

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

July 15 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 2000

congressional Republicans want us to do. Most of us would not sign away money we don't have, and neither should America.

That's why I've proposed setting aside \$500 billion as a reserve for America's future, so we can have a national discussion of our priorities and so we're prepared for a rainy day. If we do it responsibly, we'll still have the resources to meet key needs of American families. We can increase our investments in education and health care. We can have the right kind of targeted tax cuts to help Americans modernize our schools, send our children to college, care for sick family members, pay for child care. And we can offer every older American the option of affordable, dependable prescription drug benefits through Medicare.

There's a growing consensus, in the Senate and all across America, that we need a real Medicare prescription drug benefit, not a flawed private insurance program that even the insurance companies admit won't work. I also think we can agree to protect our hard-fought fiscal discipline by pledging to use Medicare surpluses only for debt reduction, as Vice President Gore has urged. I hope Republicans and Democrats would start from there and move forward together on America's other priorities.

In that spirit, I've reached out to Congress and said that if they'll agree to pass a plan that offers affordable Medicare prescription drug

coverage to all seniors and people with disabilities, while protecting our hard-won fiscal discipline, I will sign a marriage penalty relief law.

As yet, the Republican leaders have not yet responded to the Nation's call for a real prescription drug plan. But it's not too late to put progress over partisanship. The American people know what they need, a Medicare prescription drug benefit, investments in health and education, and targeted tax cuts that don't take us off the path of fiscal discipline and debt reduction.

Some people here in Washington already are looking ahead to election day. But let's not get ahead of ourselves. We did not reach this moment of prosperity by accident, but we could lose it through inattention. Remember, how a nation deals with prosperity is just as stern a test of its judgment and values as how it deals with adversity. If we fail that test, the losers won't be political parties or special interests; they'll be our children and our future. But if we succeed, America's best days are still ahead.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 6:46 p.m. on July 14 at Camp David, MD, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on July 15. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 14 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Excerpt of an Interview With Michael Kramer of the New York Daily News

July 16, 2000

Middle East Peace Summit

Mr. Kramer. How's it going?

The President. I'm more optimistic than I was when they got here. This is really important. We might make it. I don't know. God it's hard. It's like nothing I've ever dealt with—all the negotiations with the Irish, all the stuff I've done with the Palestinians before this and with the Israelis, the Balkans at Dayton. What's really troubling is that they know if they make a peace agreement half of their constituencies will have to be angry at them for a while. But I would be totally misleading if I said I had an inkling

that a deal is at hand. That's just not true. But we're slogging.

Group of Eight Summit

Mr. Kramer. Will you leave for Japan on Wednesday?

The President. I hope so. I'm going to do my best to finish here. There's been some progress, but I can't say I know we'll succeed. They're trying. It's so hard. My heart goes out to them. It's really hard. It's the hardest thing I've ever seen.