

## Statement on the National Economy *April 30, 1999*

Today we received more good news for America's working families about our economy. In the first quarter of this year, the U.S. economy expanded at a robust 4.5 percent annual rate. Driven by high investment and vigorous consumer demand, America's expansion continues to grow steady and strong.

Strong growth, high investment, low inflation, and low unemployment are a winning combination and more evidence that we should stick with an economic strategy that has helped usher in a new era of prosperity for the American people.

## Memorandum on Emergency Refugee Admissions Consultations Relating to Kosovars *April 30, 1999*

*Memorandum for the Secretary of State*

*Subject:* FY 1999 Emergency Refugee Admissions Consultations Relating to Kosovars

In accordance with section 207(b) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1157(b)), you are authorized to consult with the appropriate committees of the Congress concerning the authorization of 20,000 emergency

refugee admissions during FY 1999, which would be allocated to Europe for the purpose of admitting Kosovar refugees to the United States.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this memorandum.

## Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on International Travel Expenses of Executive Branch Agencies *April 30, 1999*

*Dear \_\_\_\_\_:*

I am transmitting the following information on international travel in accordance with provisions of section 2505(g) of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, FYs 1998 and 1999, as included in Public Law 105-277, the Omnibus Consolidated and Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act, 1999.

The estimated total obligations for international travel by executive branch agencies in FY 1998 were \$311,261,371. This number excludes obligations for civilian/military relocation expenses due to a permanent change of work station and the deployment of military units. Of that amount, the Department of State accounted for \$112,000,000 or 36 percent. Additionally, the Departments of Agriculture, Com-

merce, Defense, Health and Human Services, Justice, and the Treasury, as well as the U.S. Information Agency and the Agency for International Development all reported obligations close to or in excess of \$10,000,000. In total, these eight agencies account for 51 percent of obligations for international travel during FY 1998. The estimated total number of individuals who traveled was 57,142.

The details of this report are set forth in the enclosed letter from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to C.W. Bill Young, chairman, and David R. Obey, ranking member, House Committee on Appropriations; Benjamin A. Gilman, chairman, and Sam Gejdenson, 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 the Friends of Art and Preservation in Embassies Dinner *April 30, 1999*

Well, let me say to all of you, first, welcome. I want to thank Jo Carole Lauder, Robin Chandler Duke, Ann Gund, everyone else who has worked on this program.

You know, I look forward to this every year. This is a night when I can appreciate what is constant about our Embassies, rather than what is changing in our relationships with the countries involved. *[Laughter]* And I must say that tonight is especially important. I want to welcome the artists, those who have made such generous gifts. Any number of representatives of the governments of other nations are here tonight, and we welcome them, as well. I want to say a special word of thank you to Joel Shapiro for helping to make our new Embassy in Ottawa a showcase of the best in American art.

The Arts in Embassies program is quite a success all around the world. And as you might imagine, Hillary and I, because we have had the opportunity and the responsibility to travel quite a lot, have seen more of the fruits of your labors than almost any other Americans. I can tell you, having spent the night in any number of Embassies, held any number of receptions, one of the things that people always comment on is the art. And many, many people come to see the President when I'm in a given country who don't know anything about our Arts in Embassies program, and so I have become one of your better ambassadors of good will—*[laughter]*—in explaining how we come to have all this magnificent art in our Embassies throughout the world.

Senator Specter, I have never claimed that Congress spent taxpayers' money on it, but neither have I denied it. *[Laughter]*

And as all of you know—and Hillary was talking about some of the art we have in the White House—one of the great pleasures of living here

is just living around the art that is here. And to all of you who have contributed to the art in the White House, many over several decades, I am profoundly grateful for that, as well.

Robin mentioned that this is not the easiest of moments for our country because of what we are trying to achieve in Kosovo. And she said that it was, therefore, especially appreciated that Hillary and I would have you here tonight. I would argue that it's especially important that you be here tonight. And I'd like to read you something that I hope makes the point.

In the springtime of 1941, as fascism spread across Europe, destroying lives and liberties, President Roosevelt spoke at the dedication of the National Gallery here in Washington. His words seemed to me particularly relevant today, and I'd like to share a few of them with you.

He said, "Art is part of the present life of all the living and creating peoples—all who make and build. These paintings are symbols of the human spirit. To accept this work today is to assert that the freedom of the human spirit shall not be utterly destroyed."

All around the world, our American Embassies are helping people to follow the path of freedom and democracy. Our efforts and those of our NATO Allies are standing for that freedom and against the principle of ethnic cleansing, racial and religious exclusivity as a basis for killing and uprooting people and destroying their cultures.

This is a particularly painful thing for any American with any sense of history, for the Serbs were our grand allies in World War II. They stood against Hitler, and they fought bravely. And they have their legitimate historical grievances, as do most ethnic groups in Europe, Asia, Africa, or any other part of the world. We hope to be reconciled with them.