

Statement on the Tenth Anniversary of the *Exxon Valdez* Oilspill March 24, 1999

Ten years after the *Exxon Valdez* ran aground in Prince William Sound, the lingering effects of the worst oilspill in U.S. history are a compelling reminder that we must be ever vigilant in the protection of America's natural treasures.

The spill caused grievous damage to an extraordinary web of nature and to the communities and livelihoods it sustains. A decade later, the healing is well under way, and tough new rules ensure that our entire coast is better protected against the threat of oilspills. With the State of Alaska, we have converted the large

penalty paid by Exxon into lasting protection for salmon streams, fragile coastline, and old-growth forest around Prince William Sound.

Still, more time must pass before the communities and wildlife of Prince William Sound can fully recover. And some of the damage may never be undone. This awful disaster was a wake-up call. And we must work to ensure that its true legacy is a renewed commitment to protect our environment for generations yet to come.

Statement on the Murder of Vice President Luis Maria Argana of Paraguay March 24, 1999

I want to express the profound sadness of the United States for the death earlier yesterday of the Vice President of Paraguay, Luis Maria Argana, and offer our condolences to the people of Paraguay and especially to the family of Vice President Argana. Vice President Argana was shot and killed yesterday by unknown assailants while on his way to the office. We strongly

condemn this brutal murder, which occurred against the backdrop of continued political turmoil in Paraguay. I join the President of Paraguay, Cubas Grau, in urging all Paraguayans to put aside politics and draw together in the interest of all Paraguayans to support the democratic process.

Statement on Proposed Legislation To Strengthen Medicare March 24, 1999

Today the Senate Democrats introduced important amendments to address the major defect of the Republican budget: its complete failure to address Medicare. The majority's budget fails to set aside even one penny of the surplus to strengthen Medicare and does not extend its solvency by a single day. Yet, Medicare faces the same demographic challenges as Social Security and is projected to become insolvent even sooner. Instead of putting Medicare first, the

Republican budget puts top priority on a tax cut that explodes in cost just at the time that baby boomers retire.

I applaud Senate Democratic efforts to fix the Republican budget by putting a higher priority on strengthening Medicare and by making sure that any lockbox includes Medicare. I urge Congress not to miss this historic opportunity to strengthen Medicare.