

Statement on House of Representatives Action on Foreign Operations
Appropriations
July 14, 2000

Yesterday the House of Representatives passed a foreign operations bill which includes certain positive elements but is nonetheless deeply flawed. I am pleased that members of both parties joined together to support debt relief for the poorest of the poor nations, as illustrated by the vote on Representative Maxine Waters amendment. While this is an encouraging step, I urge Congress to build on this support by fully funding my request for debt reduction to fully implement the landmark Cologne debt initiative. I am also pleased that a majority in the House supports our efforts to halt the global spread of AIDS. In Africa, AIDS is a leading cause of death and is undermining decades of effort to reduce mortality, improve health, expand educational opportunities, and lift people out of poverty.

However, it is unfortunate and unacceptable that this bill fails to provide the resources necessary to support our efforts to keep building peace and stability around the world. The House bill imposes deep, untenable cuts to U.S. contributions to multilateral development banks, including the International Development Association which provides loans for the world's neediest countries in areas like health, clean water supplies, education, and other infrastructure needed for lasting poverty reduction. It is counterproductive to slash development loans that are aimed at lifting the world's poorest nations from poverty, as they reform their social and economic policies, while providing debt relief to these same nations for the same purpose. To do so undermines efforts to lift these countries from deepest poverty and sends them in the wrong direction just when they are working to reverse the devastating spread of AIDS among their people. This bill also denies funding for other multilateral development banks, in-

cluding draining resources from efforts to encourage developing nations to promote sound environmental policy. We must support the efforts of multilateral development banks, and we must fully fund our obligation to debt relief for the world's poorest nations.

This bill includes deep cuts in military assistance for nations working with the United States to advance stability; in particular, it would drain essential funds necessary to support Mid-East peace. It also cuts funding from the Ex-Im Bank which supports the export of American products overseas.

Support for combating terrorism and nuclear proliferation is inadequate. This bill fails to provide sufficient resources for work with scientists of other nations to reduce the threat of nuclear proliferation, and it denies funds to an administration initiative for anti-terrorism security training. By significantly cutting my request for funds to support Eastern Europe and voluntary peacekeeping, the bill also fails to provide the resources needed to implement a lasting peace in Kosovo and the Balkans and to bring our troops home from that region as quickly as possible.

In addition, Congress should not maintain the unnecessary restrictions on international family planning. We should not impose limitations on foreign nongovernmental organizations' use of their own money or their ability to participate in the democratic process in their own country. The bill also fails to provide sufficient funding for international family planning and other USAID development activities, thereby inhibiting our efforts to increase development assistance to Africa and Latin America. As this bill moves forward, I call on Congress to address the numerous and serious problems in it and to produce a foreign operations bill I can sign.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Review of Title III of the Cuban
Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996
July 14, 2000

Dear _____:

Pursuant to subsection 306(c)(2) of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996 (Public Law 104–114), (the “Act”), I hereby determine and report to the Congress that suspension for 6 months beyond August 1, 2000, of the right to bring an action under title III of the Act is necessary to the national interests of the United States and will expedite a transition to democracy in Cuba.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Jesse Helms, chairman, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., ranking member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; Ted Stevens, chairman, and Robert C. Byrd, ranking member, Senate Committee on Appropriations; Benjamin A. Gilman, chairman, and Sam Gejdenson, ranking member, House Committee on International Relations; and C.W. Bill Young, chairman, and David R. Obey, ranking member, House Committee on Appropriations.

The President’s Radio Address
July 15, 2000

Good morning. Today I want to talk about what we as a nation must do to keep our economic expansion going and extend its benefits to every American.

For more than 7 years now, our Nation has followed a course of fiscal discipline that has paid tremendous dividends for the American people. We made tough choices, cut our deficits, paid down our debt. We’ve strengthened and extended the life of Social Security and Medicare. And we made the investments that matter most for America’s future in education, in health care, in the environment, in science and technology, and in targeted tax cuts.

But in recent weeks, the Republicans in Congress have done an about-face on our strategy of fiscal discipline. Having already passed more than half a trillion dollars in reckless tax cuts, this week they passed a fiscally irresponsible plan to repeal the entire estate tax. Its costs would explode to \$750 billion after 10 years. And every year fully half its benefits would go to just 3,000 families.

But they haven’t been able to provide an affordable Medicare prescription drug benefit for tens of millions of Americans. They haven’t been able to add even a day to the life of Social Security or Medicare. They haven’t done anything new to improve our schools, increase the

minimum wage, expand health insurance coverage for children or parents whose children have coverage, or even to pass a meaningful Patients’ Bill of Rights. And now they seem ready to give up on our bipartisan plan to use Social Security and Medicare surpluses for debt reduction. All these actions are serving special interests, not our national interest.

As we look to the future, if we want to keep this economic expansion going, we have got to keep fiscal discipline at the forefront. That’s why I want to stay on track to pay off our national debt by 2012. That’s why we should dedicate Social Security surpluses to paying down the debt and use savings from debt reduction to extend the life of Social Security to 2057. Also, I support Vice President Gore’s proposal to take Medicare funds out of the budget as well, and to use savings from debt reduction to help extend the life of the Medicare Trust Fund out beyond 2030.

Now, their plan would take all of our projected surplus and spend it all for tax cuts and for the cost of privatizing partially the Social Security system and other spending. Let me ask you something. If someone asked you to sign a contract committing you to spend every penny of your projected earnings for the next 10 years, would you do it? Unfortunately, that’s what the