

July 1 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1999

Lady. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on Export Controls on High-Performance Computers and Semiconductors

July 1, 1999

Today I am announcing reforms to the administration's export controls on high-performance computers (HPC) and semiconductors. These policies will strengthen America's high-tech competitiveness, while maintaining controls that are needed to maintain our national security.

These reforms are needed because of the extraordinarily rapid rate of technological change in the computer industry. The number-crunching ability of a supercomputer that once filled a room and cost millions of dollars is now available in an inexpensive desktop computer. Computers that are widely used by businesses and can be manufactured by European, Japanese, and Asian companies will soon exceed the limits that I established on high-performance computers in 1996. These business computers have become commodities, and next year U.S. and foreign vendors are expected to sell 5 million of them.

Maintaining these controls would hurt U.S. exports without benefiting our national security. Moreover, a strong, vibrant high-tech industry

is in America's national security interests. That is why I have decided to raise the licensing threshold of high-performance computers to so-called tier two and tier three countries. For tier three countries, which present the greatest risk from a national security viewpoint, the administration will continue its policy of maintaining a lower threshold for military end-users than civilian end-users. I have also directed my national security and economic advisers to provide me with recommendations to update our export controls every 6 months.

Due to legislation passed by the Congress in 1997, this change will require congressional approval and a 6-month period before it can go into effect. I will work with the Congress to pass legislation that would reduce this period to one month, so that we can keep up with the rapid pace of technological change. I also want to work with the Congress on a bipartisan basis to explore longer term solutions to how we deal with commodities like widely available computers and microprocessors.

Message on the Observance of Independence Day, 1999

July 1, 1999

I am delighted to join my fellow Americans across the nation and around the world in celebrating Independence Day.

Today we gather with family and friends to commemorate the 223rd anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. In marking this historic event, and in remembering the courage and sacrifice of the patriots and soldiers who fought and died that we might shape our own destiny, we are truly celebrating the birth of our great country.

Every generation of Americans owes a profound debt of gratitude to our Founders for

envisioning a nation that, as President Lincoln so eloquently put it, was "conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal." Inspired by this same vision, we have built together a society in which freedom and democracy do more than enlighten our laws and political institutions—they permeate our culture and way of life. We have only to look at the recent tragic events in Kosovo to recognize how blessed we are to live in a land where life, liberty, and equality are cherished rights, upheld by courts and custom, and where, as we realize more each day, our