

Title XII includes many welfare provisions. I strongly support real welfare reform that strengthens families and encourages work and responsibility. But the provisions in this bill, when added to the EITC cuts, would cut low-income programs too deeply. For welfare reform to succeed, savings should result from moving people from welfare to work, not from cutting people off and shifting costs to the States. The cost of excessive program cuts in human terms—to working families, single mothers with small children, abused and neglected children, low-income legal immigrants, and disabled children—would be grave. In addition, this bill threatens the national nutritional safety net by making unwarranted changes in child nutrition programs and the national food stamp program.

The agriculture provisions would eliminate the safety net that farm programs provide for U.S. agriculture. Title I would provide windfall pay-

ments to producers when prices are high, but not protect family farm income when prices are low. In addition, it would slash spending for agricultural export assistance and reduce the environmental benefits of the Conservation Reserve Program.

For all of these reasons, and for others detailed in the attachment, this bill is unacceptable.

Nevertheless, while I have major differences with the Congress, I want to work with Members to find a common path to balance the budget in a way that will honor our commitment to senior citizens, help working families, provide a better life for our children, and improve the standard of living of all Americans.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
December 6, 1995.

Remarks on Lighting the National Christmas Tree *December 6, 1995*

Thank you so much. To John Betchkal, the Pageant of Peace Chairman; Reverend John Tavlarides; to the Sherando High School Choir, congratulations, you guys were great tonight; to Brendan and Bridget Walsh; the Washington Ballet; to Denyce Graves and Jack Jones and Kathie Lee Gifford and the Navy Band; and of course, to Santa Claus. I would come here every year just to see Santa Claus.

We gather to begin our Nation's celebration of the Christmas season with the lighting of this magnificent tree, a symbol, as evergreens have always been, of the infinite capacity of nature and people to renew themselves. We give gifts, and we count our blessings.

My fellow Americans, I have just returned from a very moving trip to Europe, to England and to Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, to Germany to see our troops, and to Spain. And I can tell you that among the things that I feel most grateful for at this Christmas time is the way people around the world look at our America. They see a nation graced by peace and prosperity, a land of freedom and fairness. And even though it imposes extra bur-

dens on us, they trust us to work with them to share the blessings of peace.

This is my second Christmas tree lighting of the season, for just a few days ago I was in Belfast with the people of Northern Ireland, Protestant and Catholic alike, searching, yearning, longing for peace, celebrating their second Christmas of peace. I'm proud that I was introduced there by two children, a little Catholic girl named Catherine Hamill and a young Protestant boy named David Sterritt, who joined hands and told the world of their hopes for the future, a future in which the only barriers they face are the limits of their dreams. That is the future we should want for our children and for all the children of the world.

I'm very pleased that Catherine Hamill, who touched the whole world with the story of her suffering and her family's losses in Northern Ireland, and her family are here with us tonight to celebrate this lighting of the Christmas tree. And I'd like to ask her to stand up right down here and ask all of you to give her a fine hand. She has come all the way from Northern Ireland. [*Applause*]

Remember at this Christmas time we celebrate the birth of a homeless child, whose only shelter was the straw of a manger but who grew to become the Prince of Peace. The Prince of Peace said, "Blessed are the peacemakers." Let us bless the peacemakers at this Christmas time from the Middle East to Northern Ireland to our own troops in Bosnia. Let us pray especially for our peacemakers, those who will go to Bosnia and those who are soon to come home from Haiti.

And let us resolve, my fellow Americans, to be peacemakers. For just as so many nations around the world and so many children around the world cry for peace, so do we need peace here at home in our toughest neighborhoods, where there are children, so many children who deserve to have their childhood and their future free and peaceful.

And let us remember from the example of the Prince of Peace how even the humblest of us can do, through acts of goodness and reconciliation, extraordinary things. And as we light this wonderful Christmas tree, let us all remember that together a million small lights add up to make a great blaze of glory, not for ourselves but for our families, our Nation and the world, and for the future of our children.

Merry Christmas, and blessed are the peacemakers.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:45 p.m. on the Ellipse during the annual Christmas Pageant of Peace. In his remarks, he referred to Rev. John Tavlarides, who recited the Christmas prayer; Brendan and Bridget Walsh, Camp Fire Boys and Girls, Pittsburgh, PA; entertainers Denyce Graves, Jack Jones, and Kathie Lee Gifford; and television weatherman Willard Scott.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on the Deployment of United States Military Forces for Implementation of the Balkan Peace Process

December 6, 1995

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Mr. President:)

I last reported to the Congress on September 1, 1995, concerning the use of U.S. aircraft in support of United Nations and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) efforts in the former Yugoslavia. In that report I noted our diplomatic efforts to assist the parties to reach a negotiated settlement to the conflict. I am gratified to report that those efforts have borne fruit.

On November 21, 1995, the Presidents of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Croatia, and, on behalf of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the President of the Republic of Serbia initialed a peace agreement to end the conflict in the former Yugoslavia. The agreement has 11 annexes including, among others, Military Aspects, Regional Stabilization, Elections, Human Rights, Refugees and Displaced Persons, and Civilian Implementation. These annexes were also signed or initialed by the state parties, and where appropriate, by officials from the Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This is the first

step in a process that will lead to formal signing of the agreement on December 14 in Paris.

As a result of this important first step, consistent with our consultations with the Congress, and pursuant to the North Atlantic Council (NAC) decision of December 1, 1995, I have ordered the deployment of approximately 1,500 U.S. military personnel to Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia as part of a NATO "enabling force" to lay the groundwork for the prompt and safe deployment of the NATO-led Implementation Force (IFOR). United States personnel participating in the enabling force will be under NATO operational control and rules of engagement. To date, I have also authorized the deployment of approximately 3,000 additional U.S. military personnel to Hungary, Italy, and Croatia in order to establish forward U.S. support infrastructure for the enabling force and the IFOR. These personnel will deploy in the very near future and will remain under U.S. command and control and rules of engagement.

As I have indicated before, now that I have approved the NATO operation plan for imple-