

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:12 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to dinner hosts Eric and Colleen Hanson; Senator Graham's wife, Adele; Bill Nelson, Democratic candidate for U.S. Senate in Florida, and his wife, Grace; Palm Beach County District 5 Commis-

sioner Burt Aaronson, his wife, Sheila, and son, Daniel; political consultant James Carville; and Republican Presidential candidate Gov. George W. Bush of Texas and Vice Presidential candidate Dick Cheney.

## Statement on the Colorado Initiative To Close the Gun Show Loophole *August 2, 2000*

I commend the citizens of Colorado who took an important step today toward reducing gun violence by submitting nearly twice the number of signatures needed to place an initiative on the State ballot to close the gun show loophole. Colorado voters can now do what Congress has failed to do: close a deadly loophole that allows criminals, juveniles, and other restricted persons to buy guns at gun shows with no questions asked.

With our Nation losing 10 children to gunfire every day, Congress should heed the voices of

millions of Americans concerned about gun violence—not those of the gun lobby—and follow the lead of States like Colorado. While Colorado's progress is encouraging, we should not have to rely on a patchwork of State laws when it comes to protecting our children's safety. Only Congress can pass legislation that protects children all across America. National legislation to close the gun show loophole and keep guns out of the wrong hands should be passed without further delay.

## Statement on Signing the Cross-Border Cooperation and Environmental Safety in Northern Europe Act of 2000 *August 3, 2000*

Yesterday, I signed H.R. 4249, the "Cross-Border Cooperation and Environmental Safety in Northern Europe Act of 2000." This law endorses the administration's Northern Europe Initiative (NEI) and highlights the need for continued international efforts to address the environmental dangers posed by nuclear waste in northwest Russia. I want to express my appreciation to Representative Sam Gejdenson for introducing and ensuring the passage of this important legislation.

We launched the Northern Europe Initiative because we recognized, as the Congress does in this law, the importance of strengthening regional cooperation among the Baltic States, Russia, and all countries bordering the Baltic Sea. Only in this way can we create the stability and prosperity that will lead to full integration of northern Europe, including northwest Russia, into the broader European and transatlantic

mainstream. Our European friends, especially the Nordic countries and the European Union, are full partners in this effort.

The law also highlights the environmental dangers posed by military nuclear waste in northwest Russia. These dangers have been brought to light by the work of courageous independent environmentalists and nongovernmental organizations in Russia and elsewhere. Aleksandr Nikitin, a retired Russian Navy colonel, has made important contributions to the international understanding and study of environmental problems in this region. Both environmentalists and nongovernment organizations face increased challenges today.

We have been deeply involved in helping Russia and its neighbors confront the serious environmental risks that face the Barents Sea, the Baltic Sea, and the people who live around them. We look forward to increased cooperation