

Statement on the National Economy February 7, 1997

Today we learned that during the full 4 years of my first term, the economy added 11.5 million new jobs—the first time any administration has ever created more than 11 million jobs and well above the 8 million new jobs I had set as our goal. The combined rate of unemployment and inflation was lower than during any other administration since Lyndon Johnson was President. And the deficit fell by 63 percent,

from \$290 billion in 1992 to \$107 billion in 1996. Now we must continue our work of balancing the budget while investing in people. The budget I released yesterday will balance the budget by 2002, contributing to continued strong growth with low inflation. I look forward to working with congressional leaders to pass a balanced budget that maintains our crucial investments in education and training.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Cyprus February 7, 1997

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

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

The tragic violence on Cyprus in August and September was detailed in my last report. Sadly, included in this report is an account of an additional killing on October 13.

Nonetheless, these senseless acts need not be repeated. The United Nations has been working very hard to obtain agreement on a series of practical measures to reduce the prospects for further violence along the Island's cease-fire lines. My Administration fully supports the U.N. package. A U.S. interagency team that visited the region put the issue on its agenda and urged the parties to implement all the steps in the U.N. package.

Given the events of the past summer and fall, we are disappointed that the United Nations attempts to obtain this agreement have not yet succeeded. We will continue to press the issue

with the parties. Cooperation on these steps, although modest, could have a beneficial effect on larger settlement efforts.

Although it is properly the subject of my next report, I should also note my concern about the recent decision of the Government of Cyprus to purchase SA-10 anti-aircraft missile systems and the resulting threats of a military strike from Ankara. We have forcefully made our concern known to both governments. At the same time, we remain committed to pursuing a comprehensive settlement on Cyprus. As Secretary Albright stated during her confirmation hearings: "We are prepared to play a heightened role in promoting a resolution in Cyprus, but, for any initiative to bear fruit, the parties must agree to steps that will reduce tensions and make direct negotiations possible."

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.

Message on the Observance of Id al-Fitr February 7, 1997

On behalf of all Americans, I want to extend greetings to all Muslims in the United States and around the world as you celebrate Id al-Fitr.

This celebration, which marks the end of a month of fasting and sacrifice, is an occasion for rejoicing. It is an opportunity for Muslims to gather in joy, as well as in remembrance of those less fortunate.

It is also an opportunity for all of us to rededicate ourselves, not only to achieving spiritual growth, but also to the cause of peace

between all peoples of the earth. It is our common challenge and our shared responsibility to create a better world for ourselves and our children.

To all who practice the faith of Islam, in the United States and abroad, Hillary and I extend our very best wishes. May peace be with you and your families, and may God grant you health and prosperity now and in the year ahead.

BILL CLINTON

The President's Radio Address February 8, 1997

The President. Good morning. This morning the Vice President and I are going to talk about the progress we've made to bring 21st century technology to our students and our schools.

In my State of the Union Address Tuesday night, I issued a call to action to all Americans to prepare our people for the 21st century. The very heart of this mission and my number one priority these next 4 years is to give our children the best education in the world.

Education is about opportunity, about giving our children the tools to make the most of their God-given potential. This is a goal every American must share for every other American. That's why I'm calling for a new, nonpartisan commitment to education. During the cold war, America had a bipartisan commitment to foreign policy and politics stopped at the water's edge. Today, education is a critical national security issue for our future, and our politics must stop at the schoolhouse door.

My plan calls for world-class standards for students, teachers, and schools. It calls for expanding Head Start, rebuilding crumbling schools, opening the doors of college wider than ever before, and ensuring that workers can learn and earn for a lifetime.

To give our children the best education, we must help them to harness the powerful forces of technology. That's why we've challenged

America to connect every classroom and library to the Internet by the year 2000. For the first time in history, children in the most isolated rural towns, the most comfortable suburbs, and the poorest inner-city schools will have the same access to the same universe of knowledge.

We've come a long way toward meeting that goal, and we owe much of that progress to the leadership of the Vice President who will now say a few words about our efforts.

[At this point, the Vice President made brief remarks.]

The President. Thank you, Mr. Vice President. We are making a lot of progress. Today we're issuing a report prepared by Secretary Riley and the Department of Education that shows that 65 percent of our schools are now connected to the Internet, almost double the number of schools connected in 1994. But it's not enough to connect every school; we must connect every classroom and every library as well. Since 1994, we have more than quadrupled the number of classrooms with a direct link to the Internet, but the vast majority still do not have access. That's why we're now launching an aggressive, three-part plan to finish the job.