

assistance has grown from 16 to 49, reflecting the growth in the number of people needing services.

Despite this harsh reality, the investment in research to find a treatment and cure for HIV disease is making progress. The rapid approval of a new class of anti-HIV therapies offers new hope that this virus can be held in check for extended periods of time. As soon as we learned of the benefits of these new therapies, I proposed—and the Congress then passed—a \$52 million Budget Amendment for fiscal year 1996 so people with HIV could purchase these and other medications. We have also learned that by administering the drug AZT, we can reduce the transmission of HIV infection from mothers to infants by approximately two-thirds.

The Ryan White CARE Act provides the mechanisms and the resources to translate these and other research advances into practice by providing access to state of the art health care for thousands of Americans living with HIV and

AIDS. The AIDS Drug Assistance Program, funded under Title II of the Ryan White CARE Act, will help make life-saving and life-extending treatments available to people who could not otherwise afford them. The implementation of the voluntary prenatal counseling and testing guidelines through Ryan White funded programs should dramatically reduce transmission of HIV infection to unborn babies.

There is a long way to go toward finding a cure or a vaccine for HIV and AIDS. Until then, the Ryan White CARE Act programs will continue to help people with HIV disease get the care-related services they need.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
May 20, 1996.

NOTE: S. 641, approved May 20, was assigned Public Law No. 104–146.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on the Deployment of United States Forces in Liberia *May 20, 1996*

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

On April 11, 1996, I reported that U.S. military forces equipped for combat had entered Monrovia, Liberia, for the purpose of evacuating American citizens and certain third-country nationals from that strife-torn city. This letter is provided, consistent with the War Powers Resolution, to update the Congress on the continued deployment of U.S. forces, including the response by those forces to several isolated attacks on the American Embassy complex on April 30, 1996, and May 6, 1996.

As of this date, U.S. forces have evacuated over 2,300 persons from Monrovia, including over 470 American citizens. The U.S. Special Operations and U.S. Army Europe forces that conducted the initial evacuations have been replaced by U.S. Marines assigned to a Marine Amphibious Ready Group offshore in the immediate vicinity of Monrovia. Approximately 280 Marines and other U.S. military personnel from the total U.S. force of 2,500 are currently ashore at the American Embassy complex. In addition

to protecting American lives and property at the Embassy complex, the mission of these forces is to maintain the capability to conduct further evacuations if circumstances warrant.

On April 30, 1996, three separate attacks occurred against the American Embassy complex reportedly involving fighters from several factions. In the first encounter, a U.S. Marine was grazed by a round fired by one of the attackers. The Marines did not return fire, and the injured Marine was able to return to duty on the same day. In the second attack, a Marine was struck by plywood splinters dislodged by an incoming round. During this attack, the Marines returned fire, killing two or more attackers. During the final encounter, approximately 40 to 50 attackers, while apparently engaged in a pursuit of fighters from another faction, fired on the Marines. After the Marines returned fire, one of the attackers fired again. The Marines again returned fire, this time killing two or more attackers.

Separately, on May 6, 1996, unknown factional forces fired upon the Embassy complex. The Marines returned fire with machine guns and automatic weapons, driving off the attackers. No U.S. forces were killed or injured in this encounter. One member of the attacking force may have been wounded.

Finally, on May 11, 1996, a U.S. Marine walking on the Embassy compound was struck by a stray round. The Marine was slightly injured. He was treated and returned to full duty. This incident was the result of stray fire between warring factions and appears not to have been directed at the Marines or the Embassy.

The Marine commander reported that during these attacks, U.S. forces opened fire only upon persons who fired upon the Embassy complex. In the judgment of U.S. military commanders, these attacks are sporadic incidents and do not represent an intent to mount a concerted or deliberate attack against the American Embassy or the Marines. We do not intend that U.S. Armed Forces deployed to Liberia become involved in hostilities. Nonetheless, our forces are

equipped and prepared to defend American lives and property if necessary.

Our goal is to redeploy U.S. forces once there is no longer a need for enhanced security at the Embassy and a requirement to maintain an on-scene evacuation capability.

I have directed the continued deployment of U.S. forces to Liberia pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct the foreign relations of the United States and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive.

I am providing this report as part of my efforts to keep the Congress fully informed concerning this important deployment of U.S. forces. I appreciate the support of the Congress in this action to protect American citizens and our Embassy complex in Monrovia.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Strom Thurmond, President pro tempore of the Senate.

Teleconference Remarks on the Expansion of the Detroit Metropolitan Airport

May 20, 1996

The President. It's Bill Clinton. How are you?

Wayne County Executive Ed McNamara. Well, I'm great. How are you? We have a room full of supporters here.

The President. Well, I'm very glad that Secretary Pena and I could join you today, at least by telephone, to congratulate all of you who have worked so hard to make the expansion of the Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport a reality. I know that a lot of people deserve praise for their hard work, but I want to say a particular thanks to Senator Carl Levin and Governor Engler and former Governor Jim Blanchard and Congressman Dingell, Congresswoman Rivers, Congressman Knollenberg, the executive vice president of Northwest Airlines, Don Washburn. But I especially want to thank you, Ed McNamara, for all the work you've done. We had to have this day; otherwise I could never look at you again without remem-

bering all the times you twisted my arm and put bruises all over me. [Laughter]

Mr. McNamara. Well, you've got to know we never would have done it without you. You were the most key individual in this whole show, and you've helped turn Michigan's greatest generator of jobs and economic activity into a reality. So we're grateful.

The President. I'm very pleased that we can provide some extra funding. The \$150 million in new funds, in addition to the millions already committed, as you know, will fund the infrastructure for the airport's domestic and international terminals. And this is just a great example of the kind of partnership we need between the Federal, State, and local governments and the private sector.

And I agree with you, it's going to have a tremendous impact on Michigan's economic future. It will help to create nearly \$3 billion