

Nov. 25 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1995

more desperate winters, no more shattered lives. Now we have a responsibility to see this achievement for peace through. Our values, our interests, and our leadership are at stake.

So let us give thanks for America's role in bringing Bosnia's nightmare to an end, and let us share the blessing of our Nation's strength to secure a lasting peace.

May God bless the United States on this Thanksgiving weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 9:30 a.m. on November 24 at Camp David, MD, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on November 25.

Statement on Signing the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 1995

November 22, 1995

Today I have signed into law H.R. 2394, the "Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 1995."

In signing H.R. 2394, I am pleased to extend a most deserved benefit to our Nation's service-disabled veterans and the surviving spouses and children of those who made the supreme sacrifice in defense of our freedom. In acting to maintain the value of these payments, we keep faith with those who have given so much in service to us all.

The Act provides a 2.6 percent increase in compensation and dependency and indemnity compensation benefits, effective December 1, 1995. This is the same percentage increase that

Social Security beneficiaries and veterans' pension recipients will be receiving in January.

On Veterans Day, we paused to salute all men and women in uniform. Today, it is altogether fitting that we give tangible expression to our enduring commitment to honor our obligations to them.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
November 22, 1995.

NOTE: H.R. 2394, approved November 22, was assigned Public Law No. 104-57. This statement was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 27.

Remarks Announcing the Child Survival Initiative for Bosnia-Herzegovina and an Exchange With Reporters

November 27, 1995

The President. Ladies and gentlemen, I am honored to be here today, especially with Congressman Tony Hall, a longstanding champion of children in our own country and throughout the world and the leading fighter in the Congress and perhaps in the entire United States in combating hunger. After visiting Bosnia this fall, Representative Hall worked with UNICEF to design the important child survival initiative that we announce today. I thank UNICEF Director Carol Bellamy, not only for her work at UNICEF but for her previous service in our administration as the Director of the Peace

Corps; and the USAID Administrator, Brian Atwood, who has been a tireless advocate of America's role in promoting sustainable development, in providing developmental assistance, and protecting the welfare of children throughout the world.

I want to especially welcome here two Bosnian families, the Kapetanovic family and the Mundzahasic family, who fled the fighting in their homeland and have been resettled as refugees here in the United States. Welcome to both of you.

These families know firsthand the terrible costs of war, the breakdown of basic human services, the lack of medical care, the forced closure of schools. They know how desperately the people of Bosnia need support and assistance from the international community right now.

Since the conflict in Bosnia began nearly 4 years ago, our Nation has played a major role in providing emergency assistance, including support for children, clean water and sanitation, food, shelter, and health care. But even with these efforts, the war in Bosnia has seriously harmed the most innocent and most vulnerable members of that society, its children.

Immunization rates have declined dramatically, putting tens of thousands of children at risk of potentially deadly whooping cough, measles, and diphtheria. The situation has been aggravated by the onset of harsh winters and overcrowded living conditions. Half of Bosnia's pre-war population was driven from their homes during the conflict, and even today, more than one million of them remain homeless.

In addition, the basic education systems in the region are in deep crisis. It is estimated that 40 percent of the primary schools in Croatia and 55 percent of those in Bosnia have been either damaged or destroyed.

Now that a lasting peace is at hand, we have to bring the Bosnian people the benefits of that peace, starting with the children. And that is exactly what USAID and UNICEF are doing. Together, they will lead a new, multinational initiative to immunize the children of Bosnia, Croatia, and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia who have not had access to decent health care during this war. Efforts should begin before Christmas. Most of the approximately 150,000 needy children in the region should be immunized within just 6 months.

This initiative will also provide support for basic education systems. Remember the comment of Zlata Filpovic, the Sarajevan girl who shared her experience of the war through her remarkable diary, "For me," she said, "the school is a symbol of normal life. When they take away my school, I said this really means something. They took my childhood; they took my school." With this program we can at least begin to give those children back their childhoods which were stolen.

USAID and UNICEF are finalizing plans for this \$15 million initiative. The United States will

devote \$2 million to back the effort now, and our goal is to contribute \$5 million. We'll also do our part to mobilize other donors. We hope our friends and our allies will join us in supporting this important program for the children of the former Yugoslavia.

We have just celebrated one of our most treasured holidays, Thanksgiving. All across our country, Americans came together to give thanks for the blessings in their lives and the lives of their families. This Thanksgiving, our Nation helped to give the people of Bosnia a blessing as well: the first real hope of peace in nearly 4 years. I want to say a special thanks again to the citizens of Dayton, Ohio, who welcomed the Balkan leaders to Dayton and who demonstrated on our behalf our vast and diverse Nation all committed to living together in peace.

Now we have a responsibility to see this achievement through. That is who we are as a people. That is what we stand for as a nation. The people of Bosnia, the children of Bosnia, have suffered unspeakable atrocities. We must not, and we will not, turn our backs on peace. And I am very proud to begin this very important day of discussion with the American people with this important announcement.

And again, I want to say a special word of thanks to Congressman Tony Hall for coming to me with this idea and helping me to develop it and push it through to the point where we could announce it today.

Thank you all, and thank you, Congressman.

President's Address to the Nation

Q. Mr. President, how hard a sell do you face tonight with your speech?

The President. I think the American people will respond. I believe that they're entitled to an explanation, that our values and our interests are very much at stake in the decision we make. And they're also entitled to an explanation about what exactly I propose to have our troops do there as part of the NATO mission. And I will do that this evening.

But I believe they will respond. This is an extraordinary opportunity and we have a very compelling responsibility, and I expect the American people to support it.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:44 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House.