

States; everybody around the globe has a stake into that.

And for me, I cannot agree more than the President that the leadership of the United States for the allies is extremely important. And keep up the good fight.

And unfortunately, we have to go. *Merçi beaucoup*. Thank you.

President Clinton. Thank you.

NOTE: The President's 181st news conference began at 12:05 p.m. in the Parliament Building. In his remarks, he referred to United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan and Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy of Canada. The President also referred to LIHEAP, the Low Income Housing Energy Assistance Program. A portion of this news conference could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Statement on an Inappropriate Metaphor Used in Discussing the Irish Peace Process

October 8, 1999

Earlier today, in a discussion of the Irish peace process, I used a metaphor that was inappropriate. I want to express my regret for any offense my remark caused.

Proclamation 7236—Leif Erikson Day, 1999

October 8, 1999

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

In preparing for the new millennium, Americans have become increasingly aware of the richness of our Nation's history and heritage and of the generations of men and women whose contributions have brought us safely to this moment in our American journey.

One of those remarkable individuals was Leif Erikson, who led a small, intrepid band on a voyage of discovery across the North Atlantic from Greenland, arriving on the coast of North America almost a thousand years ago. The courage, resourcefulness, and fortitude of Leif Erikson and the other Viking seafarers foreshadowed the strength and

character of the many Nordic pioneers who would make their own voyage to America centuries later. Building new lives through hard work, they also helped build our Nation and sustain our fundamental values of freedom, justice, and democracy.

The millions of Nordic Americans who have contributed so much to our peace and prosperity through the decades have also strengthened the bonds of friendship between the United States and the people Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden, and Norway. With a shared past and common ideals, we have worked in partnership to promote democracy and opportunity around the world. Through our Northern European Initiative, the Nordic countries and the United States continue to promote our common values in the region and to facilitate Baltic and Russian integration into Western institutions.

The next millennium will hold great challenge and great promise for our Nation and for the people of the Nordic countries. We have only to look back on the achievements of Leif Erikson to rekindle our spirit of adventure and to inspire us as we embark on our own exploration of the uncharted territory of the future.

In honor of Leif Erikson, son of Iceland, grandson of Norway, the Congress, by joint resolution approved on September 2, 1964 (Public Law 88-566), has authorized and requested the President to proclaim October 9 of each year as "Leif Erikson Day."

Now Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim October 9, 1999, as Leif Erikson Day. I encourage the people of the United States to observe this occasion with appropriate ceremonies and activities commemorating our rich Nordic American heritage.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this eighth day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:56 a.m., October 12, 1999]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on October 13.

Proclamation 7237—National School Lunch Week, 1999

October 8, 1999

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

For more than 50 years, the National School Lunch Program has been at the forefront of our Nation's effort to promote the health and well-being of our children. Created to ensure that all children in our Nation receive the nourishment they need to develop into healthy and productive adults, the program provides nutritious lunches to more than 26 million children each day in 95,000 schools and residential child care institutions across the country. For many children, this free or reduced-price meal is often the most nutritious meal of their day.

Equally important, the National School Lunch Program provides our children with the fuel they need to remain alert and attentive in the classroom. Common sense tells us—and scientific research confirms—that a hungry child cannot focus on learning and that a child who does not eat properly is more likely to be sick and absent from school. Day in and day out, school lunches give our children the energy to learn today, while helping them prepare for the challenges of the future.

An array of nutrition programs now supplements the National School Lunch Program. Whether providing schoolchildren with a good breakfast or a healthy afternoon snack, the School Breakfast Program, the Summer School Food Service Program, the Special Milk Program, and the Child and Adult Care Food Program help ensure that our children eat nutritious and healthy meals throughout the day. As we observe this special week, let us reaffirm the belief of President Harry Truman, founder of the school lunch program, that "Nothing is more important in our national life than the welfare of

our children, and proper nourishment comes first in attaining this welfare."

In recognition of the contributions of the National School Lunch Program to the health, education, and well-being of our Nation's children, the Congress, by joint resolution of October 9, 1962 (Public Law 87-780), has designated the week beginning on the second Sunday in October of each year as "National School Lunch Week" and has requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this week.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim October 10 through October 16, 1999, as National School Lunch Week. I call upon all Americans to recognize all those individuals whose efforts contribute so much to the success of our national child nutrition programs, whether at the Federal, State, or local level.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this eighth day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., October 13, 1999]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on October 14.

Proclamation 7238—National Children's Day, 1999

October 8, 1999

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

The children of America are our most precious gift and our greatest responsibility. Their well-being is one of the greatest measures of our success as a society, and our ability to provide them with a loving, safe, and supportive environment will help determine the character of our Nation.

We can be proud of the progress we have made in creating such environments. To