

ideals. They built us a country based on a Constitution that was literally made for reconciliation, for the honorable and principled resolution of differences, rooted in the simple proposition that God created us all equal. Therefore, the implicit mandate of the Constitution is that each of us should respect and treat our neighbors as we, ourselves, would like to be treated. It is still our most sure guidepost today. We can build an America where discrimination is something you have to look in the history books to find. But we've still got work to do. If it takes until my last day on this Earth, I owe it to you, to the American people who have been so good to me for so long, to keep working on guiding our people across all the great divides into that one beloved community.

My friends, this is not a time to rest. It's a time to work. Just as God is not finished with any of us yet, we must not be finished with God's work. We must not be finished with seeking peace or justice or freedom, equality, human dignity, and reconciliation. "Foxes have holes; birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has no place to rest his head." There is never going to be an end to this work. And the present moment of promise imposes upon all of us a special responsibility. So let there be no end to your faith, your energy, your courage, and your commitment.

And let me say one other thing. You and I need some help. And this November we'll be given a chance to get it. We have worked hard to make America a better place, and it is. We have worked hard to empower our people, and we have. But now they must use that power to be heard, to say what we shall do and where we shall go. This is a moment of decision for us. Will it be progress or partisanship, people or politics, principle or power?

The Scripture says that we should mount up with wings as eagles; we should run and not grow tired; we should walk and not faint. We should not grow weary in doing good, for in due season we shall reap, if we do not lose heart. For all the many things I am grateful to the Black Caucus for, the most important thing is that I know you have never lost heart and that in your heart there is a longing for the best, not just for African-Americans but for all Americans. We can help them get there, and they can lead us home.

Thank you, and God bless you all. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:17 p.m. at the Washington Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to civil rights activist Rosa Parks; Dorothy Height, chair and president emerita, National Council of Negro Women; and Franklin D. Raines, former Director, Office of Management and Budget.

## Statement on Signing the Military Construction Appropriations Act, 1999 *September 20, 1998*

Today I have signed into law H.R. 4059, the "Military Construction Appropriations Act, FY 1999," which provides funding for military construction and family housing programs of the Department of Defense (DOD).

The Act funds the vast majority of my request for military construction projects, including the military family housing program, other quality-of-life projects for our military personnel and their families, and the DOD base closure and realignment program.

I do have several concerns with the bill. The Congress has chosen to add funds for projects that the DOD has not identified as priorities. In particular, \$243 million is provided for 38

projects that are not in the DOD's Future Years Defense Program. The bill also includes a prohibition on the use of any funds appropriated in the Act for Partnership for Peace Programs or to provide support for non-NATO countries. This restriction could impede NATO activities and could adversely affect future NATO-led military operations.

In addition, the Congress has again included a provision that requires the Secretary of Defense to give 30 days advance notice to certain congressional committees of any proposed military exercise involving construction costs anticipated to exceed \$100,000. In approving H.R.

4059, I wish to reiterate an understanding, expressed by Presidents Reagan and Bush when they signed Military Construction Appropriations Acts containing a similar provision, that this section encompasses only exercises for which providing 30 days advance notice is feasible and consistent with my constitutional authority and duty to protect the national security.

I urge the Congress to complete action on the remaining FY 1999 appropriations bills as

quickly as possible, and to send them to me in acceptable form.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,  
September 20, 1998.

NOTE: H.R. 4059, approved September 20, was assigned Public Law No. 105–237.

## Statement on Fiscal Year 1999 Appropriations Legislation *September 20, 1998*

Today I signed the Military Construction Appropriations Act, an important step for the well-being of our men and women in uniform and their families.

This is an example of what we can achieve when we work together—Congress and the President, Republicans and Democrats—for the public good. Unfortunately, with less than 2 weeks to go before the beginning of the new fiscal year, Congress has yet to pass a budget. In fact, Congress has finished work on only one of 13 appropriations bills—bills that are necessary to keep the Government running and to advance the interests of the American people.

I am pleased that the Senate has taken steps to support the priorities laid out in my budget. But on key investments to improve education, provide affordable child care, expand health care

coverage, protect our environment, and stabilize the international economy, the House of Representatives is moving in the wrong direction. For example, the House is preparing to deny funding for smaller classes, after-school programs, technology in the classroom, and summer job programs. At the same time, some lawmakers have attached controversial and unrelated provisions guaranteed to mire these bills in unnecessary delay.

The new fiscal year begins on October 1. It is time for Congress to put progress ahead of partisanship and focus on the urgent challenges facing the American people.

NOTE: H.R. 4059, the Military Construction Appropriations Act, 1999, approved September 20, was assigned Public Law No. 105–237.

## Remarks to the 53d Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York City *September 21, 1998*

Thank you very much. Mr. President, Mr. Secretary-General, the delegates of this 53d session of the General Assembly, let me begin by thanking you for your very kind and generous welcome and by noting that at the opening of this General Assembly the world has much to celebrate.

Peace has come to Northern Ireland after 29 long years. Bosnia has just held its freest elections ever. The United Nations is actively medi-

ating crises before they explode into war all around the world. And today, more people determine their own destiny than at any previous moment in history.

We celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights with those rights more widely embraced than ever before. On every continent, people are leading lives of integrity and self-respect, and a great deal of credit for that belongs to the United Nations.