

July 16 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1998

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Action on Title III of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996

July 16, 1998

Dear _____:

Pursuant to subsection 306(c)(2) of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996 (Public Law 104–114), (the “Act”), I hereby determine and report to the Congress that suspension for 6 months beyond August 1, 1998, of the right to bring an action under title III of the Act is necessary to the national interests of the United States and will expedite a transition to democracy in Cuba.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Robert L. Livingston, chairman, and David R. Obey, ranking member, House Committee on Appropriations; Benjamin A. Gilman, chairman, and Lee H. Hamilton, ranking member, House Committee on International Relations; Jesse Helms, chairman, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., ranking member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; and Ted Stevens, chairman, and Robert C. Byrd, ranking member, Senate Committee on Appropriations.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Jefferson Trust Dinner in Chevy Chase, Maryland

July 16, 1998

The President. Thank you very much, Alan, for all the wonderful work you’ve done. And I thank all the members of the Jefferson Trust. I want to thank Steve Grossman and Carol Pensky and Len Barrack. I want to especially thank Cynthia Friedman for having us in her beautiful home and for—[*applause*]—and for giving us the opportunity to meet your family. Thank you very much.

I want to thank one of our distinguished former chairmen, Chuck Manatt, who also led this party in a very difficult time, for being here, and to say to all of you—I kept trying to think what could I say to all of you tonight who have had to endure so many of my speeches. [*Laughter*]

Audience member. We love them! [*Laughter*]

The President. I think alternative A is just to do it all over again. [*Laughter*] I once—when I was a younger man, or as Hillary and I refer to it, back when we had a life—[*laughter*—Tina Turner gave a concert in Little Rock one night. And she—you know, Tina Turner went into a big decline and disappeared and then made this remarkable resurgence and is now still enormously popular around the world. But anyway, she came to Little Rock to the

place where we had our concerts. And I took about six people to the concert. And the guy that normally seated me when I was Governor, knowing that it was not prudent for the Governor to be on the front row at a rock concert, always put me back about 15 rows but gave me good seats. But he knew I was especially fond of Tina Turner, and so on this night he put me on the front row.

And I never will forget this concert. She sang all these new songs, and she had all of her new musicians. And then at the end, the band began to play “Proud Mary,” which was her first hit. And every time she walked up to the microphone the crowd would scream. So she’d back off and walk up, back off and walk up. Finally she said, “You know, I have been singing this song for 25 years, but it gets better every time I do it.” [*Laughter*] So I could do that. [*Laughter*]

Instead, I think I’d like to just make a couple points tonight about this. First, it’s almost impossible to remember just what a miserable condition we were in as a party after we had won the first two Presidential elections back-to-back since Franklin Roosevelt. And there was an almost bitter determination to try to bring to an

end our ability to function, notwithstanding the fact that we had been, as compared with others, far more open and up front, helpful and forthcoming in trying to deal with the campaign finance questions which were asked. And a number of lionhearted women and men decided that we would not die, and we did not. And you know what the announcement was about our debt being paid down to \$3 million from a staggering sum less than 2 years ago.

So you have done a very great thing, and I hope you will always be proud of it. But I think it's important to remember that what you've done is basically to give America a chance to keep moving forward. You know, I've had a number of interesting experiences in the last few days that have really hammered home to me the incredible opportunity the American people, with your help, have given me to serve at this pivotal moment in our history.

I had quite a magnificent trip to China. But being given the opportunity to debate political liberty and human rights, the role of dissent in society, the role of religious freedom in a society, on Chinese television, directly to the people of China for the first time in history—and I'm not sure I was even aware of the magnitude of it until it was all over, because I was concentrating so hard on not messing up for you—[laughter]—but it was—when it was over, I thought to myself, this is what America can be for people in the 21st century. We can help lift people's material conditions but also to change the way they think about the nature of life, the nature of their relations with their neighbors, and the nature of their relations with the rest of the world.

Today the President of Romania came to see me, and he gave me this incredible picture. I was in Romania almost a year ago today—just a little more than a year ago—and there were somewhere between 150,000 and 200,000 people in the streets in Bucharest—this vast sea of people. They didn't come to see me. They came to see the United States, what they think we can represent to the world and to the future.

A couple of days ago, Hillary and I kicked off this Millennium Project she conceived and is executing—some of you are helping on—to save the Star-Spangled Banner. And I—we said the Pledge of Allegiance with a class of kids—just one class of about 20 school kids—and there were people from at least 8 different racial and

ethnic backgrounds there in this one little class, a real picture of our future.

Today Dick Gephardt and Tom Daschle spoke passionately in favor of the Patients' Bill of Rights at a big caucus meeting of the Democrats in the Congress, but we invited Republicans to come. And two were brave enough to show. [Laughter] One of them, Greg Ganske, is a Congressman from Iowa, and I wish he were a member of our caucus. But I want to tell you what happened.

We were talking about the—the Republicans have offered this alternative patients' bill of rights which, oh, by the way, doesn't cover about 100 million Americans and doesn't give anybody any of the substantive guarantees, and if you get shafted by your HMO, you don't have any right to appeal to anybody, so the bill doesn't do anything really.

But this doctor—this brave Republican doctor who is in the Congress, who's a cosponsor with John Dingell of the House version of the bill we're supporting, got up and said—he was introduced by Dick Gephardt—and said that when he wasn't an active Member of Congress, he gave of his free time to go to Central America, because he was a plastic surgeon, to deal with children with cleft palates.

So Dr.—Congressman Ganske got up there, in a crowd in which he was one of only two Republican Congressmen, and he had a staff person there—he said, "I want you to look at this picture." And the staff member held up this huge picture of this little boy with a horrible, unfixed cleft palate. And the crowd gasped. And he said, "This is not an Indian child from Central America; this is an American citizen. And this young boy was denied the surgery necessary to fix this cleft palate by a company that said it was 'cosmetic' and not covered by the insurance policy." And then he showed the next picture of a young boy with his face fixed anyway. And he was this beautiful, bright-eyed, young boy, smile—I mean, it was unbelievable. You could not breathe in that room.

And I say that to make the point that we invited all of the Republicans in Congress who wanted to come today because our party is trying to advance the cause of America. We belong to a party not so that we can beat up on the other party; we belong to a party because we think it offers us the best vehicle to do what we think is right for our country. And I was very proud to be there with just those two

House Members—the other was Congressman Forbes from Long Island. But we kept the door open to everybody, and more important, we tried to lift the sights of the country.

Hillary spoke at Saratoga Springs to 20,000 people today on the 150th anniversary of the dawn of the women's movement, in this remarkable tour they've had around the Northeast trying to save our national treasures. They went to George Washington's headquarters in the Revolutionary War, something which, unbelievably to me, has never been adequately protected. It was the first military shrine of America, arguably.

So I say all of this just to give you little pieces of the picture that my life is every day with the job that the American people have given me. And what I believe so strongly is that our party has always had a mission of being the instrument of progress.

Thomas Jefferson—this is the Jefferson Trust, so I got this little quote I thought you might be interested—Thomas Jefferson said, "The ground of liberty must be gained by inches, for it takes time to persuade men to do even what is in their own interest." And goodness knows we've had examples of that in the last 6 years. But what I want you to think about on the eve of this '98 election is, since the Civil War, it has been unfailingly true that the party of the President loses seats in the midterm election if the President is in his second term. In the first term it has only failed to happen two or three times. We are going to change that if we continue to put progress ahead of partisanship, people ahead of politics, unity ahead of division, and we have good ideas for America's future.

Because all over the world there are people who are looking to us, and in this country there are people looking to us to have a genuine sense of direction. People are smart enough to know that you'll never solve all the problems of any country at any time; that endemic to human nature is the prospect of failure; that times change. What people want to know is, what is the direction we are taking? And I'll just remind you that in 1992 we ran a campaign that was the most specific, detailed campaign, literally, in American history, where a candidate for President said, these are the ideas on which I am running; these are the policies I will implement. And a distinguished scholar of the Presidency said, as of 1995—and that was 3 years

ago—we had already kept more of our campaign promises than the last five Presidents. And now almost everything we've—almost everything—we've pledged to do in '92 has been done.

And what I want you to do now is to talk to your friends and neighbors and to help us to continue to get the message out that "Yes, we won two elections, and yes, I helped the President, but we represent a certain set of ideas." We believed that you could balance the budget and still invest in the people of this country. We believed you can protect the environment and still grow the economy. We believed you could require able-bodied people on welfare to go to work without hurting their children and taking food and medicine away from them, and without undermining the ability of people who move from welfare to work to be good parents. We believed that you could be tough on people who violate the law and should be punished, and still recognize that we'll never solve the problem until we keep more kids out of trouble in the first place.

Boston didn't go 2 years without a single kid being killed by a gun by jailing all the people who might have done it. They did it by having the most aggressive, systematic, people-oriented prevention strategy in the United States.

We had different ideas. We believed that we could pursue America's commercial interest in the world in a way that was consistent with both our national security and our advancement of human rights and freedom. In other words, we believed that a lot of the debates that had dominated Washington for the last 20 to 30 years were not relevant to the 21st century.

In education, we believed that you could be for preserving public education and putting more money into programs and still lifting standards and having more accountability. We thought all these dichotomies that tend to dominate the easy language of politics were essentially not relevant to the way people wanted to live and the America we wanted to build for the 21st century.

And the consequences have been indisputable. It was not just that we had the right people; we were doing the right things. That's what we have to convince the American people of now. If it takes time to persuade people to do what is in their own interests, if the ground of liberty has to be gained in inches, then it is not enough for my leadership to have been ratified in two national elections. We have to

persuade people not just that we had the right people but that we did the right things; that there is a connection between what is happening in America and what was done in Washington; that it cannot be by accident that we have the lowest crime rate in 25 years and the lowest unemployment rate in 28 years and the lowest welfare rolls in 29 years and the first balanced budget in 29 years and the lowest inflation rate in 32 years and the highest homeownership in history and the fact that we've opened the doors to college to everybody now who's willing to work for a college education and added 5 million children to the ranks of those with health insurance and kept a quarter of a million people with criminal backgrounds from getting handguns. And we have cleaner water, cleaner air, safer food, and we set aside more land in national trust than any administration except those of the two Roosevelts. And we did it all while giving people the smallest Government we've had in 35 years.

Those things did not occur by accident. The ideas were right. And if we can get that message over here, and furthermore, if we can say, look, in spite of all this, all we've really done is make America work again; now it's time to face the big challenges of the 21st century—fixing Social Security and Medicare so the baby boomers have something to retire on without bankrupting our children and our grandchildren; proving we can meet the challenge of global warming, which now, I take almost nobody takes issue with—you look at the way Florida has—Florida had the wettest winter, the driest spring, in history. And then June in Florida was the hottest month in Florida's history, hotter than any July or August in history. The 5 hottest years since 1400 have all been in the 1990's; 1997 was the hottest year ever recorded; 1998 is going to be hotter unless it changes dramatically. We have to prove that we can come to grips with this responsibly, lead other countries to do so, and still grow our economy.

I spoke to the American Chamber of Commerce in Shanghai, not exactly a liberal Democratic stronghold, right? [*Laughter*] The American Chamber of Commerce in Shanghai—I got two rounds of applause, spontaneous—one of them was when I said, you have got to take a leadership role in convincing the Chinese to grow their economy with different energy patterns that we used; otherwise, they're going to choke off their future and destroy their environ-

ment and ruin the health of their people and make it impossible for us to meet the challenge of climate change. All these conservative business people started applauding. Why? Because they know it's true.

We have to prove that we can bring the spirit of enterprise to the urban communities, the rural communities, and the Native American reservations that still haven't felt this economic recovery. We've never done that, not really. And if we can't do it when we've got the lowest unemployment rate in 28 years, we'll never get around to it.

We have to prove that we're serious about health care reform and pass this Patients' Bill of Rights. We have to prove that we're serious about making our elementary and secondary education the world's best, just as our higher education is now. We have to prove we're serious about building one America. And we have to prove that we're serious about engaging the rest of the world to take it where we want to go. That's why—even though I got all those attacks about going to China, it never once crossed my mind to cancel the trip. I didn't care if I only had 10 percent support for it, because I knew it was the right thing to do for America.

So we can beat the odds in this congressional election, and we can do just fine in 2000—if we deserve it. And what we have to do is to sort of cut through all the continuous fog and incoming fire and all this partisan stuff that happens and say, "We didn't just have the right people; we did the right things. Our ideas are good"—point one. Point two: "We're not tired; we're just getting warmed up. We still have big challenges out there, and we want you to join us in facing those challenges."

We've got to make your investment good. You saved the Democratic Party. And our adversaries thought they were going to destroy it. They thought they had a moment in which they could absolutely try to reverse the results of the last election and, in the process, destroy the Democratic Party, and you said, "I don't think so."

It is a very great thing you have done, and you should be very proud of that. But you did not do it for the purpose—as much fun as we're having—of being here with me. [*Laughter*] You did it so we could continue to move this country forward.

So go out there and tell them that: We did the right things. We've got good ideas. You now

have the evidence; come with us. Secondly, we have an agenda for the future: put people over politics, put progress over partisanship, put the unity of country over division, think about your grandchildren in the 21st century. That is the message of the Democratic Party. You've made it possible for us to take it out there. Now let's go out and do it.

Thank you. God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:45 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to Alan D. Solomont, former national finance chair, Steve Grossman, national chair, Carol Pensky, treasurer, Leonard Barrack, national finance chair, and Charles T. Manatt, former national chair, Democratic National Committee; and Cynthia Friedman, national cochair, Women's Leadership Forum.

Message to the Congress on the Emigration Policies and Trade Status of Albania

July 16, 1998

To the Congress of the United States:

I am submitting an updated report to the Congress concerning the emigration laws and policies of Albania. The report indicates continued Albanian compliance with U.S. and international standards in the area of emigration. In fact, Albania has imposed no emigration restrictions, including exit visa requirements, on its population since 1991.

On December 5, 1997, I determined and reported to the Congress that Albania is not in violation of the freedom of emigration criteria of sections 402 and 409 of the Trade Act of

1974. That action allowed for the continuation of most-favored-nation (MFN) status for Albania and certain other activities without the requirement of an annual waiver. This semiannual report is submitted as required by law pursuant to the determination of December 5, 1997.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
July 16, 1998.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 17.

Message to the Congress Reporting on the National Emergency With Respect to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) and the Bosnian Serbs

July 16, 1998

To the Congress of the United States:

On May 30, 1992, by Executive Order 12808, President Bush declared a national emergency to deal with the unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States constituted by the actions and policies of the Governments of Serbia and Montenegro, blocking all property and interests in property of those Governments. President Bush took additional measures to prohibit trade and other transactions with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) (the "FRY (S&M)"), by Executive Orders

12810 and 12831, issued on June 5, 1992, and January 15, 1993, respectively.

On April 25, 1993, I issued Executive Order 12846, blocking the property and interests in property of all commercial, industrial, or public utility undertakings or entities organized or located in the FRY (S&M), and prohibiting trade-related transactions by United States persons involving those areas of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina controlled by the Bosnian Serb forces and the United Nations Protected Areas in the Republic of Croatia. On October 25, 1994, because of the actions and policies of the