

loophole and raise the age of handgun ownership from 18 to 21. The Senate should likewise put progress over politics and give its strong backing to these reasonable measures to keep guns out of the hands of children and criminals.

I urge Senator Lott to let the Senate keep working on the juvenile crime bill and give every Senator the chance to vote on these common-sense provisions.

Statement on the Sierra Leone Cease-Fire Agreement May 18, 1999

I welcome the signing of a cease-fire agreement today in Lome, Togo, by President Kabbah of Sierra Leone and the leader of the Revolutionary United Front rebels, Foday Sankoh. I want to express my appreciation to my Special Envoy for the Promotion of Democracy in Africa, the Rev. Jesse Jackson, the Economic Community of West African States, and to the U.N. for helping to bring about this agreement which marks an important first step towards peace.

The conflict in Sierra Leone has killed tens of thousands of people—6,000 in the first month of this year alone. Half a million men, women, and children have become refugees, and one-

fifth of Sierra Leone's population has been uprooted.

With the continued commitment and engagement of both parties, the cease-fire and the confidence-building measures outlined in the agreement today can pave the way for the negotiation of a durable peace agreement. I welcome the agreement as a step toward providing for guaranteed safe and unhindered access by humanitarian agencies to all people in need, and hope that the world might soon witness an end to the needless suffering of Sierra Leone's people.

I urge all parties to implement the agreement in good faith.

Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Burma May 18, 1999

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent the enclosed notice to the *Federal Register* for publication, stating that the emergency declared with respect to Burma is to continue in effect beyond May 20, 1999.

As long as the Government of Burma continues its policies of committing large-scale re-

pression of the democratic opposition in Burma, this situation continues to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. For this reason, I have determined that it is necessary to maintain in force these emergency authorities beyond May 20, 1999.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
May 18, 1999.

NOTE: The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.