

The White House,
January 25, 1996.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office
of the Press Secretary on January 26.

**Statement on the 10th Anniversary of the Loss of the Space Shuttle
*Challenger***
January 26, 1996

Ten years ago this week, our nation and the world were stunned and saddened by the loss of the crew of the Space Shuttle *Challenger*. A decade later, we are still moved by the memory of the *Challenger* Seven and honor the extraordinary sacrifice they made for our country.

Throughout our history, pioneers have dared to dream and live life to the fullest. Like the pathfinders and explorers of our earliest days, like the settlers who pushed our boundaries westward, like the pilots who first took to the air, or the Apollo astronauts who lost their lives in pursuit of President Kennedy's visionary call to reach the moon, the *Challenger* astronauts believed in themselves and in their mission. They believed in the quest for knowledge and the pursuit of discovery. And each of them—including a special school teacher who touched America's heart, Christa McAuliffe—possessed the rare courage of those willing to risk much to achieve great things.

The people of our space program still carry with them the memory of the *Challenger* astro-

nauts and keep alive in their daily striving the spirit of the friends and colleagues they lost on that tragic day. Today, our space program is still strong, the Shuttles continue to broaden our horizons, the frontiers of knowledge continue to expand, and the dream of exploration, as we find at *Challenger* Education Centers around the country, lives on.

We have been fortunate to view our world from the vastness of space, and we owe a lasting debt of gratitude to the *Challenger* Seven and all those who have taught and still teach us about our place in the cosmos. For, as T.S. Eliot wrote:

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this statement.

Statement on Signing the Ninth Continuing Resolution
January 26, 1996

Today I have signed H.R. 2880, the ninth continuing resolution for fiscal year 1996 that I have signed into law.

This bill ensures that the normal operations of Government continue for departments and agencies for which no full-year appropriations bill has been enacted. It provides funds for certain Federal activities through March 15, and other activities through September 30, 1996.

Specifically, H.R. 2880 provides funds, through March 15, for activities that are normally funded in the Commerce, Justice, State, and Related Agencies bill; the Department of

the Interior and Related Agencies bill; the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education bill; and the Department of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and Independent Agencies bill. It also provides full-year funding (i.e., through September 30) for programs in the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs bill, ensuring adequate funds to implement an effective foreign policy that protects vital U.S. economic and strategic interests abroad.

I am pleased that the Congress avoided another partial government shutdown, and I appre-

ciate its bipartisan approach toward this bill. Nevertheless, I regret that the Congress has not sent me acceptable 1996 appropriations bills for agencies that received funding only through March 15. Governing by continuing resolution is not the appropriate way for the Congress to perform its work. Once again, I urge the Congress to work with me so that we can reach agreement on the remaining fiscal year 1996 appropriations bills.

I also urge the Congress to send me a straightforward, full-year extension of the debt limit. If the Congress does not raise the debt limit, we would not be able to meet all of our financial obligations on February 29 or March 1, and would risk not being able to make timely

payment of \$30 billion of Social Security benefits and other obligations. A default could raise interest rates and impose serious, long-term harm on the economy. The Congress must act without delay.

Finally, I urge congressional leaders to return to our negotiations to seek an agreement on a balanced budget. We should not give up on that goal.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
January 26, 1996.

NOTE: H.R. 2880, approved January 26, was assigned Public Law No. 104-99.

Statement on Senate Ratification of the START II Nuclear Arms Reduction Treaty With Russia

January 26, 1996

Today, Senate Democrats and Republicans, working together, have increased the security of the American people by ratifying the START II nuclear arms reduction treaty with Russia. I applaud this historic step. As I stated in my State of the Union Address this week, it will make every American, every Russian, and people all over the world more secure.

START II requires dramatic cuts in the nuclear arsenals of our two countries. Together with the START I treaty, which we put into force in December 1994, it will eliminate submarine, bomber, and land-based missile launchers that carried more than 14,000 warheads—two-thirds of the nuclear arsenal the United States and the former Soviet Union maintained at the height of the cold war. START II will also eliminate the most destabilizing type of nuclear weapon—the multiple warhead ICBM. Starting with President Nixon, six American Presidents from both parties have worked to control and reduce the number of nuclear weapons. President Bush negotiated START II and submitted it to the Senate in January 1993. I am proud that we have seized the opportunity presented by the end of the cold war to take this big step back from the nuclear precipice.

As President, my most basic duty is to protect the security of the American people. That's why

I have made reducing the nuclear threat one of my highest priorities.

As a result, for the first time since the dawn of the nuclear age, there are no Russian missiles pointed at our people. We convinced Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan to give up the nuclear weapons left on their land when the Soviet Union broke up. We persuaded North Korea to freeze its dangerous nuclear weapons program under international monitoring. We're working with countries around the world to safeguard and destroy nuclear weapons and materials—so that they don't fall into the hands of terrorists or criminals. We led global efforts to win the indefinite extension of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty which bans the spread of nuclear weapons to states that do not have them.

Now, as I urged in the State of the Union, we must do even more to give the American people real, lasting security. We can end the race to create new nuclear weapons by signing a truly comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty this year. We can outlaw forever poison gas if the Senate ratifies the Chemical Weapons Convention this year. We can take the fight to terrorists, who would acquire terrible weapons of mass destruction, if Congress finally passes legislation I proposed after Oklahoma City to give