

Q. So, Mr. President, you're saying that the actual offensive is justified?

*The President.* I explained that the original Croatian action, which we were told by the Croatian Government they would feel compelled to take, was animated by the Serbian attack on Bihac. But we have asked them to exercise real

restraint because we are very concerned about a wider war.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:15 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

## Statement on the 30th Anniversary of the Voting Rights Act *August 4, 1995*

This Sunday, August 6, 1995, marks the 30th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act, guaranteeing the right to vote to all Americans, regardless of race. Passed by a bipartisan majority in Congress and signed by President Lyndon Johnson after years of struggle, the Voting Rights Act has correctly been recognized as the single most important civil rights law our Nation has ever adopted. It was accomplished through the sacrifice of thousands of Americans of all colors who courageously faced down a terrible injustice.

At the time the Voting Rights Act was enacted, people of color in many parts of the country were denied the right to exercise the most fundamental right of American democracy—the right to vote. African-American voter registration was practically non-existent in many areas due to an organized system of disenfranchisement, often backed by brutal intimidation, designed to fence people out of the political process.

In the 30 years since the enactment of the Voting Rights Act, minority registration rates have soared and thousands of people who once could not get elected simply because of the color of their skin are serving in Congress, State houses, and city halls throughout the country.

More important than those results, however, has been the effect of opening our democracy to all Americans. The Voting Rights Act guarantees that no American need ever again be afraid to register to vote, no American need ever again fear the walk to the polling place, no American need ever again fear that their vote is not wanted or will not count.

In signing the law, President Johnson said, "This act flows from a clear and simple wrong. Its only purpose is to right that wrong . . . The wrong is one which no American, in his heart, can justify. The right is one which no American, true to our principles, can deny."

On this 30th anniversary, my administration reaffirms its commitment to the full enforcement of the Voting Rights Act. We must continue to protect the right of every American to fully participate in the electoral process. I challenge Americans of all races and colors to rededicate ourselves to exercising our precious right to vote. Voting is the oxygen of democracy, and millions of Americans have given their last breath to keep that right alive. So, even as we celebrate 30 years of righting a terrible wrong, we must keep working to make sure that 30 years from now, every American over the age of 18 is a voting American.

## Statement on Signing the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations and Rescissions Legislation *August 4, 1995*

On July 27, 1995, I approved H.R. 1944, the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations for Additional Disaster Assistance, for Anti-terrorism

Initiatives, for Assistance in the Recovery from the Tragedy that Occurred at Oklahoma City, and Rescissions Act, 1995. This legislation shows

how we can work together to produce good legislation.

From the start of this rescission process, I agreed with the Congress on the need to cut spending. The question was, how should we do it?

I vetoed the original rescission bill because it would have cut spending the wrong way, by targeting education and training, environmental protection, and other key national priorities. I then worked with Republicans and Democrats alike to produce a better bill. I am pleased that this bill cuts nearly \$16 billion in spending while protecting our key investments in education and training, the environment, and other priorities.

Like the earlier version, this bill also provides much-needed supplemental funds that I have sought for disaster relief activities of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Federal response to the bombing in Oklahoma City, increased anti-terrorism efforts, and debt relief to Jordan to facilitate progress toward a Middle East peace settlement.

To be sure, I do not support every provision of this bill. For instance, I still do not believe that this bill should contain any of the provisions relating to timber. But the final bill does contain changes in the language that preserve our ability to implement the current forest plans and their standards, and protect other resources such as clean water and fisheries. In addition, I am pleased that the Congress amended the bill to

limit its special authorities for timber sales to end on December 31, 1996. Therefore, I have directed the Secretaries of the Interior, Agriculture, Commerce, the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, and other Federal agencies to carry out timber salvage activities consistent with our forest plans and existing environmental laws.

In addition, though this bill includes a rescission of summer youth jobs funding for the summer of 1996, the Administration continues to support the program and will work with the Congress in the FY 1996 appropriations process to ensure that the program for the summer of 1996 is funded.

I have designated as an emergency all funds in this Act so designated by the Congress that I had not previously designated pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(D)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended.

I am pleased that bipartisan leaders of Congress worked with me to produce a good bill. Working together, we can continue to produce good legislation for the American people.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,  
August 4, 1995.

NOTE: H.R. 1944, approved July 27, was assigned Public Law No. 104-19.

## Statement on Signing the District of Columbia Emergency Highway Relief Act

*August 4, 1995*

Today I am pleased to sign into law H.R. 2017, the District of Columbia Emergency Highway Relief Act, a law to enable our Nation's capital city to advance critically needed highway construction projects. By temporarily waiving the District's cost-sharing requirements for these projects, this legislation assists the District during its period of fiscal crisis in a very practical and important way without imposing any additional cost on the American taxpayer.

Recognizing the importance of maintaining the District's highways for its residents, commuters from throughout the national capital

area, and thousands of tourists from around the Nation and the world, this Administration initiated legislation to secure a similar temporary waiver for the District. With bipartisan and intergovernmental support, and through the dedicated efforts of members of the congressional delegation from this region, this legislation was expeditiously passed by both houses of Congress.

The District will be held accountable for the funds advanced for highway construction under this bill. The District is required to repay its