

May 20 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1998

- Tough industry-wide and company-specific lookback surcharges that will finally make reducing youth smoking the tobacco companies' bottom line;
- Protection for all Americans from the health hazards of secondhand smoke;
- No antitrust exemption for the tobacco industry;
- Strong licensing and anti-smuggling provisions to prevent the emergence of contraband markets and to prosecute violators;
- A dedicated fund to provide for a substantial increase in health research funding, a demonstration to test promising new cancer treatments, a nationwide counteradvertising campaign to reduce youth smoking, effective state and local programs in tobacco education, prevention, and cessation, law enforcement efforts to prevent smuggling and crackdown on retailers who sell tobacco products to children, assistance for tobacco farmers and their communities, and funds for the states to make additional efforts to promote public health and protect children; and
- The elimination of immunity for parent companies of tobacco manufacturers, an increase in the cap on legal damages to \$8 billion per year, and changes to ensure that the cap will be available only to tobacco companies that change the way they do business, by agreeing to accept sweeping restrictions on advertising, continue making

annual payments and lookback surcharges even if those provisions are struck down, make substantial progress toward meeting the youth smoking reduction targets, prevent their top management from taking part in any scheme to promote smuggling, and abide by the terms of the legislation rather than challenging it in court. Because the First Amendment limits what we can do to stop the tobacco companies' harmful advertising practices—which lure so many young people to start smoking—we can do far more to achieve our goal of reducing youth smoking if the companies cooperate instead of tying us up in court for decades. If a cap that doesn't prevent anybody from suing the companies and getting whatever damages a jury awards will get tobacco companies to stop marketing cigarettes to kids, it is well worth it for the American people. I, therefore, oppose the Gregg Amendment to strike the liability cap.

I strongly support these improvements, and I urge the Senate to pass this legislation without delay.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Trent Lott, Senate majority leader, and Thomas A. Daschle, Senate minority leader. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

## Radio Remarks on Cuban Independence Day

May 20, 1998

I want to say hello to all listeners of Radio Marti. On behalf of the people of the United States, I offer you warmest wishes on this Cuban Independence Day.

The United States is determined to help Cuba achieve a peaceful transition to democracy. And as part of our effort, I announced in March that the U.S. would permit direct humanitarian flights, transfers of money from families in the United States to relatives in Cuba, and streamline procedures for the sale of medicines to your country.

These steps are aimed at building on Pope John Paul's historic visit to Cuba, increasing humanitarian relief and supporting the role of the church and other elements of civil society. We're committed to helping Cuba's courageous democracy and human rights advocates as they work for a brighter future. We continue to be concerned about those who languish in Cuban jails. We urge the Cuban Government to release all political prisoners and reintegrate them into Cuban society.

Cubans will never be free until Cubans are free to speak out and organize for fundamental

change. We send you a message of hope; we must work together to promote freedom in the only country in our hemisphere which does not yet enjoy it. I believe the Cuban people want democracy and that they will relish it and prosper in every realm—political, economic, and cultural—once they are free.

Before I sign off, let me congratulate the Office of Cuba Broadcasting, home to Radio and TV Marti, as it begins broadcasting from its new headquarters in Miami today. Here, closer to their listeners, Radio and TV Marti will con-

tinue to bring information, hope, and encouragement to the people of Cuba.

My best wishes to all of you, and thank you for listening.

NOTE: The President's remarks were recorded at approximately 11:30 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House for later broadcast, and the transcript was embargoed for release until 1:30 p.m. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

## Statement on the Washington Conference on Humanitarian Demining *May 20, 1998*

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the Washington Conference on Global Humanitarian Demining.

This conference fulfills a commitment I made last October when Secretary Albright and Secretary Cohen announced the "Demining 2010 Initiative." We set as our goal the elimination, by the end of the next decade, of the threat posed by landmines to civilians. Landmine contamination is not only a pressing humanitarian problem, but it affects virtually every aspect of life in countries recovering from civil war or armed conflict.

We long ago realized that reaching this goal would require a concerted effort by the international community, and we have been heartened by the response—your response—so far. Each of the countries and organizations represented at this conference plays a critical role in this effort, and your presence here is testimony to the importance the international community attaches to this enormous task.

Almost 4 years ago I called for the global elimination of landmines. Since then, the U.S.

has been at the forefront of the efforts to rid the world of these hidden killers. Not only have we destroyed millions of landmines in our own arsenal and banned their export, but we have also provided a substantial share of the global resources for humanitarian demining.

The Washington conference is an opportunity for us to set a course for the future together and move toward a goal we all share: to eliminate as quickly as possible the scourge of anti-personnel landmines that kill and maim civilians. This conference builds on the efforts of many other countries and individuals, including, of course, the remarkable accomplishment of the Ottawa process, making this a truly global endeavor.

We have come a long way, but much remains to be done. It is my hope that the Washington conference will inspire a new commitment on the part of all present to ensure an increase in the level and effectiveness of effort and resources the world dedicates to the challenge of humanitarian demining.

## Statement on the Resignation of President Soeharto of Indonesia *May 20, 1998*

We welcome President Soeharto's decision, which provides an opportunity to begin a process leading to a real democratic transition in

Indonesia—an opportunity for the Indonesian people to come together and build a stable democracy for the future. We urge Indonesia's