

Jan. 21 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 2000

This protocol is an important advance for human rights. At the same time, it fully protects the military recruitment and readiness requirements of the United States. I am committed to a speedy process of review and signature and to working with the Senate on this historic achievement to protect the world's children.

NOTE: The statement referred to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on Involvement of Children in Armed Conflicts, adopted on January 21 by a working group of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights.

Statement on Indications of a Third Consecutive Budget Surplus *January 21, 2000*

Today we received further evidence that our economic strategy of fiscal discipline is working. The tough choices we made on deficit reduction have turned a deficit of \$290 billion in 1992 into a surplus of \$124 billion in 1999—the largest surplus in history and the second consecutive surplus in more than 40 years. The latest financial numbers from the Department of the Treasury indicate that we are on track this year to

reach a third consecutive annual budget surplus. In the last 2 years we have paid down more than \$140 billion in debt, and these numbers confirm that we are continuing to pay down even more debt. I remain committed to maintaining our strategy of fiscal discipline to keep our economy strong and pay down the debt by 2015 for the first time since Andrew Jackson was President.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on the Comprehensive Trade and Development Policy for Africa *January 21, 2000*

Dear _____:

I am pleased to submit the fifth annual report on the Administration's Comprehensive Trade and Development Policy for Africa, as required by section 134 of the Uruguay Round Agreements Act. The past year has seen the broadening and deepening of our economic relations with Sub-Saharan Africa as we pursue common objectives under the Partnership for Economic Growth and Opportunity in Africa and set a course for the 21st century.

For the first time in history, a U.S.-Africa Ministerial meeting was held in Washington in March 1999. The event was attended by 83 ministers from 46 Sub-Saharan countries, as well as representatives from 4 north African nations, the heads of 8 African regional organizations, and 8 members of my Cabinet and 4 agency heads. The Ministerial resulted in the *Blueprint for a U.S.-Africa Partnership for the 21st Century*, a document setting forth common perspectives and plans for U.S.-Africa cooperation on

a series of important issues, including the integration of African states into the global economy, regional integration, development assistance, sector issues including investment, debt, and agriculture, and the broader issues of human resource development, HIV/AIDS, transnational threats, and conflict resolution. We will continue to build on this blueprint in the coming year.

The legislative cornerstone of our Africa trade policy is the African Growth and Opportunity Act. I am pleased that this legislation has been approved by both chambers of Congress, and I look forward to final approval by the Congress of this historic legislation early this year.

The African Growth and Opportunity Act will add further impetus to our Nation's bipartisan efforts to enhance economic growth and strengthen U.S. trade with and investment in Sub-Saharan Africa.

My Administration continues to be guided by the conviction that economic development in