala talked quite a bit about the record we have worked hard to establish here on health care issues. I want to thank two people who aren't here today: first, my wife, because of the role Hillary played in extending health insurance coverage to 5 million children, and now we have all the States signed up for the Children's Health Insurance Program; and I want to thank the Vice President for the critical role he has played in fighting for the Patients' Bill of Rights, for our long-term care tax credit, for our plan to strengthen Medicare and to include prescription drug coverage. And I appreciated the agenda he set out yesterday for expanding affordable health care to children and families who don't have it in the 21st century, something that I still believe needs to be done.

You know, I heard quite a bit about Dr. Copeland before he came here, and one of the things I heard is that his youngest daughter, who just started college a week ago, is such a good student, she's already been guaranteed admission to medical school. If somebody had figured out a way for me to get around organic chemistry, I might have had a different career. *[Laughter]* That's a wonderful achievement.

But the truth is, there are doctors all across our country today who having given their lives to the health of their patients, have genuine reservations about whether their children should go into medicine. They feel that for all the miracles of modern medicine, doctors are too often hamstrung by accountants,

and too often the needs of their patients don't come first. You just heard a pretty good accounting.

I know that you, Doctor, are overjoyed that your own child wants to be a doctor, because you know that we have the power to do what it takes to put patients first again, which means you have faith in the health of our political system.

There are a lot of pessimists who think that nothing's going to happen here this fall, that the parties are just going to fight and maneuver and get ready for next year. I think they're wrong. For one thing, ever since we've had this divided Government, we normally have to wait until the 11th hour for really good things to happen. I've grown used to it. As I said a couple of days ago, it is now 10:30; we're ready for the 11th hour. *[Laughter]*

But after years of debate and genuine disagreement on a lot of these issues, I think a new and increasingly bipartisan consensus is emerging on the importance of giving patients the health and privacy protections they need, on strengthening and modernizing Medicare, on saving teenagers from the ravages from tobacco, on expanding health care coverage for uninsured children, and empowering adults with disabilities and making long-term care more affordable. But this growing bipartisan consensus will amount to little if the Republican leadership refuses to schedule a vote on the health care legislation. If they permit the votes, this fall could be one of the most important ones for health care reform in many, many years. If there is nothing but delay, it's just like delaying a patient; it will only make the cure harder. Sooner or later, we're going to have to face up to all these issues. We ought to do it sooner rather than later. It's a simple choice, familiar to every doctor—act early, prevent problems; or act later, at greater cost, with more heartbreak and human loss.

The American people are counting on all their leaders, of both parties, to take the wise former course. First and foremost, the Republican leaders must make the responsible choice to protect 160 million Americans who rely on managed care, with a strong and enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights. In August

Representatives Dingell and Norwood introduced a bipartisan bill that rejects the wholly inadequate, watered-down approach taken by the Senate. It now has a clear majority support in the House of Representatives. That means both Republicans and Democrats are for it.

The Republican leaders, therefore, owe it to the American people to schedule a vote on this bill. They must not give in to pressure to tack on extraneous provisions that would jeopardize the remarkable bipartisan consensus, in the hope that they can make it so bad that I will have to veto it, and then claim it's not their responsibility after all.

The American people deserve the right to see a specialist. They deserve the right to go to the nearest emergency room if they're hurt in an accident. They deserve the right to maintain the same doctor during pregnancy or chemotherapy treatment. They deserve the right to an internal and an external review process; the right to know that their doctor can openly discuss the best treatment options, not just the cheapest; the right to hold health plans accountable for bad decisions.

More than 200 health care and consumer organizations strongly support these protections. Estimates based on Congressional Budget Office figures show that the protections would cost no more than \$2 a month a policy.

Now, as you all know—all of you in this room—I have already established these protections by Executive order for everybody under a Federal health care plan, and our costs are less than \$1 a month a policy. Now, whether we're right, or they're right, it's a small price to pay for peace of mind and quality health care. *[Applause]* Thank you.

Second, I challenge the Republican leadership to join with me to work out a plan to strengthen and modernize Medicare for the 21st century. For more than three decades, Medicare has been a lifeline to dignified retirement. You heard what the doctor said about his own patients. But with people living longer and the retirement of the baby boomers approaching, the Medicare Trust Fund is scheduled to become insolvent in 2015. Now, keep in mind there will be twice as many people over 65 by 2030 as there are today.

Today, anybody that lives to be 65 has a life expectancy of 82. By then, it will be considerably higher. By then, there will only be about two people working for every one retired. We have got to do this now, when we have the funds to do so.

I've asked Congress to dedicate more than \$300 billion of the projected surplus over the next 10 years to take the Trust Fund out past 2025. That's the longest it's been in a long, long time. But we need to do it, with the retirement of the baby boomers approaching.

I challenge Congress to introduce new mechanisms of competition, to improve quality, to control costs. I've challenged Congress to modernize Medicare by helping seniors and people with disabilities pay for prescription drugs. I have also set aside a fund to deal with the Medicare problems that we now have because of the budget decisions made in the '99 Balanced Budget Act, which have imposed severe problems on a lot of our teaching hospitals, some of our therapy services, and other problems of which many of you in this room are quite familiar.

Before the August recess, Senator Roth, the chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, committed to mark up a Medicare reform package by early October. I salute him for that. With the leadership of Senator Roth and Senator Moynihan, we can get a bipartisan consensus on what to do about Medicare. I don't expect them to agree with everything I want to do. What I want them to do is sit down and talk with me and let's agree on the objectives. We have to lengthen the life of the Trust Fund. It is irresponsible for us to leave here with the Trust Fund scheduled to go out of money in 2015, with this projected surplus. It is irresponsible for us to leave here without dealing with the plain problems being faced today because of Medicare financing difficulties. And I strongly believe it is irresponsible for us to leave here without providing for some prescription drug coverage.

If we were designing Medicare today, there's no way in the wide world we'd have a Medicare program without some prescription drug coverage. And you know as well as I do that these medicines are going to do more and more and more, if properly taken, to lengthen the life and improve the quality

of life, of people, and eventually to cut the cost of hospitalization and other more extensive interventions. So we ought to do this now. This should not wait 2 more years. We should do it now. [Applause] Thank you.

The third thing I ask the Republican leadership to join me on is to make a responsible choice to protect the sanctity of medical records. You know, to the average person, this seems like a no-brainer, a lay-down. It's actually quite a hot issue, because there are people who do not want to protect the sanctity of medical records. But as more and more of these records are stored electronically, the threats to our privacy will only increase.

We know that protecting medical records has been a genuine priority for leaders in both parties. But the longstanding deadline for action by Congress came and went more than 2 weeks ago. If Congress does not soon pass legislation to protect patient records, I will honor the pledge I made to the American people in the State of the Union to do so through executive action. If need be, I will issue these new protections this fall. We should not delay this anymore.

But again, I don't want this to become a fight either between the executive and the legislative branch, or between the two parties. I would far rather have legislation so that the American people can look to Washington and see people in both parties saying that your medical information belongs to you and you alone. Only you can control how it is used.

The fourth challenge I want to issue to the leadership is to make sure that we make the responsible choice to allow people with disabilities to keep their health insurance when they go to work.

Now, there is huge bipartisan support for this. Last June the Senate unanimously adopted the bill, sponsored by Senators Jeffords and Kennedy, Roth and Moynihan, that would finally end the system that says to people with disabilities: If you want to go to work, you've got to give up your health insurance and, therefore, you'll have to spend more every month than you can possibly make.

Now, we have worked hard to end the disincentives that for too long kept people on

welfare out of the work force. These disincentives are even more severe for people with disabilities, with serious health care problems.

I met a man in New Hampshire a few months ago who, if he had to pay his own health bills, would have had bills of \$40,000 a year, and he desperately wanted to take a \$28,000 job. Now, we're out the \$40,000 anyway. Forget about the human impact on his life and his community and his family. Wouldn't you rather have the man making \$28,000 and giving some of it back in taxes as a productive citizen, having him out there as a role model, having people see what people can do if given the chance to live up to their God-given abilities? This is foolish. It is time to schedule a vote on the "Work Incentive Improvement Act" in the House of Representatives.

Now, the bill has 231 cosponsors in the House, so it's got bipartisan support. Now, most of you here know what the problem is. This bill costs money; under our budget rules, we have to pay for it. I gave them a way to pay for it; they don't like my way to pay for it. I say, "Okay, if you don't like my way, bring me another way." But we can't—when a bill gets this kind of support in Congress—and believe me, instead of 231, the number would be 400 in the House if we didn't have this dispute. They don't like the way I want to pay for it. Okay, it's a big government; there are lots of options. [Laughter]

But any way to pay for this within reason is better than letting one more year go by where people have to give up a precious year of their life when they could be working and being fulfilled and making a contribution to our country when it will not cost us, really, any more money.

So I say, I understand what the problem is. We'll be reasonable. We'll work with you. But we cannot walk away from this session of Congress without passing this legislation. It will change the lives of tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands of Americans, with one simple bill.

Fifth, I challenge the Republican leaders to make the responsible choice to prevent yet another generation of children from being lured into smoking and becoming addicted to it. More than 400,000 Americans

each year die of smoking-related diseases. Almost 90 percent of them started smoking as teenagers. All the studies confirm that the price of cigarettes is one of the most effective ways to prevent kids from starting to smoke in the first place.

My balanced budget raises the price by 55 cents a pack. It's good health policy; it's good fiscal policy. It will help us to save the Social Security Trust Fund, and it will allow us to honor our commitments by aiding both parents and children. For these reasons, Congress should side with America's families, and not with the tobacco lobby. We don't want to let another opportunity go up in smoke.

Sixth, I challenge the Republican leaders to make the responsible choice to expand health coverage for the children of working families. Today, as I said, with the approval of the plan submitted by Washington and Wyoming, all 50 States and territories have now joined the children's health insurance initiative. Unfortunately, even with full participation from the States, there are still, literally, millions of children who are eligible for help who have not begun to receive it; and other children, like legal immigrants and foster children turning 18, who also need coverage.

Once again I ask the Congress to fully fund the initiative that I gave them to help the States provide the coverage to the kids. We did this initiative together. When we passed the bipartisan balanced budget bill it has heavy majority support from both parties in both Houses. Heavy majority support in both parties in both Houses. And this was one of the things that I think all the Members were most proud of.

Now, we've got a million and a half kids signed up, and we've appropriated money for 5 million kids. And we've simply got to do more to sign these children up. This is a modest cost for a huge return.

Seventh, I asked the Republican leaders to make the responsible choice by helping families cope with the strains of long-term care. In our balanced budget—in the balanced budget, having nothing to do with the surplus or the tax cut or any of that, I proposed a tax credit and other initiatives aimed at helping elderly, ailing, and people with dis-

abilities or the families who care for them to deal with the cost of long-term care. This will become a bigger and bigger challenge as America ages. People will want to make different kinds of choices based on the facts of their family situation or the facts of the problems of people needing long-term care. That's why I believe the best thing we can do for them now is to give them a tax credit. It is a good beginning, and I hope we can pass it.

Finally, I ask the leaders to join with me in choosing wisely to continue to invest in public health. I'm talking about investing to begin closing the devastating health gaps we see that Surgeon General Satcher has done so much work on in Native American, African-American, Hispanic, and other communities; investing and treating and preventing mental illness; investing in the National Institutes of Health and the Centers for Disease Control.

Now, usually, I don't give a talk with eight points—[laughter]—because I'm always—you give a test, and people are lucky to remember four. But I felt better after the Doctor went over most of them. [Laughter] I felt like it was almost a prescription after he got through. This is not a laundry list. They are like eight panels of a protective umbrella for America's future. They're connected; they work together; they'll help millions of Americans weather the many changes in our health care system and the inevitable changes in their own lives.

Health care cannot be a partisan issue. It hasn't been, and it shouldn't be. I was glad to hear the Doctor say that he was referring to his Republican and Democratic patients. You know, every time I give this talk, I say that no one asks you when you show up at the doctor's office and you fill out those endless forms—there's no box for Republican, Democrat, or independent. [Laughter]

And we see now in Washington a mood change that has already been out there for a long, long time in the country. You see it in the people coming over for the Patients' Bill of Rights; in the people saying, "Yes, we want to provide the opportunity for people with disabilities to go to work." You see it in the efforts we have with children's health insurance.

So I am optimistic about the future. I think the Copelands' daughter will have a good time being a doctor, just like her father did. I think we will make meaningful progress in this session. The bipartisan votes are out there. Nothing can stop it unless the votes aren't scheduled or we decide not to talk. We've got to schedule the votes, and all of you know I'm always willing to talk. [*Laughter*]

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:57 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Dr. Lanny R. Copeland, president, American Academy of Family Physicians, his wife, Mica, and their daughter, Mary Anne.

Statement on the Earthquake in Greece

September 8, 1999

On behalf of all Americans, Hillary and I extend our profound sympathy to the loved ones of those who have lost their lives and to those injured in yesterday's earthquake in Greece. Last month, people around the world were moved by Greece's generous assistance to Turkey in the wake of the devastating earthquake that struck near Istanbul. Now we have seen the same spirit of cooperation in President Demirel's pledge of support for the Greek people in their hour of need. We, too, are prepared to help the Greek Government respond to the disaster.

Message to the Senate Transmitting the Dominican Republic-United States Stolen Vehicle Treaty With Documentation

September 8, 1999

To the Senate of the United States:

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, I transmit herewith the Treaty Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Dominican Republic for the Return of Stolen or Embezzled Vehicles, with Annexes, signed at Santo Domingo on April 30, 1996. I transmit also, for the information of the Senate, the report of the

Department of State with respect to the Treaty.

The Treaty is one of a series of stolen vehicles treaties being negotiated by the United States in order to eliminate the difficulties faced by owners of vehicles that have been stolen and transported across international borders. When it enters into force, it will be an effective tool to facilitate the return of U.S. vehicles that have been stolen or embezzled and taken to the Dominican Republic.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to the Treaty, with Annexes, and give its advice and consent to ratification.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
September 8, 1999.

Message to the Senate Transmitting the International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings

September 8, 1999

To the Senate of the United States:

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, I transmit herewith the International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 15, 1997, and signed on behalf of the United States of America on January 12, 1998. The report of the Department of State with respect to the Convention is also transmitted for the information of the Senate.

In recent years, we have witnessed an unprecedented and intolerable increase in acts of terrorism involving bombings in public places in various parts of the world. The United States initiated the negotiations of this convention in the aftermath of the June 1996 bombing attack on U.S. military personnel in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, in which 17 U.S. Air Force personnel were killed as the result of a truck bombing. That attack followed other terrorist attacks including poison gas attacks in Tokyo's subways; bombing attacks by HAMAS in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem; and a bombing attack by the IRA in Manchester, England. Last year's terrorist attacks upon United States embassies in

Nairobi and Dar es Salaam are recent examples of such bombings, and no country or region is exempt from the human tragedy and immense costs that result from such criminal acts. Although the penal codes of most states contain provisions proscribing these kinds of attacks, this Convention provides, for the first time, an international framework for cooperation among states directed toward prevention of such incidents and ensuing punishment of offenders, wherever found.

In essence, the Convention imposes binding legal obligations upon States Parties either to submit for prosecution or to extradite any person within their jurisdiction who commits an offense as defined in Article 2, attempts to commit such an act, participates as an accomplice, organizes or directs others to commit such an offense, or in any other way contributes to the commission of an offense by a group of persons acting with a common purpose. A State Party is subject to these obligations without regard to the place where the alleged act covered by Article 2 took place.

Article 2 of the Convention declares that any person commits an offense within the meaning of the Convention if that person unlawfully and intentionally delivers, places, discharges or detonates an explosive or other lethal device in, into or against a place of public use, a state or government facility, a public transportation system, or an infrastructure facility, with the intent (a) to cause death or serious bodily injury or (b) cause extensive destruction of such a place, facility or system, where such destruction results in or is likely to result in major economic loss. States Parties to the Convention will also be obligated to provide one another legal assistance in investigations or criminal or extradition proceedings brought in respect of the offenses set forth in Article 2.

The recommended legislation necessary to implement the Convention will be submitted to the Congress separately.

This Convention is a vitally important new element in the campaign against the scourge of international terrorism. I hope that all states will become Parties to this Convention, and that it will be applied universally. I recommend, therefore, that the Senate give

early and favorable consideration to this Convention, subject to the understandings and reservation that are described in the accompanying State Department report.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
September 8, 1999.

Remarks on Anticrime Legislative Priorities

September 9, 1999

Thank you very much, Mayor Webb, for your words and your work and your friendship. Thank you, Commissioner Timoney, for the example that you and so many others in law enforcement set. I want to thank all the mayors here today. There's really quite an amazing array of our Nation's chief executives of our cities, and Republicans and Democrats alike. Thank you all for coming.

I thank the county officials who are here, the police chiefs and others in law enforcement who are here, and those of you who are here supporting them from the National Council of Churches and other groups.

I want to thank Attorney General Reno and Secretary Summers and Secretary Cuomo, Deputy Attorney General Holder, Treasury Under Secretary for Enforcement Jim Johnson. They are some of the team and the heart of the team that we have had working at this crime issue now for 6½ years. And any success that our administration has enjoyed, I think belongs in large measure to them as well as to the remarkable partnership that we have enjoyed with all of you, and I thank them for that.

There have already been a couple of references made to the fact that many of you were with me here in the White House way back in January of 1994 when I asked you to walk a beat in the Halls of Congress to put more police on the street, to ban assault weapons, to keep guns out of the hands of those who shouldn't have them, to fund local prevention programs, to help keep our kids out of trouble in the first place even as we have tougher punishment for serious, violent crimes.

At the time, I think most people in this country assumed that the crime rate would

go up forever and that nothing could be done to bring it down substantially. But I didn't believe that, because I had seen from neighborhoods in Los Angeles to the street I walked with Mayor Rendell in Philadelphia and—to many other places that I have been with many of you from late 1991 through 1993 that the crime rate was already going down in places where people had done what makes sense to reconnect police officers to their communities and to take sensible preventive measures.

Well, with a lot of effort, a lot of blood on the floor and the sacrifice—I think we should never forget the sacrifice of some Members' seats in the United States Congress—we did pass the 1994 crime bill. A lot of people used that passage to go home in 1994 and then try to terrify the voters that we were going to take away all their hunting and sporting rights. And others said it was a great waste of money, that it would never lower the crime rate. Others said there would never be any police put on the street. I heard it all.

But thanks to the mayors, the law enforcement chiefs, the county officials, and others involved in trying to make our streets safer, this strategy has worked beyond all expectations: the lowest murder rate in 30 years, the lowest overall crime rate in 26 years, violent crime down by 27 percent in the last 6 years nationwide. And in many smaller ways, crimes like vandalism that undermine our quality of life have also dropped dramatically.

I know that one reason this has happened is that we have enjoyed the longest peacetime expansion in our history, and we have 19.4 million new jobs. But every single serious analysis of this phenomenon has also shown that a major portion of the credit belongs to sensible law enforcement and prevention strategies and especially to the strategy of community policing and day-to-day involvement in the communities.

I see Mayor Menino from Boston here. Many of you know that Boston went virtually 2 years without any young person being killed in a violent act. You cannot explain those kind of results, which we have seen in the neighborhoods of every person represented in this audience, simply by economic improvement. We now know what works, and more and

more mayors and law enforcement officials and other local officials are doing what works. All we've tried to do is to give you the tools to do it.

We've now funded, ahead of schedule and under budget, the 100,000 community police officers promised in the 1994 crime bill. Working together, we have created, I believe, all across the country, across party lines and jurisdictional lines, a new consensus on how to fight crime and violence, on what works. But, as Mayor Webb said, we have been reminded in recent months from Los Angeles to Littleton to Atlanta to what happened in Illinois and Indiana, gun violence is still too much a part of America's life.

We've learned a lot about it and what it takes to reduce it in the last 6 years, and we know that we need to do some more things. But once again, just as I asked you 6 years ago, you have to walk a beat in Congress if you want the results. We have to send the message that out in America, this is not a partisan issue; this is simply a common-sense issue about what does and doesn't work. Mayors and police chiefs, Republicans and Democrats all work on the frontlines. They know the cost of inaction; they know the benefits of prudent action.

You also know that the Federal Government needs to be a partner in giving you the tools to do your jobs. Today the Justice Department will take another step in that direction by releasing \$146 million in grants to hundreds of law enforcement agencies across our country to hire nearly 1,600 more police officers, including over 750 who will walk a new beat, the halls of our schools, to protect our children.

I am also pleased that the Department of Housing and Urban Development will invest \$15 million to help public housing agencies, working with the police, to get guns off the street through gun buy-back programs.

A lot of you have already invested in efforts like these where citizens can exchange their guns for food or clothing or small sums of cash. They have been successfully pioneered at the local level. I just want the Federal Government to lend a hand to do more.

We know that too many neighborhoods still are awash in guns, and that's not just through crime—that is just not through

crime that guns lead to tragedy. You heard Mayor Webb mention the tragic case in Gary, Indiana. Listen to this: The rate of accidental shooting deaths for children under 15 in the United States is 9 times higher than the rate for the other 25 industrialized nations combined. If any of you have or ever had a child in those wonderful, glowing years, that makes a lasting impression. I'm going to say it one more time. The rate of accidental shooting deaths for children under 15 in the United States is 9 times higher than the rate of the other 25 industrialized nations combined. Every gun turned in through a buy-back program means, potentially, one less tragedy. And there's more we can do to help you as well.

As all of you know, in the balanced budget, I proposed funding through our COPS program that would allow us to put another 30–50,000 police on the street in the neighborhoods that still have very high crime rates, to concentrate more resources where they're most needed.

You are doing your part; now it's time for Congress to do its part. Unfortunately, there is the chance that it will go in the other direction. The budget approved by the Republican leaders would cut our successful COPS program policing in half, really by more than half.

First, they said it wouldn't work in '94, and it was a colossal waste of money. Now that it has worked and it's made the streets safer, they still want to cut it. The tax plan that the leadership is supporting would threaten law enforcement across the board. It would force reduction in the numbers of Federal agents that work with your local officials. It would cut deeply into our support for State and local law enforcement.

To make matters worse, Congress has yet to pass a commonsense juvenile crime bill to prevent youth violence and keep guns out of the wrong hands. It's been over a month now since the House and the Senate conferees met, nearly 5 months since the shootings at Columbine. America is still waiting for Congress to act. It shouldn't take another tragedy to make this a priority, though we've had plenty of them in the last 5 months.

Now, the lawmakers are back in town. It would be unconscionable if they were to

leave again without sending me a balanced bipartisan juvenile crime bill that closes the gun show loophole, I mean, really closes the gun show loophole, requires child safety locks on guns, and bans the importation of large-capacity ammunition clips.

We need legislation that will strengthen our present laws, not weaken them. We need legislation that applies to all gun shows, not a bill that allows criminals to turn flea markets and parking lots into open-air gun bazaars. And we need legislation that strengthens, not weakens, the Brady background checks.

These Brady checks are working. They've stopped over 410,000 felons, fugitives, and other prohibited persons from buying guns since 1993 when the Brady bill became law. In just the last 7 months, since our new instant criminal background check system went into effect, 100,000 illegal purchases have been stopped by the insta-check system. Today the Justice and Treasury Departments are releasing reports analyzing the effectiveness of the instant check system.

The report makes two things very clear. First, the system does provide law enforcement with a powerful new crime-fighting tool while causing little inconvenience for law-abiding gun purchasers. Listen to this: Seventy-three percent of the checks are completed within minutes, 95 percent in 2 hours or less. That's the good news. But second, the report also makes clear that it is critically important to give law enforcement sufficient time to thoroughly check records. In fact, less than 5 percent of background checks take longer than 24 hours. But those purchasers, whose checks who do take longer than 24 hours, are almost 20 times more likely to be convicted felons or otherwise prohibited from owning firearms.

Now, what does that mean? It means Congress did a good thing in pushing the instant check system. That's a good thing, and all of us should acknowledge that. It's a good thing. Anything that minimizes inconvenience to law-abiding people is a good thing. But it also means that our law enforcement officials should not be artificially required to get all this done within a window of time that is so small and that would inconvenience only 5 percent of the people by going more

than a day who, themselves, are 20 times more likely to be prohibited from making purchases in the first place. So everybody, I think, will take heart from the results of this study. They will see that the instant check system is a good thing. And that is good.

But I would also hope that everyone will take heart from the sobering fact that the 5 percent that take longer than a day are 20 times more likely to be prohibited purchasers and not unduly tie the hands of our law enforcement officials who do this work. So let me be blunt. The NRA was right to support the instant check system; they're wrong when they try to tie the hands of the law enforcement officials to look at the last 5 percent, and I would hope the Congress would do that.

In the next few weeks, this juvenile crime bill is but one of an enormous number of opportunities Congress will have, thanks to our present prosperity, to pull our country together and to move our country forward. We have an historic opportunity to lift the burden of debt off the next generation. We can literally not only continue to pay down the debt, but America, in 15 years, if we stay on the present path, could be debt-free for the first time since 1835. That would guarantee a whole generation of low interest rates and prosperity.

We have an opportunity to strengthen Social Security and take it out beyond the life-span of the baby boom generation, to strengthen Medicare and reform it with prescription drug coverage. We have an opportunity to invest in our children's future with world-class schools and safer streets. The tax plan passed by the Republican leadership would not permit these priorities to be pursued. We could never pay off the debt; it doesn't add a day to the life of the Social Security or the Medicare Trust Funds; it doesn't provide for prescription drug coverage and would require cuts in education and law enforcement. The cuts in education and law enforcement could be up to 50 percent.

Now, in 1994, because we worked together, we passed the crime bill that enables us to come here and celebrate today, to enable every mayor to sit here and say, "I wish

the President were telling this story about my hometown. There is this thing I wish was mentioned today." And back home, people are celebrating, and no one asks you when you're a victim of a crime whether you're a Republican or a Democrat.

And once a person gets elected, when the mayor walks down the street and we're talking about saving lives, no one cares what your party is; they just want people to be safe. We've come a long way since 1994 with a simple strategy—more police, fewer guns in the wrong hands. We don't want to adopt laws and budgets which would give us the reverse—fewer police and more guns in the wrong hands. No one in America wants that to happen. And there is, today, a bipartisan majority in the Congress that does not want that to happen.

So, again, I implore the leadership of the Congress to work with us, to give us safer streets and a brighter future. In 1994 we were having a discussion, a debate based on what we thought would work, based on a year or 2 of experience in a few places. In 1999 there is no reasonable debate. We now have 6 years of what works. We have proven avalanches of indisputable evidence about what it takes to have safe streets and safe futures for our children. It is an American issue beyond the confines of the Capital City, and it should become America's cause as Congress returns to work.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:11 a.m. in Presidential Hall (formerly Room 450) in the Old Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Wellington E. Webb of Denver, CO; Police Commissioner John Timoney and Mayor Edward Rendell of Philadelphia, PA; and Mayor Thomas M. Menino of Boston, MA.

Remarks on Departure for New Zealand and an Exchange With Reporters

September 9, 1999

Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Summit/East Timor

The President. Good afternoon. Before I leave on my trip for New Zealand, I wanted to say a few words about the trip and a couple

of other issues. These APEC summits started in 1993 when I first invited the leaders of the Asia-Pacific region to meet in Seattle, Washington. They bring together the leaders of more than half the world's people and half of its economic activity.

What we do there will help to decide whether the global economy continues to move in the direction of greater openness and integration, equity, and growth in the next century. This year one of my most important goals is to get a commitment on the part of all our Asian-Pacific partners to rapid, wide-ranging market opening so that we can launch a new trade round at the WTO meeting in Seattle in December. We must stand together against protectionism and for a common future of prosperity.

During the global financial crisis over the last 2 years, the fact that the United States kept its markets open bolstered Asia and the world. It helped to keep the crisis from becoming even worse, and it certainly helped to turn it around. All of this was good for American workers, as you can see by the continued low unemployment rate in our country.

I will meet with Prime Minister Obuchi and President Kim in Auckland to have the opportunity to discuss not only economic issues but also the difficult issues surrounding our relationships with North Korea. I will also meet with President Jiang and with the new Russian Prime Minister, Mr. Putin. We will be meeting following a difficult period in Asia.

There are encouraging signs of recovery from South Korea to Thailand to Japan. There are also continuing difficulties, as all of you know, caused by everything from economic distress to neglect of human rights. Nowhere are those difficulties more pressing than in Indonesia. It is the fourth-largest country in the world and the largest Islamic country. It has been undergoing an important democratic transformation. It has the capacity to lift an entire region if it succeeds, and to swamp its neighbors in a sea of disorder if it fails.

Precisely because Indonesia's future is important, I am so deeply concerned by the failure of its military to bring a stop to gross abuses now going on in East Timor. After

24 years, the people of East Timor voted overwhelmingly for independence. Now, there are forces who want to reverse the popular will. At stake are the lives and way of life of innocent people. At issue is whether the democratically expressed will of the people can be overturned by violence and intimidation.

Also at stake is Indonesia's own transition to civilian democratic rule. For these reasons, we will continue with our allies in Asia and elsewhere to make it clear that we expect the authorities to live up to their word and to their responsibilities.

The Indonesian Government and military are responsible for the safety of the East Timorese and of the U.N. mission there. If Indonesia does not end the violence, it must invite—it must invite—the international community to assist in restoring security. It must allow international relief agencies to help people on the ground. It must move forward with the transition to independence. Having allowed the vote and gotten such a clear, unambiguous answer, we cannot have a reversal of course here.

The overwhelming weight of international opinion, from Asia to Africa to Europe to North America, strongly agrees with this position. Right now, the international financial institutions are not moving forward with substantial new lending to Indonesia. My own willingness to support future assistance will depend very strongly on the way Indonesia handles this situation.

Today I have also ordered the suspension of all programs of military cooperation with Indonesia effective immediately. Our military leaders have made crystal clear to senior military officials in Indonesia what they must do to restore our confidence. In the past few days, I have made many phone calls with our partners in the region and around the world and with Secretary-General Annan. I applaud the efforts, especially, of Australia to mobilize a multinational force to help provide security in East Timor. I thank all countries that have already agreed to participate.

The United States is prepared to provide support to this Australian-led effort. Although we've made no final decisions, we are consulting with Congress now on the best way to support this mission if it goes forward.

The will of the people of East Timor must not be thwarted. They have a right to live in peace and security, and they have earned and voted for their freedom. This issue obviously will be an important part of our discussions in New Zealand, and I look forward to having the opportunity to meet with all of the leaders on this and the other matters we will discuss. Thank you.

Tax Cuts

Q. Mr. President, Republicans in Congress are saying that if you veto their tax cut package, they're not likely to send you another one. Are tax cuts dead for this year, or will you offer them a little bit more, perhaps, than the \$300 billion you said you might be willing to accept?

The President. My bill is \$250 billion, and it provides almost exactly as much aid to middle class Americans as theirs does. Whether there is a bill, of course, is up to them; they can control what bills come up. But if they're saying, "Well, it's our way or no way," then that is evidence that this has been pretty much about politics all along.

I'm all about progress; I want to get something done. I'd like to see us secure and modernize Medicare. I am willing to work with them on the Social Security issue. I think we ought to run the life of the Social Security Trust Fund out beyond the life expectancy of the baby boom generation, and I am willing to provide for a modest tax cut that will not undermine our ability to pay down the debt and make this country debt-free over the next 15 years. So I'm willing to work with them.

There is always some flexibility in this budget. We can have an agreement, but it is up to them. They know good and well I'm not going to sign this bill. It's wrong for America; it's bad for the economy; it will lead to an increase in interest rates and a cut in education spending and a lot of other things that won't be good; and it won't add a day to Social Security or Medicare and it will undermine our ability to pay down the debt. So they know that. The question is whether we're going to meet and work together. My door is open, and I hope we will.

Go ahead, Ann [Ann Compton, ABC News]. Did you have a question?

Clemency for Members of the FALN

Q. I did, about the FALN. Do you think now that the clemency has been accepted, but these—the prisoners say they are political prisoners; they challenge the restrictions on them. And your disagreement with the First Lady, can you describe to us how you discussed it with her on the issue of clemency?

The President. Well, first of all, let me discuss this issue on the merits so you'll know what happened. It came in what I would call the ordinary course of business from the Counsel's Office, and I received a very detailed statement of the facts and the claims. I was requested by hundreds of people, including President Carter, Bishop Tutu, and many other religious leaders and Members of Congress to look at this and act favorably on it. And then, obviously, there were those who disagreed.

My judgment was that these people should be offered a conditional clemency for two reasons: One, none of them, even though they belong to an organization which has espoused violent means, none of them were convicted of doing any bodily harm to anyone. And two, they had all served sentences that were considerably longer than they would serve under the sentencing guidelines which control Federal sentencing now. Most of them had been in for somewhere around 19 years; they had served very long sentences for offenses that did not involve bodily harm to other people.

Because I did not believe they should be held in incarceration, in effect, by guilt by association, I agreed to offer them clemency if they would abide by the conditions of parole and specifically renounce violence.

What that means is, if they get out and they violate the conditions of parole, and particularly if they are engaged in any way with people who are espousing violence, that their parole will be revoked and they'll have to go back to prison. So under those circumstances, I felt then and I still feel that that was the just decision.

She didn't know anything about it, as far as I know, until someone from her office called and asked her for a comment, because I did not discuss it with her. I haven't discussed other clemency issues with her, and

I didn't think I should discuss this one. So it was up to her and entirely appropriate for her to say whatever she wanted to about it, but I did what I thought was right and that's what I'll continue to do.

Gene [Gene Gibbons, Reuters].

Q. As a very skilled politician, using that perspective, if your wife decides on a run for office, does she figure to be hurt by what many people perceive as a flip-flop on the issue of clemency for the Puerto Rican nationalists?

The President. Well, you know, they'll have to evaluate that as they please. You know what she said in her statement; I don't know that that's a flip-flop. I had a different position. I thought they should be given another week. If, in the course of this week, if we had come to tomorrow and they hadn't taken it and I had revoked the offer, would that have been a flip-flop by me? I don't think so.

The reason I felt they should be given to this week is, I knew that their lawyer was actually physically going around to see all of them and would not finish until, I think, yesterday. So I thought they ought to be given that amount of time, and it's a judgment I made.

East Timor

Q. Mr. President, what level of military support are you prepared to provide to any peacekeeping mission, and what recourse do you have if Indonesia continues to refuse an international mission for East Timor?

The President. The answer to the first question is, we're still—we're consulting with the Australians and with others, and we're also talking to interested Members of Congress about this, and no decision has been made. I want the American people to know two things: Number one, the Australians have made it clear that they, being the nearest military authority, intend to play the largest role and provide the lion's share of the effort, and that many other countries have already agreed to contribute.

But, secondly, the United States has been, certainly since the Second World War, and indeed, going back before, heavily involved in the Asia-Pacific region. The Australians and many of these other countries have been

our allies in every difficulty that we have faced, and I believe that we should support them in an appropriate way. But that is something that would still have to be worked out.

Now, the second question you asked is the most difficult one. There are any number of countries that are willing to support this endeavor; there are any number of countries on the Security Council who are willing to support it if Indonesia will ask. The problem is, we're in this interim period where the East Timorese have voted for independence, but East Timor is still a part of Indonesia, and we're going through this transition period.

The frustrating thing to me—and I don't know how many phone calls I've made the last 3 or 4 days about this, but the thing that's frustrating people all over the world is, they either can't or won't stop the violence, which is leading people to leave. But they don't want to admit they can't, so they don't want to ask anybody else to come in. That is why I have made the statements I've made today about economic aid and the military cooperation.

I tried to do this with telephone calls, working with others. I have seen the frustration and the anxiety in the voice of the Portuguese Prime Minister and any other number of leaders who are passionately concerned about this area, and obviously Prime Minister Howard in Australia, Prime Minister Shipley in New Zealand, and others. We are doing our best. Kofi Annan is doing his best. He sent a U.N. delegation there. They arrived there yesterday. So this may be a question that you'll have to ask me again tomorrow and the next day and the next day, because I don't have a clear answer for you yet.

Q. What are they telling you? What are the Indonesians telling you, and have you thought of economic sanctions?

Q. —force change in Indonesia right now would suspend temporarily IMF and World Bank—who are set to go there—do you think that's the right approach?

The President. First of all, I think today the right thing to do is to make it clear what our intentions are; and our intentions are: one, to stop military and military cooperation right now until this matter gets resolved; and two, we have sent a clear signal about what

we will do on economic cooperation if it is not resolved.

It would be a pity if the Indonesian recovery were crashed by this, but one way or the other, it will be crashed by this if they don't fix it, because there will be overwhelming public sentiment to stop the international economic cooperation, but quite to the side of that, nobody is going to want to continue to invest there if they are allowing this sort of travesty to go on.

So I think one way or the other, the economic consequences to them are going to be very dire, but I think—my statement clearly signals where I'm prepared to go on the economic issue.

Yes.

Q. If you got asked this, I didn't hear the question and I apologize. But what about in terms of support troops for any international mission or infantry-level troops? Would it be mostly just support the United States is considering at this point?

The President. There are a number of ways that we can support this mission and participate in it. But I normally make a practice, and you will know now after several years of our doing this from, I guess we started with Haiti and then Bosnia, I like to consult with the leaders of Congress. They've been gone; they're coming back.

What I want the American people to know is that the Australians are clearly prepared to lead this. Prime Minister Howard's been very strong, very unambiguous, and very impressive, I think, in his determination to try to help. Several other countries have said they will go along if the Indonesians ask and the United Nations approves. And I think the United States should support this mission.

Whatever we do, the lion's share of the people involved will be from the region. But a lot of those people, starting with the Australians, have been with us every step of the way for decades now, and I think we have to be involved with them in whatever way we can; and our military people will have to work that out, and we'll have to work that out—some consultation with Congress as well.

Yes, in the back.

Medicare

Q. Yesterday the Senate was nearing to have some form of prescription drug coverage. Would you be willing to compromise with the Republicans on this issue to include a means testing on Medicaid coverage in order to jump start negotiations?

The President. In order to jump start what? I think the question is, would I be willing to work with the Republicans and take a smaller drug benefit in order to get one started? Is that what you said? Is that—what did you say? I don't want to misstate you?

Q. If you would accept means testing.

The President. Well, what I don't want to do is to accept something that's so meager it doesn't mean anything. The real problem with the medical benefits, the prescription drug benefits available to seniors today in so many of these programs is that they are so expensive, they're unaffordable, or they're so meager, they don't mean anything.

Any proposal the President sends to Congress has got to be, by definition, subject to negotiation and modification. I mean, that's just any proposal, and you know that. There are things we could do apart from the prescription drugs proposal to come closer together on Medicare. They have acknowledged, as Senator Lott said, which, as I said at the time, for him was probably high praise, when I proposed my Medicare program and I called him about it, he said, "Well, it's not as bad as I thought it would be," which is another way of saying that I adopted a lot of the competitive mechanisms and structural reforms in Medicare that were embraced by the Medicare Commission.

I'm willing to work with them, but I don't want to undermine the universal character of the program, the clear benefits of the program. I don't want to force people into managed care by some pricing gimmick, and I don't want the drug benefit to be so small as to be meaningless or so expensive as to be unaffordable. And I think that—I frankly think the areas we have for compromise and where I think they want to go may be more in other areas. But I am willing—I just want to sit down and talk to them about it.

Now, we are going to have a chance to do that because Senator Roth has committed to mark up a Medicare bill. And so what I

would urge you to do is to watch the progress of the Medicare bill in the Senate, in the Finance Committee, and see what we have to say about it. And you'll see whether we're working together or at cross purposes.

East Timor

Q. You've left a big blank on what kind of response you're getting from the Indonesian Government. You keep saying what we're willing to do and what the Australians—what are they—

The President. The reason I left a big blank there is that, so far, both the political and military authorities have been unwilling—they have been very clear—they do not want to ask for international assistance.

Now, that is subject to one of two or three interpretations. Interpretation number one is, they believe they can stop this madness in East Timor and they want to do it, and they don't want to have to admit that they have to have help to do it. Two is, nobody's got the authority to make a decision because it's chaotic there; they've already had a Presidential election and parliamentary elections, but they haven't, because of the complex system for picking a new leader, they haven't done that. Three is that at least some elements in the country support what is happening in East Timor for whatever reasons.

In other words, they didn't like the results of the referendum, and they're trying to undo it by running people out of the country or into the grave. There may be other explanations. But, no, we've gotten very clear answers, which is at this time they are not prepared to ask for international help, and we have continued to press them in our military-to-military contacts, which have been quite extensive over the last several years. General Shelton, in particular, has worked very, very hard to push the Indonesians to send people in there that can stop this killing and stop these people from being run out of their country.

We want to get the humanitarian agencies in there as well. So that's what we're doing. But we've gotten a clear answer. The answer to date has been no, and that's what we're frustrated about, because if the answer were no and they were fixing the problem, that would be the best of all worlds.

Japanese Economy

Q. Mr. President, are you confident that Japan is on the path to economic recovery? Today they reported a second straight quarter of economic growth.

The President. They're doing better, and I'm real pleased about it. I think the world should be pleased about it. I know some in America are worried. They're afraid that a resurgent Japan means more competition for money and more pressure on the dollar. But on the whole, a Japan that could buy more American products and buy more products in Asia from other Asian countries would be very much good for the global economy and therefore good for America's working people.

So you're asking me, do I know for sure that their recovery is underway? I think they're doing better, and I think Mr. Obuchi has shown real ability, real talent in getting people together.

We—as you know, our Treasury officials have continued to recommend things in conversations with the Japanese that we think will help to speed up the recovery, but we're working with them well, and I'm pleased that they seem to be turning around. It's a good thing for the world.

China-U.S. Relations

Q. Are our relations with China on the mend now? And what are the prospects for signing a WTO deal with President Jiang?

The President. Well, we've done our best to do what I think is the honorable and decent thing in the wake of the terrible accident involving the Embassy in Belgrade. And we have made it clear in the recent tensions between Taiwan and China that we still strongly support the "one China" policy and the so-called Three Noes. But we also believe that any differences between them should be resolved in a peaceful manner, and we feel very strongly about it.

I hope that those things and the passage of time will permit us to resume constructive conversations with the Chinese, beginning with my meeting with President Jiang, and I would very much like to resume the WTO negotiations. I think it would be good for China, good for the United States, and good for the world economic system. So I hope

we'll be able to resume our talks, and if we resume them, obviously, I hope we'll be able to bring them to a successful conclusion.

Religious Persecution in China

Q. Sir, have you seen the new State Department report on religious persecution out today, and do you plan on talking about China's actions when you meet—

The President. On what?

Q. —the State Department report on religious persecution. Have you seen that today, and do you plan on talking about China's actions, the allegations, when you see President Jiang on the weekend?

The President. I have not seen it, but I will see it, and if I think it's appropriate, I'll certainly bring it up. I brought it up before, and as you remember, I actually sent a delegation of religious leaders to China to tour around the country and to talk to religious leaders in China and also talk to high representatives of the Chinese Government about that. That's a big issue for the United States. We have legislation on it, and it's a very large issue for me, personally.

I've been working on that issue ever since I got here and in many countries, so I look forward to having a chance to review the contents of the report and to taking appropriate action. Thank you.

Attorney General and FBI Director

Q. There's a lot of pressure on Reno to resign. Do you think Freeh should resign?

The President. I think Janet—first of all, in terms of the merits of this and the FBI, I don't have anything to add to what I said last week. I think that she did the right thing in asking an outside person to review it. I think that Mr. Freeh did the right thing in supporting that. I think—I've known Senator Danforth for—well, I met him when President Carter was in office, sometime during that period, so somewhere around 20 years. And I have always thought him an honorable man and an intelligent and straightforward man.

The only thing that I would ask is that he conduct a thorough and honest inquiry and do it as promptly as he can so that we can get the facts, take appropriate action, and go forward. But based on what I know of him

and what I have observed, I think that's a good move by the Attorney General, and I certainly don't think there's any reason for her to resign.

Thank you.

Clemency for Members of the FALN

Q. Mr. President, can you say that New York senatorial politics played no role in the Puerto Rican decision?

The President. Absolutely. Absolutely. I got the memo from Mr. Ruff. I didn't know it was coming; it came with all the other papers I get every day and every week, and I dealt with it the way I deal with everything.

Q. The First Lady says you didn't tell her about your deadline when she—

The President. That's also true.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:26 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi of Japan; President Kim Dae-jung of South Korea; President Jiang Zemin of China; Prime Minister Vladimir Putin of Russia; U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan; former President Jimmy Carter; Archbishop Desmond Tutu; Prime Minister Antonio Guterres of Portugal; Prime Minister John Howard of Australia; Prime Minister Jennifer (Jenny) Shipley of New Zealand; former Senator John C. Danforth, recently appointed Special Counsel to investigate the Justice Department's role in the 1993 siege in Waco, TX; and former Counsel to the President Charles F.C. Ruff. A reporter referred to FALN, the Armed Forces of National Liberation.

Statement on the Recommendations of the Patten Commission

September 9, 1999

I welcome the unanimous recommendations of the Independent Commission on Policing (the Patten Commission), which represent an important outcome of the Good Friday agreement. While it is up to the people of Northern Ireland to address the specific proposals, I strongly endorse the report's guiding objective—to take politics out of policing in Northern Ireland. The benchmarks identified—effectiveness, efficiency, impartiality, accountability, representativeness, and respect for human rights—are the guideposts for good policing everywhere.

The Commission's recommendations focus on assuring a professional police service in Northern Ireland that meets the highest possible standards and that enjoys the support of the community as a whole. The Commission's approach draws on best practices from other police forces, including those in the United States. I am pleased that two distinguished Americans served on the Patten Commission, and I commend Chris Patten and all the members of the Commission for their efforts.

Statement on the Convention Concerning Safety and Health in Mines

September 9, 1999

Today I am sending to the United States Senate for advice and consent to ratification International Labor Organization (ILO) Convention Number 176, the "Convention Concerning Safety and Health in Mines." I have previously submitted to the Senate ILO conventions on employment discrimination (Convention Number 111) and the worst forms of child labor (Convention Number 182). Taken together, these steps demonstrate the importance I place on the ILO's work and my commitment to work together with labor and business interests through the ILO to raise labor standards around the world.

Mining has long been recognized as one of the most dangerous jobs in the world. Men, women—and sometimes even children—are exposed to hazards that can claim their lives or destroy their health. Mining employs more than 30 million people worldwide. Although that figure accounts for only one percent of the world's entire work force, mining is responsible for about 8 percent of fatal accidents at work, or around 15,000 per year. Despite the considerable advances in safety and health throughout this century, mining remains one of the most hazardous occupations worldwide.

In the United States, miners are protected by a strong and effective Federal statute, enforced by the Mine Safety and Health Administration in the Department of Labor. A tripartite panel of American Government,

labor, and business representatives has reviewed the Convention and has concluded that the United States can ratify Convention 176 without changing our laws or regulations. But in other countries, miners may lack the legal protections they need and deserve. I urge the Senate to give its advice and consent to ratification of this Convention, to help ensure safety and healthful working conditions for miners the world over.

As an institution, the International Labor Organization plays a vital role in our efforts to put a human face on the global economy. My administration, led by Secretary of Labor Alexis M. Herman and joined by our partners in labor and business, will continue to support the efforts of the ILO.

I look forward to working with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the Senate leadership to advance Convention Number 176, and the other ILO conventions, toward ratification.

Message to the Senate Transmitting the Convention Concerning Safety and Health in Mines

September 9, 1999

To the Senate of the United States:

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification of the Convention (No. 176) Concerning Safety and Health in Mines, adopted by the International Labor Conference at its 82nd Session in Geneva on June 22, 1995, I transmit herewith a certified copy of that Convention.

The report of the Department of State, with a letter from the Secretary of Labor, concerning the Convention is enclosed.

As explained more fully in the enclosed letter from the Secretary of Labor, current United States law and practice fully satisfies the requirements of Convention No. 176. Ratification of this Convention, therefore, would not require the United States to alter in any way its law or practice in this field.

Ratification of additional ILO conventions will enhance the ability of the United States to take other governments to task for failing to comply with the ILO instruments they have ratified. I recommend that the Senate

give its advice and consent to the ratification of ILO Convention No. 176.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
September 9, 1999.

**Statement on the Situation
in East Timor**

September 10, 1999

Let me address the deteriorating situation in East Timor. I am alarmed by reports I have just received of attacks on the United Nations compound in Dili.

It is now clear that the Indonesian military is aiding and abetting the militia violence. This is simply unacceptable. The actions of the Indonesian military in East Timor stand in stark contrast to the commitments they have given to the international community.

The Indonesian Government and military must reverse this course to do everything possible to stop the violence and allow an international force to make possible the restoration of security.

**Statement on House Action on
Corporation for National and
Community Service Appropriations
Legislation**

September 10, 1999

I am deeply dismayed that the House has passed an appropriations bill that includes no funding for the Corporation for National and Community Service. Since 1994, and with broad bipartisan support, AmeriCorps has given over 100,000 of our young people the opportunity to serve community and country. It has enabled Americans from every walk of life to work together to revitalize our neighborhoods and schools. The House's action sends exactly the wrong message to young Americans who want to make a difference in their communities. I have said before, and say again now, that I will veto any

bill that inadequately funds AmeriCorps. But I hope that we can work with Members of Congress from both parties to restore full funding for this vital program.

**Memorandum on Continuation of
the Exercise of Certain Authorities
Under the Trading With the Enemy
Act**

September 10, 1999

Presidential Determination No. 99-36

*Memorandum for the Secretary of State, the
Secretary of the Treasury*

*Subject: Presidential Determination on
Continuation of the Exercise of Certain
Authorities Under the Trading With the
Enemy Act*

Under section 101(b) of Public Law 95-223 (91 Stat. 1625; 50 U.S.C. App. 5(b) note), and a previous determination made by me on September 11, 1998 (63 *Fed. Reg.* 50455), the exercise of certain authorities under the Trading With the Enemy Act is scheduled to terminate on September 14, 1999.

I hereby determine that the continuation for 1 year of the exercise of those authorities with respect to the applicable countries is in the national interest of the United States.

Therefore, pursuant to the authority vested in me by section 101(b) of Public Law 95-223, I continue for 1 year, until September 14, 2000, the exercise of those authorities with respect to countries affected by:

- (1) the Foreign Assets Control Regulations, 31 CFR part 500;
- (2) the Transaction Control Regulations, 31 CFR part 505; and
- (3) the Cuban Assets Control Regulations, 31 CFR part 515.

The Secretary of the Treasury is authorized and directed to publish this determination in the *Federal Register*.

William J. Clinton

**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.

September 6

In the morning, the President traveled from Camp David, MD, to Norfolk, VA.

In the afternoon, the President participated in a classroom renovation project at Coleman Place Elementary School in classrooms 29 and 30. Later, he traveled to Newport News, VA.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The President had separate telephone conversations with U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan and Prime Minister John Howard of Australia concerning the situation in East Timor.

The President declared a major disaster in Virginia and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by Tropical Storm Dennis and tornadoes beginning on August 27 and continuing.

September 7

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Olney, MD, where he read to a first grade class and visited a third grade history class at Brooke Grove Elementary School. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to nominate Adm. Joseph W. Prueher to be U.S. Ambassador to China.

September 8

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with President Boris Yeltsin of Russia.

The President announced his intention to nominate Linda Lee Aaker, Edward L. Ayers, Pedro G. Castillo, Peggy Whitman Prenshaw, and Theodore W. Striggles to be members of the National Council on the Humanities.

September 9

In the evening, the President traveled to Auckland, New Zealand, arriving the following day.

The President announced his intention to nominate Sim Farar to be U.S. Representative to the 54th session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

The President declared a major disaster in North Carolina and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by Hurricane Dennis on August 29 and continuing.

September 10

The President announced his intention to nominate John F. Potter to be a member of the Board of Regents of the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences at the Department of Defense.

**Nominations
Submitted to the Senate**

The following list does not include promotions of members of the Uniformed Services, nominations to the Service Academies, or nominations of Foreign Service officers.

Submitted September 8

Jay Johnson,
of Wisconsin, to be Director of the Mint for a term of 5 years, vice Philip N. Diehl, term expired.

Willene A. Johnson,
of New York, to be U.S. Director of the African Development Bank for a term of 5 years, vice Alice Marie Dear, term expired.

Joseph W. Prueher,
of Tennessee, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the People's Republic of China.

Mark Reid Tucker,
of North Carolina, to be U.S. Marshal for the Eastern District of North Carolina for the term of 4 years, vice William I. Berryhill, to which position he was appointed during the last recess of the Senate.

**Checklist
of White House Press Releases**

The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as items nor covered by entries in the Digest of Other White House Announcements.

Released September 7

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Transcript of a press briefing by Education Secretary Richard Riley, National Economic Council Director Gene Sperling, and Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy Planning Bruce Reed on the impact of the Republican tax cut

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing 12 individuals will sign statements agreeing to all conditions of the clemency grant

Announcement of nomination of U.S. Marshal for the Eastern District of North Carolina

Released September 8

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Transcript of a press briefing by National Security Adviser Samuel Berger and National Economic Council Director Gene Sperling on foreign affairs

Statement by Counsel to the President Beth Nolan on the President's interview with Independent Counsel Ralph Lancaster

Released September 9

Statement by the Press Secretary: Anti-Sweatshop Fair Labor Association Names Ruff as Chair

Official delegation to New Zealand

Released September 10

Transcript of remarks and an exchange with reporters by National Security Adviser Samuel Berger aboard Air Force One

**Acts Approved
by the President**

NOTE: No acts approved by the President were received by the Office of the Federal Register during the period covered by this issue.