

Statement on United Nations Efforts Toward a Political Settlement in Cyprus

December 23, 1998

The United States remains deeply committed to finding a viable solution to the Cyprus problem. A political settlement that would put an end to the tragic division of Cyprus has been and continues to be a high priority of my administration.

The United States strongly supports U.N. Secretary-General Annan's September 30, 1998, initiative to reduce tensions and promote progress toward a just and lasting settlement on Cyprus. The Security Council has adopted UNSCR 1218 endorsing Secretary-General Annan's initiative and requesting him to intensify his efforts to achieve specific objectives to reduce tensions and promote a comprehensive settlement to this longstanding dispute.

The United States wholeheartedly supports this resolution. We will take all necessary steps to support a sustained effort to implement UNSCR 1218.

I am encouraged by the cooperation and engagement demonstrated by the two sides thus far in working with the U.N. I believe 1999 can offer significant opportunities to achieve progress toward a Cyprus settlement that will meet the concerns of the parties involved. The Secretary-General's ongoing initiative is critically important to making those opportunities a reality.

Just as the international community is stepping up its efforts on Cyprus through the U.N., it is important for the Cypriots themselves to support those efforts. I urge all the parties to avoid taking any steps that could increase tensions on the island, including the expansion of military forces and armaments. This will make possible the significant efforts that I and others want to make in order to promote substantial progress toward a political settlement of the Cyprus problem in 1999.

Statement on the National Economy

December 24, 1998

Today we received more evidence that our economy remains solid and strong, more proof that the economic strategy we have had in place for 6 years is serving America's working families well. Last month personal income rose a strong 0.5 percent. That's good news in this holiday season and good news for our future. Over the past year, personal incomes have increased nearly 5 percent, far faster than the rate of inflation.

While we should be pleased with our strong economic progress, now is not a time to rest;

it is a time to build. To ensure that America's economy continues to work for America's working families, we must maintain the three-part economic strategy that has helped produce these remarkable gains. We must maintain our fiscal discipline; continue to invest in our people through education, health care, and research and development; and continue to lead the global economy.

The President's Radio Address

December 26, 1998

Good morning. December is a month for families, a season of celebration and anticipation, especially for our children. But with alcohol

flowing at parties and millions of families taking to the road to see friends and relatives, the holiday season can also be a season of tragedy.

Last December more than 1,300 Americans lost their lives in alcohol-related crashes. Who knows how many presents under the Christmas tree were left unopened, presents for a child killed by a drunk driver.

Today I want to talk about how we can work together to make our roads safer for our families. For a generation, drunk driving has been one of America's greatest public safety challenges. The sight of a car weaving through traffic is an all too familiar and frightening one for many Americans. Over the past decade, spurred to action by grassroots activists such as Mothers Against Drunk Driving, and with the leadership of the Department of Transportation and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, America has worked hard to keep drunk drivers off our roads with increased public awareness, stronger laws, and stricter enforcement.

My administration has made safety our number one transportation priority. In 1995 we helped States make it illegal for anyone under 21 to drive with any amount of alcohol in their system. We put young people on notice: just one drink before driving—one beer, one glass of wine, one shot—and you can lose your license.

There's good news to report. Last year the number of people killed in alcohol-related crashes dropped to an all-time low. For the first time since we started keeping track in 1975, alcohol-related deaths accounted for less than 40 percent of all traffic deaths and dropped by 5 percent among 15- to 20-year-olds. But we have much more to do.

In a report I'm releasing today, the Department of Health and Human Services estimates that in 1996 more than a quarter of all drivers—46.5 million—used drugs, alcohol, or both within 2 hours of driving. Ask any parent, any family, anyone who has lost a loved one to an alcohol related crash: One impaired driver is one too many.

So today I'm announcing that the Justice and Transportation Departments will strengthen

their efforts in the new year, through grants to States and other incentives, to enforce underage drinking laws, to carry out alcohol impaired driving prevention programs, and to pass and enforce strong State highway safety legislation.

The most effective action we can take to make our roads even safer is to set the national impaired driving standard at .08 percent blood alcohol content. No one will ever doubt that a person with that much blood alcohol is unfit to drive after meeting Brenda Frazier. This spring at the White House she described the horror of watching a drunk driver run over her 9-year-old daughter at a school bus stop. The driver's blood alcohol content: .08 percent.

This year I worked with Members of Congress to make .08 the law of the land. Tragically, the special interests blocked this lifesaving measure. I am determined to succeed in setting a .08 standard in the new year. It's the right thing to do. In the meantime, I've asked Transportation Secretary Rodney Slater to work to make .08 the rule on Federal property. I commend the 16 States and the District of Columbia who have already adopted the stricter standard.

But every American family also must take responsibility for safer roads for all our families. Tell your neighbors and teach your own children about the dangers of drunk driving. And as we gather this week to ring in a new year, stop and think before getting behind the wheel. If you've had too much to drink, hand your keys to a designated driver. Together, we can make sure the new year is, indeed, a safe and happy one for all Americans.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 11:04 a.m. on December 24 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on December 26. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 24 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.