These efforts have made a difference, but we cannot afford to let up in this fight. Today's results also show emerging threats, such as increased Ecstasy use, while also reminding us that the overall levels of youth drug, tobacco, and alcohol use remain unacceptably high. I urge the next Congress to support these proven efforts to give our children the safe and healthy futures that they deserve.

Proclamation—Wright Brothers Day, 2000

December 14, 2000

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

In 1903, Orville and Wilbur Wright were poised on the brink of one of history's most remarkable advances. For years, the two brothers had been mesmerized by the principle of flight and had studied birds to understand how these fascinating creatures rose, fell, and darted through the air. The Wright Brothers' studies affirmed what they had long believed: that powered, controlled human flight was possible. After much research and experimentation and many trials and failures, the brothers tested their prototype biplane on the windy dunes of Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. On December 17, their efforts were rewarded and their dream realized when the Wright Flyer rose through the air, soaring for 12 seconds and traveling 120 feet.

While it took humanity thousands of years to reach that pivotal moment, we have achieved stunning advances in aviation in the past century alone. Less than 25 years after the Wright Brothers' inaugural flight, Charles Lindbergh conquered the Atlantic Ocean flying nonstop aboard The Spirit of St. Louis; in less than 50 years, Chuck Yeager broke the sound barrier; and in less than 70 years, the United States reached the heavens and landed two men on the Moon. Today, we continue to explore the frontiers of space as the International Space Station orbits the Earth.

The creative vision, ingenuity, and indomitable spirit that sparked the Wright Brothers' achievement still power our Nation's aviation accomplishments today. Air travel is a vital part of life in America, and people across the country depend on our air transportation system to link them with one another and to sustain our growing economy. Last year alone, U.S. airlines safely transported almost 700 million passengers on 13 million flights.

The gift of flight has immeasurably strengthened our Nation and enriched the lives of people around the world. It is only fitting that we should remember on December 17 the two visionary Americans whose scientific curiosity, independent thinking, and technical genius began a new era that has taken us to the threshold of space and beyond.The Congress, by a joint resolution approved December 17, 1963 (77 Stat. 402; 36 U.S.C. 143), has designated December 17 of each year as "Wright Brothers Day" and has authorized and requested the President to issue annually a proclamation inviting the people of the United States to observe that day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim December 17, 2000, as Wright Brothers Day.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this fourteenth day of December, in the year of our Lord two thousand, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fifth.

William J. Clinton

NOTE: At the time of publication, this proclamation had not been received by the Office of the Federal Register for assignment of a proclamation number.

Remarks at a Special Olympics Dinner

December 15, 2000

Thank you, Senator. Trying to get in practice, guys. I want to thank Victor and Katy and Barry and all the Special Olympics global messengers. Let's give them all a big hand

again. [*Applause*] Actually, I don't know whether I want to thank Victor or not. I understand that the very first time you played golf, you hit a ball 250 yards. And I want to know the secret before we go any further with this friendship of ours.

I also want to thank our friend Jamie Lee Curtis, who has been a great master of ceremonies and has walked us all through this tonight. Let's give her a big hand—[*applause*]—and all the wonderful performers who have graced this stage tonight because they believe in Special Olympics. Hillary and I have been proud supporters of Special Olympics for many, many years, and we're proud to be part of this very special evening.

Special Olympics is a program of sports, training, and competition, but ultimately it's a strong statement of optimism about human life. It says that every human being can learn and grow and contribute to the society we all share. It casts a spotlight on the dignity of human life and the beauty of the human soul.

Special Olympics teaches us that when people with disabilities gain skill and confidence, we all win from their abilities. When Special Olympic athletes from America meet their counterparts from places like China and Botswana, people all over the world are enriched. And in this century, we have just begun. If we help Special Olympics establish global networks for families, create new health programs for athletes, and open new opportunity for 2 million athletes around the world, every one of us will be better off.

Special Olympics began as a small flicker in the heart of one remarkable woman, Eunice Kennedy Shriver. We miss her tonight, and we thank Sarge and her whole family for being here. Special Olympics enters a new century, not a small flicker but a bursting flame of pride and a beacon of inspiration for every one of us.

So tonight we celebrate what has been accomplished, and even more, we look forward to the future with determination and confidence. And now, I want all of our artists to get a big hand. They're back on the stage, and they're going to sing us—you know, I only have just a few days left—[*laughter*]—so I'm going to take every opportunity I can to ask for everything I can. I want one more song.

Merry Christmas, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:11 a.m. in a pavilion on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Special Olympics Global Messengers Victor Stewart, Texas, Katy Wilson, Georgia, and Barry Cairns, Jr., United Kingdom; actress Jamie Lee Curtis; and Eunice Kennedy Shriver, founder of the Special Olympics, and her husband, Sergeant Shriver.

Videotape Remarks on the Shutdown of the Chernobyl Nuclear Powerplant

December 15, 2000

President Kuchma, honored guests, people of Ukraine, today is a great day for Ukraine and for the world.

On April 26, 1986, reactor number four at the Chernobyl nuclear powerplant suffered a runaway chain reaction, causing the worst nuclear disaster in history. That horrible destruction has offered us lessons not only in nuclear technology but also in people and governments. For when governments are arrogant and unaccountable, they will impose unacceptable risks on the health and safety of their people.

After the disaster, the outspoken father of the Soviet atomic program, Dr. Andrei Sakharov, declared that the safe use of nuclear technology demands open discussions and informed citizens. So it is fitting that while a Communist government of the U.S.S.R. built the unsafe plant, a free and independent Ukraine is shutting it down. It is also fitting to recall that the very event that exposed the weakness of the Soviet system revealed the courage and valor of the Ukrainian people.

Fourteen years ago Ukrainians took heroic steps to contain the danger and protect their people. Today, we see that same commitment, as Ukraine, with the cooperation of the United States, the G–7, and the EU, fulfills its historic decision to shut down the Chernobyl nuclear powerplant forever. This is a triumph for the common good. It is what is possible when free, democratic nations pursue common goals. As President Kuchma