

Fourth Congressional District; and David J. Leland, chairman, Ohio Democratic Party.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Waiver on Most-Favored-Nation Trade Status for Vietnam

March 9, 1998

To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to section 402(c)(2)(A) of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended (the "Act"), I have determined that a waiver of the application of subsections 402(a) and (b) with respect to Vietnam will substantially promote the objectives of section 402. A copy of that determination is attached. I also have received assurances with respect to the emigration practices of Vietnam required by section 402(c)(2)(B) of the Act. This message constitutes the report to the Congress required by section 402(c)(2).

Pursuant to subsection 402(c)(2) of the Act, I shall issue an Executive order waiving the ap-

plication of subsections (a) and (b) of section 402 of the Act with respect to Vietnam.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
March 9, 1998.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 11. The related memorandums of March 9 and the Executive order of April 7 are listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks Prior to Discussions With United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan and an Exchange With Reporters

March 11, 1998

President Clinton. Let me begin by saying that I'm delighted that the Secretary-General is here. We share a strong commitment to curtailing the threat of weapons of mass destruction in general and to continuing the work in Iraq. And again let me say how pleased I am at the agreement that he worked out with Iraq to continue the inspections, as well as the access which has been provided to the UNSCOM inspectors which was previously denied. All that is encouraging.

Now, I think we have to remain vigilant. The last 6 days is not the same as the next 6 months, but it's all very hopeful. And the Secretary-General deserves a lot of appreciation from the United States and from all Americans for the work that has been done.

Secretary-General's Agreement With Iraq

Q. Mr. President, are you both on the same wavelength in terms of what would happen if

there is a breach in the agreement in the aftermath of that implementation? We understand there's some little friction.

President Clinton. Well—

Secretary-General Annan. Between the President and me, or the President and someone else?

Q. Between the President and you.

Secretary-General Annan. I see. Okay.

President Clinton. Well, over the weekend the Secretary-General said he thought that under the resolution there would have to be some consultations before any military force could be taken or used. We believe that the resolution gives us the authority to take whatever actions are necessary. But of course, we would consult. It would be unthinkable that we wouldn't do that. We do that all the time anyway. I spent an awful lot of time on the telephone with large numbers of world leaders in the last several weeks as this difficulty has unfolded, and so

I'm not sure there is a conflict between our positions.

Q. What do you think, Mr. Secretary-General?

Secretary-General Annan. I think what the President has said is exactly what I said on television on Sunday. And not only was the President himself informed, as you will recall, Mrs.—the Secretary of State Albright consulted Council members, Ambassador Richardson, Secretary of Defense Cohen—and so there was consultation even this time around. So the consultation is an ongoing process and part of the way we do business in the international community. And I agree with what the President has said.

Q. Mr. President, what do you think about Senator Lott's criticism that this agreement is a sellout?

President Clinton. I just don't believe it is. The agreement on its own terms is clearly not a sellout. The agreement on its own terms preserves the integrity of the UNSCOM inspections. It does add some diplomats to the inspection process in the Presidential sites, but if the agreement is complied with—and again, I think the Secretary-General did a good job working through these issues over the weekend—then we will be able to do what the United States has always wanted, which is to complete the inspection process.

Again, let me say—I know I don't need to beat this dead horse, but I think it's worth repeating one more time. I see this issue with Iraq in the larger context of the threat I believe will be presented to the world for the next few decades from biological and chemical and perhaps even, God forbid, small-scale nuclear weapons—a different sort of weapons of mass destruction threat than we have faced in the past. And world leaders simply have to come to grips with the potential that is out there for organized groups—not just nations but terrorist groups, narcotraffickers, international criminals—to make and deploy such weapons for their own purposes, so that this is very important on its own merits. But it's also very important as the first of what I believe will have to be a many, many year effort by all peace-loving people to deal with this issue.

Independent Counsel's Investigation

Q. Mr. President, how would you feel about testifying or talking to the grand jury and in some way giving your side of the story in the ongoing controversy?

President Clinton. Well, you know I'm not going to talk about that today. I can't. I've got to do the work that the people of this country hired me to do, so I can't—I'm not going to discuss that.

Q. Sir, with your pledge to cooperate fully, as you mentioned when this story first broke—

Secretary-General Annan. I wish you would concentrate on my issues.

President Clinton. I just don't have anything else to say about it.

Tobacco Legislation/Kosovo

Q. Sir, are you going to embrace the Conrad bill for tobacco, sir?

President Clinton. Let me say—I'd like to answer that question and then, if I could, I'd like to make one comment about Kosovo before you leave.

I have said that the Conrad bill embraces the principles that I feel strongly about. I haven't reviewed all of its provisions, and I'm not sure exactly what it does, for example, on the tobacco farmer issue, but in general I think Senator Conrad has put out a very good bill. And what I hope will happen is that either his bill will attract bipartisan support or that it will lead to a bipartisan bill reflecting the principles that I've outlined in the tobacco settlement—for the tobacco settlement.

I personally believe, even though there are now less than 70 scheduled work days left in this year, that Congress ought to have no higher priority than to get this done. We need to do this and get this behind us. There are a thousand lives a day on the line. We do not need to wait until next year.

Let me just make one comment if I might about Kosovo, because the Secretary of State has just returned from an arduous trip. The United States and I condemn in the strongest possible terms excessive violence that has led to the death of innocent civilians there. We believe the cause of it is the inadequate response by the Serbian Government to the legitimate concerns of the Albanian minority in Serbia, but majority in Kosovo.

I believe that the decision that the Secretary and other world leaders reached in the last few days, the reimposition of the sanctions, and the strong statements that were made coming out of the Contact Group, and the unity of the

countries gives us some hope that we can resolve this. But this is a matter of great concern to me; I know it's of great concern to the Secretary-General. We do not want the Balkans to have more pictures like we've seen in the last few days, so reminiscent of what Bosnia endured. And I just want to make it absolutely clear that to me it's a very serious issue.

Secretary-General Annan. I agree.

Q. [Inaudible]—consider military action, sir, as your Secretary of State has said in the past, and others?

President Clinton. We believe that no option should be ruled in or out now. But the Secretary of State, along with all of her colleagues—and there's been remarkable unanimity on this—they've taken a position that gives us a chance to avoid further bloodshed by all parties under all conditions. That's what I want.

Q. Have you been in touch with Milosevic?

President Clinton. Not directly, I have not.

President's Planned Visit to Africa

Q. Will you have some travel tips on Africa for the President?

Secretary-General Annan. I think I'll be discussing a few interesting things, and I have one or two ideas that I would want to put to the President. I think it's great that he's going to Africa, and I think it's good for U.S.-African relationship, and the entire continent is excited

that for the first time a sitting U.S. President is doing this. And it's a sign that U.S.-African relationship is on the upswing. And I'm very pleased about that.

Independent Counsel's Investigation

Q. Mr. President, will the American people hear your version in the Lewinsky matter?

Press Secretary Mike McCurry. Thank you, everyone. We're done. And the President has already answered that question. Good-bye.

Q. Do you all—

Press Secretary McCurry. No, we're done.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. [Inaudible]—Middle East—[inaudible]?

President Clinton. Well, we're going to discuss that. I hope it will. We're working very hard on that. We're doing everything we can to get it back on track. And I hope we can have a chance to talk about it.

Q. Will this visit have helped in some way?

President Clinton. It certainly can. It certainly can.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:55 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Slobodan Milosevic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks on the Observance of International Women's Day March 11, 1998

Thank you. Thank you very much, Doctor. And to all our distinguished guests here today, let me welcome you and say that I have rarely enjoyed anything in this room as much as I have what has already happened.

I've told this story before, but I feel just like I did the first time I gave remarks, a speech, as a public official. It was at one of these civic banquets, and it started at 6 o'clock in the evening. Everyone in the audience was introduced, hundreds of people—except three people, and they went home mad. [Laughter] Five people spoke before me. I got up to speak at a quarter to 10, and the man who introduced me did not do nearly as good a job as our

distinguished guest from Thailand—he said, "You know, you could stop here and have had a very nice evening." [Laughter] Well, we could certainly stop here and have had a very fine occasion.

Let me begin by thanking the Secretary-General for being here. We've had a very good meeting, just before we came over here, to talk about our shared goal of preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction and of securing Iraq's compliance with its obligations under the U.N. Security Council resolutions.

The Secretary-General deserves the thanks of all Americans for securing the agreement with