

July 27 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1999

Statement on the Organization of African Unity's Framework Agreement for Ethiopia and Eritrea

July 27, 1999

I welcome the announcement by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) that Ethiopia and Eritrea have accepted the OAU framework agreement and the modalities for its implementation, and agreed to steps proposed by the OAU to facilitate implementation of the agreement. This is a significant step toward peace.

We have worked intensively with the OAU in recent weeks to help bring an end to this

devastating conflict. My Special Envoy, Anthony Lake, has just returned from the region, where he met with the leaders of both governments and the OAU. The United States will continue to support the efforts of the OAU under the chairmanship of Algerian President Bouteflika to bring this tragic conflict to a speedy conclusion.

Remarks to the American Legion Boys and Girls Nations

July 28, 1999

Thank you very much. I always look forward to your coming every year because I know we'll have plenty of enthusiasm to light up the old house here. *[Laughter]*

Let me begin by thanking Secretary Riley, who is, I'm almost sure, the longest serving Secretary of Education in American history, and I am quite sure the finest Secretary of Education we have ever had. And I thank him for his service.

I would like to thank the officials of Boys and Girls Nation who are here: the American Legion National Commander, Butch Miller; Boys Nation Director Ron Engel; Director of Activities Jack Mercier, who was a counselor when I was at Boys Nation, in 1904 or whenever—*[laughter]*—a long time ago—1963—Girls Nation Director Dianne McClung, Youth Program Coordinator Kenya Ostermeier.

I'd also like to acknowledge the presence in the audience of some alumni of Boys and Girls Nation: Congressman Jim Ramstad of Minnesota, who was there with me in 1963. Stand up, Jim. *[Applause]* And I see one of my two White House staffers who is an alumnus, Fred DuVal of Arizona, who is here. And Janet Murguia from Kansas is—I don't know if she's here or not, but she went to Girls Nation—a long time after I did. *[Laughter]*

I also can't help noting that—I think the State of Nevada today is represented by Patrick Sergeant. His father, Colonel Steve Sergeant, is the

new Deputy Executive Secretary of the National Security Council here at the White House, and we're glad to have his service.

I want to thank your Boys Nation and Girls Nation officers who are here: Vice President Denise Battle and Vice President John Feeny. If Al Gore were here, he would tell you that's a very important job. *[Laughter]* And I might say it is a very important job.

The Vice President has this great joke. He says every time he votes, we win. *[Laughter]* And as all of you know, we only vote when there's a tie in the Senate. And actually, we've had some of the more important—perhaps one of the two or three most important votes taken in the Senate in my term as President was the vote on the economic plan of 1993, which led to big reduction in the deficit and gave us the biggest leg up on the balanced budget. It was a tie vote, and the Vice President broke the tie. So you might think about that as you contemplate your future. It's a good thing to break ties.

I want to thank President Teah Frederick and President Ryan Rippel for their comments and their example.

I look forward to this day every year, partly because of my own memories of being at Boys Nation and the debates we had. When you talked about the issues you were dealing with—we had this huge debate on civil rights in 1963, and I was one of the four representatives from