

Statement on the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption

September 16, 2000

Yesterday I joined the leaders of 19 nations in the Western Hemisphere in ratifying the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption.

The Convention establishes a treaty-based regime among members of the Organization of American States (OAS) to combat official corruption. OAS members who have ratified the Convention will have to criminalize acts of corruption if they have not already done so. Most important, they will have to criminalize the bribery of foreign government officials, a practice that punishes honest businesses, undermines economic development, and destroys confidence in law. The United States pressed for this provision, and it is a breakthrough in our effort to persuade other countries to adopt legislation similar to our Foreign Corrupt Practices Act.

The Convention will strengthen America's ability to cooperate with, and receive assistance from, countries in the hemisphere in efforts to prevent, investigate, and prosecute corruption, through extradition, mutual legal assistance, and other measures. It will also enhance law enforcement capabilities in other areas, given the links between corruption and organized criminal activity.

This Convention was the first multilateral agreement against bribery to be adopted anywhere in the world. It is a victory for good government, fair competition, and open trade through our hemisphere.

Remarks at the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation Dinner

September 16, 2000

Thank you very much, Chairman Clyburn; dinner chair Eddie Bernice Johnson, my friend of 28 years—and didn't she give a great introduction to the Vice President? You better go on the road, girl. *[Laughter]* Our foundation chair, Eva Clayton, and all the members and former members of the CBC, especially to my friend Bill Clay. We wish you well and Godspeed on your retirement,

and I thank you for 8 years of our good partnership.

To Mrs. Coretta Scott King and all the distinguished citizens in the audience, but especially to the two whom I had the great honor to award the Presidential Medal of Freedom, Marian Wright Edelman and Reverend Jesse Jackson, thank you for being here with us tonight.

I thank Lou Stokes and Phylicia Rashad and want to join in congratulating the award winners, my friend Arthur Eve, whose son did such a good job working for the Clinton-Gore administration; Kenneth Hill; Rodney Carroll, who has been great on our Welfare to Work program. Tom Joyner, who lets me jaw on his radio program from time to time. Even I never got an eight-page spread in *Ebony*; I don't know about that. *[Laughter]*

To Tavis Smiley and to the family of our friend LeBaron Taylor; Bill Kennard, and Ambassador Sisulu, thank you for what you said about our friend Nelson Mandela. I thank General Reno and Secretary Slater and Secretary Herman and Deputy Attorney General Holder and our SBA Director, Aida Alvarez, and all the people from our White House team who are here, and from the entire administration.

I thought the Vice President gave a great speech, and I'm looking forward to getting rid of that trouble adjective at the beginning of his title in just a couple of months now.

Now, there was nothing subliminal about that. We Democrats don't have subliminal advertising. *[Laughter]* I also want to thank Senator Lieberman, who has been a friend since Hillary and I met him 30 years ago when he was running for the State Senate in New Haven. And I can tell you that if he is the Vice President of this country, you will be very, very proud of him. He has done a great job, and he has been a great friend of mine.

I want to bring you a warm welcome from Hillary. She wishes she could be here tonight, but she's otherwise occupied. They sent the one in our family who is not running for office this year to speak to you tonight.

I've been honored to be at every one of these dinners since I became President. Tonight I came mostly to listen and to clap and to say thanks. Thank you for your friendship,