Message to the Senate Transmitting the United Nations Convention To Combat Desertification
August 2, 1996

To the Senate of the United States:

I transmit herewith, for the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, with Annexes, adopted at Paris, June 17, 1994, and signed by the United States on October 14, 1994. The report of the Department of State is also enclosed for the information of the Senate.

The purpose of the Convention is to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought on arid, semi-arid, and dry sub-humid lands through effective action at all levels. In particular, the Convention addresses the fundamental causes of famine and food insecurity in Africa, by stimulating more effective partnership between governments, local communities, non-governmental organizations, and aid donors, and by encouraging the dissemination of information derived from new technology (e.g., early warning of impending drought) to farmers.

The United States has strongly supported the Convention’s innovative approach to combatting dryland degradation. I believe it will help Africans and others to make better use of fragile resources without requiring increased development assistance. Ratification by the United States would promote effective implementation of the Convention and is likely to encourage similar action by other countries whose participation would also promote effective implementation.

United States obligations under the Convention would be met under existing law and ongoing assistance programs.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to this Convention and its Annexes, with the declaration described in the accompanying report of the Secretary of State, and give its advice and consent to ratification.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
August 2, 1996.

Letter to Speaker of the House of Representatives Newt Gingrich on Proposed Legislation on Illegal Immigration Enforcement
August 2, 1996

Dear Mr. Speaker:

Reversing decades of neglect, this Administration has dedicated unprecedented resources and enforcement effort to curtailing illegal immigration. Our comprehensive strategy to restore the rule of law to illegal immigration enforcement has done more in three years than was done in thirty years before. It includes:

1) Gaining control of our borders. This Administration is deploying more Border Patrol agents than any previous Administration. In FY 1996, we will deploy an additional 1,000 new and reassigned agents. Overall, the Administration has increased the number of Border Patrol agents at the southwest border by 40% since 1993. For the first time, Border Patrol agents are being equipped with the high technology resources needed to do the job, including sensors, night scopes, computers and encrypted radios. Strengthened anti-smuggling efforts have reduced the criminal transport and exploitation of smuggled aliens.

2) Safeguarding the interests of legal workers. This Administration is the first to initiate effective enforcement of employer sanctions and worksite standards. In addition, I issued an Executive Order to keep federal contracts from going to businesses that
knowingly hire illegal workers. We are also
testing a computer work authorization
verification system and are creating more
fraud-resistant immigration documents.
3) Removing criminal and other deportable
aliens from the country. In 1995, this Ad-
ministration removed a record number of
criminal and other illegal aliens from this
country—74% more than in FY 1990.
Most of H.R. 2202, the Immigration in the
National Interest Act, supports the steps we
have taken. I continue to urge Congress to pass
these provisions and present me with the addi-
tional tools that I need to continue the progress
we have made.
However, there is a right way and a wrong
way to fight illegal immigration. The Gallegly
Amendment and the compromise being consid-
ered during the conference process would result
in kicking children out of school and onto the
street. The street is no place for children to
learn; children should be in school. This pro-
posal is an unacceptable and ineffective way to
fight illegal immigration. And the proposed com-
promise—which will still require states to verify
the immigration status of all children, and per-
mit states to exclude those who cannot afford
to pay tuition—is as objectionable as the original
provision. Congress should reject it.
If the immigration bill contains this provision,
I will veto it. We can agree on so much in
the legislation that would help what we are al-
ready doing. Let us move forward with illegal
immigration enforcement legislation without this
misguided measure.
Sincerely,
BILL CLINTON
NOTE: This letter was released by the Office of
the Press Secretary on August 3.

The President’s Radio Address
August 3, 1996

Good morning. Today I’m pleased to an-
ounce a major step for protecting the health
and safety of all Americans, especially our chil-
dren. In a few moments I’ll sign into law legisla-
tion that will revolutionize the way we protect
our food from harmful pesticides. This is a posi-
tive and hopeful time, an age of enormous possi-
bility for our people, a chance for us to build
a country and a world that is stronger and safer
and more full of opportunity than any that has
existed before.
The way we will master this moment of
change is the way we always have, by meeting
our challenges and holding fast to our enduring
values. Central among these is the belief that
American families are owed some basic security.
They should know that the food they eat and
the water they drink will not make them sick.
From the day I took office I’ve worked hard
to meet this fundamental promise. We strength-
ened and expanded the community right-to-
know law, which requires industries to tell our
citizens exactly what substances are being re-
leased into the world around us. Last year we
put in place strong new protections to ensure
that the seafood we eat is safe, and last month
I announced steps to revamp our meat and
poultry inspection system for the first time in
90 years.
Today we add the cornerstone to the solid
foundation we’ve built for America’s families,
the Food Quality Protection Act. Three years
ago I proposed reforms to overhaul and
strengthen the way we regulate pesticides. This
landmark legislation meets the goals I set forth
then. I like to think of it as the “peace of
mind” act, because it will give parents the peace
of mind that comes from knowing that the fruits,
vegetables, and grains they set down in front
of their children are safe.
This legislation is long overdue. The old sa-
guards that protected our foods from pesticides
were written with the best intentions, but
they’re simply no longer up to the job. Bad
pesticides have stayed on the market too long;
good alternatives have been kept out. There are
strong protections against cancer but not against
other health dangers. There is no uniform stan-
dard for what is safe.
Those weaknesses in the present law put us
all at risk but especially our children. According
to the National Academy of Sciences, infants