

*[President Flores said he was optimistic about Honduras' recuperation from Hurricane Mitch but expressed concern that the difficulties it presented could undermine the democracy his nation had fought so hard to attain. He said the challenge would be to show the Honduran people that the system would work for them. He concluded by thanking the President for coming.]*

President Clinton. Thank you. Let me just say one thing as we break up. I have heard this—and one of the reasons I am grateful that we have Members of our Congress here is that we have these bills up there; they can be addressed now. I think there is an overwhelming understanding in both parties in the Congress that we have to pass the aid bill. And I think

the only thing that we have to do is to make sure that political considerations in America that have nothing to do with Central America, things that are back home don't in any way hold up the consideration of either piece of legislation, and so we will work hard on it.

Thank you.

Oh, I have to get my key to the city. If I wear this to dinner tonight, I'll get a discount. *[Laughter]*

Thank you.

NOTE: The discussion began at 2:52 p.m. in the conference room at the Central Bank. In his remarks, the President referred to Pope John Paul II. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

## Statement on the Kennedy-Murray Amendment to Proposed Education Flexibility Partnership Legislation

March 9, 1999

For the second day in a row, the Republican leadership has continued its efforts to stand in the way of voting on an amendment to finish the job of hiring 100,000 teachers to reduce class size. Communities across the country need to know that Congress will live up to the bipartisan commitment we made last fall to fund this effort. The American people expect us to

work together to improve the education of our students. I call on the Republican leadership to allow an up-or-down vote on more teachers and smaller classes, and I call on every Senator to support the Murray-Kennedy measure to reduce class size and hire well-prepared teachers across the Nation.

## Message to the Congress Transmitting the Report of the National Endowment for the Arts

March 9, 1999

*To the Congress of the United States:*

It is my pleasure to transmit herewith the Annual Report of the National Endowment for the Arts for Fiscal Year 1997.

The Arts Endowment awards more than one thousand grants each year to nonprofit arts organizations for projects that bring the arts to millions of Americans. Once again, this year's grants reflect the diversity of our Nation's culture and the creativity of our artists. Whether seeing a classic theatrical production in Connecticut or

an art exhibition in Arizona, whether listening to a symphony in Iowa or participating in a fine arts training program for inner-city students in Louisiana, Americans who benefit from Arts Endowment grants have experienced the power and joy of the arts in their lives.

Arts Endowment grants in 1997 supported:

- projects in theater, dance, music, visual arts, and the other artistic disciplines, demonstrating that our diversity is an asset—

and helping us to interpret the past, understand each other in the present, and envision the future;

- folk and traditional arts programs, which strengthen and showcase our rich cultural heritage; and
- arts education, which helps improve our children's skills and enhances their lives with the richness of the arts.

The arts challenge our imaginations, nourish our spirits, and help to sustain our democracy.

We are a Nation of creators and innovators. As this report illustrates, the NEA continues to celebrate America's artistic achievements and makes the arts more accessible to the American people.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,  
March 9, 1999.

### Message to the Congress Transmitting the Trade Policy Agenda and a Report on the Trade Agreements Program *March 9, 1999*

*To the Congress of the United States:*

As required by section 163 of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended (19 U.S.C. 2213), I transmit herewith the 1999 Trade Policy Agenda and the 1998 Annual Report on the Trade Agreements Program. This report includes the Annual Report on the World Trade Organization, as

required by section 124 of the Uruguay Round Agreements Act (19 U.S.C. 3534).

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,  
March 9, 1999.

### Remarks to the Legislative Assembly of El Salvador in San Salvador *March 10, 1999*

To the president of the Legislative Assembly, thank you very much for your welcome and your fine comments. To the president of the Supreme Court, the leaders and members of the Assembly; to the other leaders from Central America who are here; members of the diplomatic corps; other distinguished public officials from El Salvador; members of the American delegation. Mr. President, I noticed you said you would officially certify the results of the recent Presidential elections today, so I don't want to jump the gun, but apparently the President-elect is here. And I'm delighted to see him as well.

I have come to Central America with gratitude for our partnership, gratitude for the warm reception that my wife received when she came here recently, and later the wife of our Vice President, with a distinguished delegation of Members of Congress, heads of our Federal

agencies, members of the White House staff, my new Special Envoy to Latin America, former Lieutenant Governor of Florida Buddy MacKay, and others.

For 2 days now, we have been seeing and speaking with many different kinds of people in Nicaragua and Honduras, now in El Salvador, about efforts to recover and rebuild in the wake of Hurricane Mitch. We have met people who have lost everything but hope. I have been moved and humbled by their refusal to be defeated in the face of the deaths of their children, their husbands, their wives, their parents, the loss of all source of income.

I am very proud and grateful that the United States, through our soldiers, our aid workers, and our Peace Corps volunteers, our private donations, have had the opportunity to work alongside the people of Central America in the rebuilding process.