

May 7 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1998

showcase and support women's role in the economic and political life of their society. The women of Northern Ireland—wives, mothers, and daughters—have borne an enormous share of the trauma of the Troubles. Now, their participation will be essential to build a future of peace and reconciliation. I've asked the First Lady to travel to Belfast to take part in this important conference.

We have seen around the world how Americans have rallied to help the lands of their ancestors. I hope the Irish-American community will continue to support the voices of peace in Northern Ireland. My administration will continue to do all we can to foster hope and healing in Northern Ireland and to help its people build a new age of peace for their families and future generations.

Statement on Senate Action on Internal Revenue Service Reform Legislation *May 7, 1998*

I am very pleased that IRS reform took a major step forward today with bipartisan passage of the Senate bill. We've worked hard to give the American people an IRS that is fairer and more responsive to their needs and to support the many dedicated IRS employees who do want to serve them well. We've made progress, and final passage of this reform bill will help our efforts to give Americans the modern, customer-friendly IRS they deserve.

Vice President Gore and Treasury Secretary Bob Rubin last year completed a top-to-bottom review of customer service at the IRS. This effort has launched a complete revamping of customer service at the IRS. IRS offices and phones are open longer, problemsolving days have been instituted, and independent citizen advocacy panels are being launched. I've also appointed a new kind of IRS Commissioner. Charles Rossotti is an experienced businessman who understands technology and understands customer service. Certainly, not every problem

will be solved overnight, but our new Commissioner is committed to ongoing reform and to correcting problems when they arise.

The Senate bill, like the House bill, will provide Commissioner Rossotti the tools he needs to succeed, and it will expand taxpayer rights. The new personnel flexibility provisions will allow the IRS to bring in talent and expertise from the private sector. The bill provides taxpayers with a stronger Taxpayer Advocate. It also advances the important goal of expanding electronic filing of tax returns to make it easier for taxpayers.

I urge the House and Senate to act quickly and send me a bill to sign that expands taxpayer rights and moves us forward towards delivering an IRS the American people deserve. We will continue to work with the Congress on a bipartisan basis on a final bill that advances our shared goals, that avoids unintended benefits for noncompliant taxpayers, and that is consistent with our commitment to fiscal discipline.

Remarks to the Arab American Institute Conference *May 7, 1998*

Thank you, Jim. To Elie Abboud and Fuad Ateyeh, all the members of the Arab American Institute, the National Arab American Business Association, Palestinian American Congress; to Prince Bandar and the members of the diplomatic corps—all of you, thank you for coming. My fellow Americans: I like getting advice from

Jim Zogby's mother. [*Laughter*] And she has a remarkable read on the world. Her son John, a renowned pollster, has nothing on her. In fact, I think her numbers are better than his for me sometimes. [*Laughter*] I also want to say a special word of appreciation to Jim for his advice over the years. He is a remarkable voice