

long-term interest for the IMF to be involved in trying to stabilize those Asian economies and help them to recover.

In our personal interest—how can we expect to be the leader of the world and also to benefit personally, economically from a system that we won't contribute to and we won't pay our fair share on? I think virtually every American now believes—or at least a huge majority—when it comes to the United Nations, that in this interdependent world we should share responsibilities. I think people liked it when we shared responsibilities in Haiti, when we shared responsibilities in Bosnia.

And we're saying to the world, "Yes, we want to continue to lead the world toward peace and freedom. We understand this is an important part of our security and our prosperity, but we're having a little political spat in the United States, and we don't think we ought to pay

our dues to the U.N. We think that different rules apply to us, and we have a right not to pay our way, so we can have this fight over an issue that is unrelated to our U.N. responsibilities or our IMF responsibilities." I don't think that is a responsible, mature message to send to the world by the leading country in the world.

I think that if we want to lead, we ought to lead, and we ought to lead by example, by paying our way. That's what I believe, and I hope that I'll be able to prevail upon Congress to make some progress in that direction.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:55 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Fernando Cardoso of Brazil.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on International Monetary Fund and United Nations Funding

April 28, 1998

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. Leader:)

I am writing with respect to the treatment of International Monetary Fund (IMF) and United Nations (UN) funding in the pending supplemental appropriations conference.

I am pleased that both Houses have approved needed funding for domestic disaster relief and defense. I urge Congress to approve this funding as I requested it, without violating the "fire-walls" agreed to in last year's balanced budget deal or including objectionable extraneous measures.

However, I am deeply concerned that the conference report may not include the funding I have requested for the IMF. Delay or failure to approve the full IMF requests could undermine our capacity to deal with threats to world economic stability and could leave us unable to protect American workers, farmers, and businesses in the event of an escalation or spread of the Asian financial crisis or a new crisis.

I am also deeply concerned by the possibility that the conference will not include payment of our UN arrears. The failure to provide the full request in this bill could jeopardize our

chance to affect negotiations starting in May on lowering U.S. dues and would undermine U.S. leadership in the international community.

Some would link passage of IMF funding and UN arrears to legislation related to international family planning. There are deep convictions on both sides of this debate, which should be settled on its own merits—and not used to sidetrack other legislation on matters vital to our nation's well-being.

I urge you in the strongest possible terms to include the full requests for the IMF and UN arrears in the bill now in conference.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives; Trent Lott, Senate majority leader; Thomas A. Daschle, Senate minority leader; Richard K. Armey, House majority leader; and Richard A. Gephardt, House minority leader.