

past week. Now the civilians on both sides of the border can return to their homes and resume their normal lives with greater confidence and greater security than in the past. I also want to commend Prime Minister Peres, President Asad, Prime Minister Hariri, and the representatives of other interested governments, including France, for providing leadership which was very much needed to end this crisis.

Now, this agreement will only last if all those who worked with us to bring it about now work to make sure it succeeds. We must not and we will not tolerate new attempts to disrupt the calm which has been reestablished at such a terrible cost.

I know I speak for all Americans in saying that our thoughts and prayers are with the innocent civilians and their families in Lebanon and in Israel who have suffered so much during the last 2 weeks. Now we must turn again to the hard work of building a comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East.

Thank you very much.

#### *Middle East Peace Process*

Q. Mr. President, doesn't this really accept the status quo, and will—the real crux of the problem is Israeli occupation of Lebanon, and the President of Lebanon told you that he could restore order on the border if the Israeli troops got out. Why don't you work on that?

*The President.* Well, first of all, that will be worked on in the context of resolving—making peace in the Middle East. That is a part of a comprehensive resolution to the Middle East peace process. That has always been our position. But first we had to restore the peace and stop the suffering of the innocent civilians.

#### *1996 Olympics*

Q. Mr. President, there are reports that there have been arrests in Georgia in connection, perhaps, with a militia group making some threats against the Olympics. I know you're planning on attending the Olympic games. Can you, first of all, tell us what exactly is going on?

*The President.* Let me say—as you know, I have to leave—but the Justice Department will make whatever statements are appropriate there. I think it's inappropriate for me at this moment to say more.

Thank you.

Q. Are you concerned, though, about your security going to Atlanta?

*The President.* No.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:50 p.m. in the Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Hafiz al-Asad of Syria and Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri of Lebanon. A reporter referred to President Ilyas Harawi of Lebanon.

## Statement on Signing the Omnibus Consolidated Rescissions and Appropriations Act of 1996

*April 26, 1996*

Today I have signed into law H.R. 3019, the "Omnibus Consolidated Rescissions and Appropriations Act of 1996."

This bill helps us move toward a balanced budget in a way that honors our Nation's values by protecting our commitments to education and training, the environment, law enforcement, science and technology, and national service. It restores \$5.1 billion of the \$8.1 billion I had sought for these priorities over levels in the appropriations bills that I had rejected. In addition, H.R. 3019 provides emergency disaster funding as well as funding for our troops in

Bosnia and for the furtherance of the Middle East peace process.

We should have reached this conclusion 7 months ago, at the beginning of the fiscal year instead of more than halfway through it. Unfortunately, the Congress passed versions of the appropriations bills that were far outside of the mainstream, leaving me no choice but to veto them.

Rather than move quickly to reach a compromise such as the one achieved with this legislation, the Congress shut the Government down twice and then I had to sign a record 13 continuing resolutions funding the Government.

The extent of conflict and delay was unprecedented. It should never happen again.

Nonetheless, 7 months later, we have a bill we can all be proud of, one that achieves savings, protects investments, and avoids outcomes that could have been disastrous for our environment and our people.

For example, the bill eliminates, or permits me to suspend, the most egregious legislative riders that the Congress had sought to attach to the appropriations bills, including those that would have blocked enforcement of some of the Nation's key environmental laws. These riders reflected a philosophy of disregard for our environment that the American people and bipartisan majorities in previous Congresses and Administrations had long ago rejected.

At my insistence the Congress dropped the rider that would have prevented the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) from using its authority to protect our Nation's wetlands.

Likewise, this bill provides me the authority to suspend three other riders—authority that I invoked immediately after signing this legislation. If I had not suspended these riders, they would have:

- overridden existing environmental laws and led to unsustainable levels of timber cutting in Alaska's Tongass National Forest;
- drastically undermined the level of protection provided to the Mojave National Preserve by the 1994 California Desert Protection Act; and
- prohibited proposed or final listing actions by the Departments of the Interior and Commerce under the Endangered Species Act, which could have resulted in a greater risk of extinction of some of the over 400 species that are currently either proposed for listing or for which proposed listings are awaiting evaluation.

At my request, the bill also deletes the measure contained in the Senate- and House-passed Interior appropriations bills that would have extended the repeal of environmental laws and allowed the clear-cutting of old growth trees for 3 years or more. That authority is currently set to expire on September 30 of this year, just 5 months away. I am disappointed, however, that the Congress was unwilling to support an immediate repeal of these provisions, despite the fact that, by imperiling salmon and other spe-

cies, these provisions threaten the environment and economy of the region.

The bill also funds important programs that the House or the Senate—or both—had sought to eliminate.

The Congress, in a bill I vetoed, sought to kill AmeriCorps, the National Service program. This bill retains it, as I had insisted, funding the Corporation for National and Community Service at \$402 million. Through National Service, we will continue to allow young Americans to help address vital needs in their communities, such as health care, crime prevention, and education, while earning a monetary award to help them pursue additional education or training.

The House sought to terminate Goals 2000, which is providing schools throughout the country with the resources to improve teacher training and raise academic standards to prepare our children for the 21st Century. This bill restores funding for Goals 2000.

In another bill I vetoed, the Congress sought to end the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program, the commitment I made with the previous Congress to put 100,000 additional police officers on the streets of our cities and towns by the year 2000. At my insistence, that program is continued. As a result, we remain on track for fulfilling our commitment, with 45,000 police officers funded by the end of this fiscal year, including 19,000 provided by this legislation. These police are working hand-in-hand with their communities to fight crime. Crime is down in many communities across the Nation, and we can make further progress through the COPS program and similar efforts.

In the same bill that I vetoed, the Congress proposed to end the Department of Commerce's Advanced Technology Program (ATP), an integral part of my civilian technology strategy to promote economic growth. Adequate funding is provided for that program, while proposed language that would have prohibited new grants was deleted. ATP provides an effective mechanism for augmenting U.S. economic growth through highly-leveraged, industry-led research and development. It is a rigorously competitive, cost-shared program that fosters technology development, promotes industrial alliances, and creates jobs. The continuation of a strong ATP is a fitting tribute to the late Secretary Ron Brown, who deserves so much credit for making ATP what it is today.

Other programs or agencies that one or both houses sought to end, but which this bill restores, include the Community Development Financial Institutions program, the Summer Youth jobs program, and the Council on Environmental Quality.

Very importantly, the bill provides \$22.8 billion for the Education Department. I am pleased that the Congress restored critical education programs—among my highest priorities to levels near or above the fiscal 1995 levels. The restorations include important funding for Title I—Education for the Disadvantaged (which the House had sought to cut by \$1.2 billion), Goals 2000, Safe and Drug-Free Schools, School-to-Work, and Education Technology.

This bill also ensures that colleges, universities, and vocational schools can continue to choose the Federal student loan program—either the new Federal Direct Student Loan Program or the bank-based guaranteed student loan program—that best serves the needs of their students and ensures that students have access to the most flexible student loan repayment provisions, including income-contingent repayment. Institutions of higher education that now participate in the program or have planned to participate in July 1996 will be able to do so; other schools that wish to participate can enroll without facing limits on the program. Students with guaranteed student loans who want access to income-contingent repayment will be able to switch into the Direct Loan program. The House had sought to place a severe cap on the Direct Loan program, a step that would have had the effect of killing in its infancy an effort that has benefited students, colleges and universities, and taxpayers alike.

The bill also restores other programs to close to, or above, last year's levels that at least one house of Congress had sought to cut deeply. These include Head Start, Department of Labor worker protection programs, and payments to international organizations for peacekeeping and other programs. To help finance these priorities, the bill provides new debt collection authorities, calls for selling the United States Enrichment Corporation, and cuts Government overhead.

The Congress, also at my insistence, dropped from the bill the most seriously objectionable language provisions affecting the Education Department. The Congress also eliminated controversial language affecting Goals 2000, paving

the way for renewed bipartisan support for this program.

The bill provides \$6.5 billion for the EPA. The cuts originally proposed by the House for the EPA would have crippled its ability to protect the health of families throughout the Nation. I am pleased that the Congress deleted or modified other objectionable legislative riders, including restrictions on the size of the diplomatic presence in Vietnam, the District of Columbia school voucher provision, and a measure that could have resulted in bans on the use of Medicaid funds for abortions for victims of rape or incest.

I am also pleased that the Congress dropped political advocacy disclosure provisions. These provisions could have interfered with the First Amendment rights of such nonprofit organizations as the Girl Scouts, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, and the American Red Cross.

I commend the Congress for repealing the language in the 1996 Defense Authorization Act that unfairly required the discharge of military personnel with HIV.

I am disappointed that the Congress chose to modify the conditions under which prison grant monies are distributed to the States. The Congress carefully crafted a distribution mechanism just 2 years ago to ensure that States implementing "truth in sentencing" would be rewarded for doing so. That mechanism is in place and has no need for change. These program changes will significantly delay getting these resources to the places they are needed most.

I note with regret the other objectionable legislative riders that remain in the bill.

They include a provision intended to allow the construction of a third telescope on Mt. Graham, Arizona, affecting the Mt. Graham red squirrel, Native American cultural lands, and the abortion accreditation provision.

While I am disappointed that the Congress chose to reduce funding for the Legal Services Corporation, I am pleased that the bill assures continued funding of legal services programs for all eligible populations, including migrants.

I am also disappointed that the Congress did not approve my request to increase funding by \$250 million for our anti-drug initiative. But I am pleased that the conferees stated their intent to provide additional funds for these important programs in FY 1997, ensuring that we can continue our anti-drug effort at full strength.

Unfortunately, the Congress did not include legislation I had sought to stabilize the Savings Association Insurance Fund. It is important for the Congress to take action on this issue quickly so that we can put the thrift crisis behind us without imposing any further costs on the taxpayers.

In addition, I note that section 119(a) of the Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1996, contains a legislative veto, which would be unconstitutional under *INS v. Chadha* (462 U.S. 919) (1983). However, because I am suspending section 119(a) pursuant to section 119(b), the constitutional problem will be avoided.

With regard to defense, this bill also permits the Federal Government to undertake a multi-year procurement of the C-17 aircraft, the critical next-generation military transport. The C-17 will greatly enhance our ability to respond to crises around the world; buying it this way

will save hundreds of millions of dollars for the taxpayers.

This bill represents true compromise and bipartisan cooperation. Clearly, when we work together we can enact good legislation for the American people.

With this in mind, we should build on our efforts here and move on to the larger challenge of balancing the budget over the next 7 years. The American people deserve a balanced budget, and we should give it to them.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,  
April 26, 1996.

NOTE: H.R. 3019, approved April 26, was assigned Public Law No. 104-134. The related memorandums on suspension of certain provisions for environmental management are listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

## Message to the Congress on Waivers for Environmental Management *April 26, 1996*

*To the Congress of the United States:*

I hereby report that I have exercised the authority provided to me under subsection 325(c) of the Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1996, to suspend subsection 325(a) and 325(b) of such Act. A copy of the suspension is attached.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,  
April 26, 1996.

NOTE: The President exercised authority to waive certain sections of the Omnibus Consolidation Revisions Act of 1996 (P.L. 104-134) pursuant to provisions of that act. The suspension memorandum is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

## Message on the Observance of Eid al-Adha *April 26, 1996*

Warm greetings to everyone celebrating Eid al-Adha.

An observance of sacrifice and a celebration of faith, Eid al-Adha is a sacred day for Muslims in our nation and around the world. On this special day, the entire global Muslim community

joins in spirit with those who have traveled to Mecca to complete the Hajj.

The Festival of the Sacrifice reminds all of us of the need for obedience to God, prompts us to reflect on God's mercy, and gives participants a welcome opportunity to join with friends