

Statement on the United Nations Security Council's Selection of Kofi Annan To Be Secretary-General *December 13, 1996*

I'm delighted by today's vote in the United Nations Security Council selecting Kofi Annan of Ghana to be the new U.N. Secretary-General. We are hopeful that the General Assembly will concur with the Security Council early next week.

Through his decades of work at the United Nations and in the international arena, Kofi Annan has established excellent working relations with many countries, including the United States. Over the last 4 years as U.N. Under Secretary for Peacekeeping and throughout his impressive career, he has proven himself an able and energetic manager—professional, impartial, well-versed in the issues at hand, and a true proponent of reform. We are confident he will take concrete steps to inspire the world to support the U.N., inspire the U.N. to live up to its ideals, and transform those ideals into action.

Since its founding more than half a century ago, the United Nations has been a vehicle for peace and progress that has served the interests of America and the world. Since taking office, I have worked hard with Congress to sustain America's support for the United Nations.

Precisely because we believe in the United Nations, my administration has also led the fight for far-reaching U.N. reform. To meet the challenges of the 21st century, the U.N. must keep

pace with the times—achieving its work with fewer people and resources, reducing waste and rationalizing priorities, and producing better results at lower costs. The world community needs a United Nations that spends less on overhead and outdated agencies and more on services that directly benefit people's daily lives.

I believe the United Nations must have a leader who is committed to these goals. That is why I decided we needed a new Secretary-General. I knew this would be a controversial decision, but it was the right thing to do.

The outgoing U.N. Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, is an honorable man who has led a great career—from the breakthrough for Middle East peace at Camp David to his leadership of the United Nations as it celebrated its 50th anniversary. Now we must prepare the United Nations for the demands of the *next* 50 years. I am confident Kofi Annan will rise to this task with conviction.

I am committed to work closely with the Congress to meet America's obligations to the United Nations and to make good on our arrears. And I am sure that my nominee for our U.N. Ambassador, Bill Richardson, will work effectively with the new Secretary-General to renew and revitalize this historic organization to take on the challenges of the future.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Cyprus *December 13, 1996*

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. Chairman:)

In accordance with Public Law 95-384 (22 U.S.C. 2373(c)), I submit this report on progress toward a negotiated settlement of the Cyprus question. The previous submission covered progress through July 31, 1996. The current submission covers the period August 1, 1996, through September 30, 1996.

I regret that intercommunal violence, including unprecedented killings of civilians, dominated events in Cyprus during this reporting period. These incidents raised intercommunal

tensions to their worst level in many years and complicated efforts aimed at achieving a lasting solution to the Cyprus dispute. In meetings with the two Cypriot communities and the governments of Greece and Turkey, my representatives noted that the violence underscored the unsustainability of the status quo and the need for redoubled efforts toward a negotiated settlement. They advised that provocative rhetoric and actions be avoided to permit intercommunal relations to move onto a more constructive track.

Similar calls were made by the United Nations and the European Union.

Notwithstanding the tragic events of August and September, my Administration remains committed to promoting a lasting peace on the island. Given the urgency of the current situation, we are appealing again for the implementation of practical measures to reduce the potential for conflict. We remain hopeful that both

sides will recognize the importance of such measures and put them into immediate effect.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Jesse Helms, chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.

The President's Radio Address *December 14, 1996*

Good morning. Today we're taking important new steps to make adoption easier and to move children out of foster care faster. These efforts will help to give even more children what every child needs and deserves, loving parents and a strong and stable home.

I'm delighted to be joined in the Oval Office today by a remarkable group of children and parents who know firsthand the tremendous possibilities of adoption and by the First Lady, who has worked so long and hard on this issue and whose efforts have made today possible.

I'm especially pleased to be able to take this action now, in this season of hope and light. The holidays we celebrate this month teach us that through faith and love we can truly repair the world. I can think of no better way to fulfill the promise of this season than to bring a child into a family and a family to a child.

There are more than 450,000 children in the Nation's foster care system. They are placed there because of abuse, neglect, or a home life that is neither safe nor secure. While most of these children eventually return to their original homes, nearly 100,000 of them simply don't have that option. Those children wait far too long, typically 3 years or more, to find permanent homes and families to love them.

Promoting adoption has been at the heart of our administration's efforts to protect our children and strengthen our families. Earlier this year I was proud to sign a \$5,000 tax credit to help families adopt children. We put an end to racial preferences for adoption. No longer can laws keep children of one race from nurturing arms of adoptive parents of another. This is a good start, but we must do more.

That is why I have just signed a Presidential directive with a clear goal: We will double the number of children we move from foster care to permanent homes, from 27,000 a year today to 54,000 a year by the year 2002. With this effort we're saying no child should be trapped in the limbo of foster care, no child should be uncertain about what the words "family" or "parents" or "home" mean, particularly when there are open arms waiting to welcome these children into safe and strong households where they can build good, caring lives.

As part of this initiative, I'm directing the Secretary of Health and Human Services, Donna Shalala, who is also with us today, to launch an extensive effort to determine what steps we must take to meet our goal. I want the Secretary to report back to me with her recommendations in 60 days. This report must tell us how we can help States set and meet urgent new adoption targets. It must describe how we can improve coordination among local, State, and Federal authorities so that every community has access to the best ways to encourage adoption. And it must outline what sensible financial incentives we can provide States to raise adoption rates.

I also want the Secretary to determine what additional changes we can make in Federal laws and regulations to ensure that children won't get trapped in foster care. And I want to know if there are any new provisions we can put in place to move children through the system faster and to protect them when they leave.

There are other steps we are taking immediately. I'm instructing the Departments of Treasury, Labor, Commerce, and Health and