

America is going to keep winning these next 4 years.

Let me say that, as all of you here from my native State know, I believe this and I have tried to live by it because there is no person in America who has been given more gifts than I have; there is no person in America tonight who feels more humble in the face of this victory than I do. Fifty years ago, when I was born in a summer storm to a widowed mother in a small town in the southwest part of our State, it was unimaginable that someone like me could have ever become President of the greatest country in human history. It has been, for me, a remarkable journey, not free of failure but full of adventure and wonder and grace. I have worked hard to serve, but I did not get here on my own.

Every step along the way, for these last 23 years and long before, there was a teacher, a doctor, a neighbor, a parent, a friend, a wife, a daughter who always had time to care, who always tried to give me instruction and encouragement, and who never gave up. I got here tonight, my fellow Americans, because America gave me a chance.

That is what all the children of America deserve. Our people have to give them the tools to give them not a guarantee but that real chance to live up to their God-given potential.

And I ask you to join me in that commitment. Every child deserves the main chance that I was given.

And so I say, again, let us resolve to run our country the way we try to run our lives. Whether you are the party of Thomas Jefferson or the party of Abraham Lincoln, whether you're an independent or unaffiliated, remember that we all belong to the greatest Nation in history. To us much has been given and much is still expected. We must rise to the challenge of building that bridge to the 21st century.

Tonight is a night for joy not just for us here but for all Americans. For the 53d time in our history our people have made their quiet and deliberate decision. They have come together with their powerful voice and expressed their will. Tonight we celebrate the miracle of America. Tomorrow we greet the dawn and begin our work anew.

I am more grateful than I can say. You have given me an opportunity and a responsibility that comes to few people. I will do my best. And together, we will—we will—build that bridge to the 21st century.

Thank you. Good night, and God bless America. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:10 p.m. on the steps of the Old State House.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Prevention of Importation of Weapons of Mass Destruction

November 4, 1996

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

I am writing pursuant to section 229 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1997, to inform the Congress that the United States has the capability to prevent the illegal importation of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons into the United States and its possessions.

The United States Government has developed and maintains myriad international and domestic programs to prevent the illegal importation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) into the United States. The scope and nature of our approach is essential because at least 20 countries have or may be developing nuclear, chemical,

and biological weapons. Moreover, terrorist groups have become increasingly capable, often employing lethal, wide-ranging and sophisticated operating methods and technical expertise. This trend is exacerbated by the spread of dual-use technologies, many of which have legitimate civilian or military applications.

Our response to this multi-dimensional threat begins far from our borders. The Departments of Defense and Energy, for example, have developed programs that have succeeded in eliminating or more fully safeguarding tons of fissile materials in the former Soviet Union. These materials—essential to nuclear weapons production—could be targeted for acquisition by terror-

ist groups or pariah nations and used against the United States. We also are assisting Russia in the elimination of the chemical weapons stockpile it inherited from the Soviet Union, and an interagency group is working with Kazakhstan in the conversion of a former chemical weapons production facility to civilian use.

Diplomacy is another instrument for combating the potential illegal importation of WMD. At the 1996 Moscow Nuclear Summit, the United States, Russia, and our G-7 partners agreed on an international program to combat illicit trafficking in nuclear materials. To this end, the Intelligence Community has expanded its liaison relationships with foreign intelligence services, and similar relationships have been expanded among law enforcement organizations. In addition, the indefinite extension in 1995 of the Non-Proliferation Treaty strengthens our efforts to control the spread of nuclear weapons. The United States also is working with other members of the International Community to help deny terrorists and rogue states access to chemical and biological weapons by ratifying and bringing into force the Chemical Weapons Convention, and by concluding a legally binding protocol to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention.

Prevention of WMD importation also receives high priority for intelligence collection. This is particularly important because one of our first lines of defense is to discover the hidden plans and intentions of countries and groups of concern well before we have to confront their weapons or efforts to smuggle these weapons into the United States. Because of intelligence successes and cooperation with foreign governments, the United States has halted the international transfer of a large amount of equipment that could be used in WMD programs. The efforts of our intelligence and law enforcement agencies are supported by a Department of Defense initiative to develop special technologies—including BW/CW sensors to counter terrorist WMD threats.

Within the United States, the FBI has been assigned the lead law enforcement role in responding to threats or acts of nuclear, chemical, and biological terrorism. The FBI's criminal jurisdiction is based in Federal statutes, including title 18 and title 42 of the United States Code, which address planned or attempted acts of nuclear, chemical, and biological terrorism. Moreover, in April 1996, title 18 was amended to

prohibit transactions involving nuclear byproduct materials, providing additional statutory authority over radiological threats. While the probability of a major terrorist or criminal-related WMD incident occurring in the United States cannot be realistically quantified, to date all of the threats investigated by the FBI have been determined to be noncredible. Nonetheless, the FBI is aggressively pursuing countermeasures and readiness programs to respond to a threat to develop, use, or import WMD.

As the Nation's primary border enforcement agency, the Customs Service has taken the lead in working with other United States Government agencies to prevent any attempts to illegally import WMD into the United States. During the past year, the Customs Service program has focused on preventing illegal trafficking in prohibited materials and components as well as their delivery means. The Customs Service also initiated a major research and development effort aimed at detecting any nuclear devices or materials being smuggled across this Nation's borders. Various detection means were tested and a pilot test was conducted at the JFK Airport in New York in 1996. The Customs Service also has played a leading role in developing a Border Enhancement Training course for 10 countries in parts of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

In conclusion, the United States Government has devoted significant resources to developing the capability to detect and prevent efforts to illegally import nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons into the United States or its possessions. These efforts range from international cooperation to domestic law enforcement. I take this threat seriously, and my Administration will continue to strengthen our capability to prevent illegal importation of such weapons. In this regard, the funding provided in the National Defense Authorization Act will enhance our existing capabilities.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 6.