AUTHENTICATED
U.S. GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
GPO

I further direct you to submit a schedule of your planned meetings to the NPR staff by March 30 and work with NPR in following through on those meetings.

Fourth: Negotiate, Don't Dictate

It is time to move from a process where lawyers and bureaucrats write volumes of regulations to one where people work in partnership to issue sensible regulations that impose the least burden without sacrificing rational and necessary protections. In September 1993, I asked each of you to identify at least one rule that could be conducted through negotiated rulemaking (or to explain why such could not be done) in order to promote consensual rulemaking as opposed to the more traditional rulemaking that has dominated the regulatory arena.

I now direct you to expand substantially your efforts to promote consensual rulemaking. To this end, you should submit to OIRA, no later than March 30, a list of upcoming rulemakings that can be converted into negotiated rulemakings. I have directed Sally Katzen to review your lists with a view toward making clear to the regulated community that we want to work together productively on even the most difficult subjects.

To facilitate our ability to learn from those affected by regulation, I will amend Executive Order No. 12838 (which requires agencies to reduce the number of advisory committees that they use and to limit the future use of such committees) to allow for advisory committees established for negotiated rulemakings.

I also intend to take additional steps to increase our ability to learn from those affected by regulation. While many laws and rules that limit the ability to regulators to talk with those being regulated were imposed to curb abuse, they now often serve as a barrier to meaningful communication between the regulators and the regulated. To address this problem, and to promote consensus building and a less adversarial environment, I direct you to review all of your administrative *ex parte* rules and eliminate any that restrict communication prior to the publication of a proposed rule—other than rules requiring the simple disclosure of the time, place, purpose, and participants of meetings (as in Executive Order No. 12866). We will also begin drafting legislation that will carve out exemptions to the Federal Advisory Committee Act to promote a better understanding of the issues, such as exemptions for meetings with State/local/tribal governments and with scientific or technical advisors.

I also ask you to think about other ways to promote better communication, consensus building, and a less adversarial environment. Please send your ideas to the Office of the Vice President.

As I said on Tuesday, February 21, 1995, you are to make regulatory reform a top priority. Good government demands it and your full cooperation is crucial.

William J. Clinton

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 6.

Remarks to the Veterans of Foreign Wars Conference

March 6, 1995

Thank you very much, Commander Kent, for that introduction. Ladies and gentlemen, I can tell you from firsthand experience that the VFW is very lucky to have a leader as forceful and as thoughtful as Gunner Kent. I also want to acknowledge the presence here of Secretary Brown and Deputy Secretary Gober; General Sullivan; your adjutant general, Larry Rivers; Charles Durning, who rode over here with me and regaled me with experiences. How lucky we are to have him going out and setting an example, visiting our hospitalized veterans all across the United States. And I appreciate the reception you gave him. I want to recognize the president of your ladies auxiliary, Helen Harsh. I also want to recognize these young people over here from the Voice of Democracy contest, the winners there. I'm glad to see them. I thank you for your support of the young people of this country and for this project. I very much enjoyed having my picture taken with the young people just before we came out, and I got to shake hands with all of them. And they took about 10 years off my life, so I feel pretty spry standing up here. [*Laughter*] I want to thank whoever orga-

nized this for putting the delegates from my home State of Arkansas up here close where I can keep an eye on them during my speech. [*Laughter*] And they were all pretty well-behaved when I walked out. I was glad to see that. Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen.

I want to recognize two veterans of the VFW, Jimmy Gates of Alabama, who has given more than 50 years of service to this organization, and your past national commander, Bob Merrill of California. People like Bob Merrill, who piloted biplanes in World War I and devoted their lives to fighting for their fellow veterans, who have helped the VFW to make a difference in the lives of so many Americans, those are the kinds of people that I think that we ought to keep in mind when we make the decisions that are being made here in Washington about what is in the interest of the veterans of the United States.

It also gives me great pleasure to tell you that just as soon as it comes across my desk, I will sign the bill that will allow the VFW to reform its charter and expand your membership even further.

This year we mark the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II. Many of you fought in that great struggle. Meeting some of the men and women who sacrificed so much for our freedom, whether I met them on the windswept beaches of Normandy, between the crowded rows of the cemetery in England or Italy, or inside the tunnels of the rock of Corregidor in the Philippines, meeting those people has been one of the greatest privileges I've had as President. America owes to them and to all of you a debt that we cannot fully repay.

With their lives before them, the World War II veterans left everything, family, loved ones, home, to fight for a just cause. From the Aleutians to Okinawa, from the Mediterranean to the North Sea, they watched so many of their friends fall. We lost more than 400,000, and 700,000 more were wounded. But still, our veterans never faltered. They gave everything so that future generations of Americans might be free. And we are all profoundly grateful.

But to honor their deeds and those of all the veterans who fought for freedom in World War I, Korea, Vietnam, the Persian Gulf, and all around the world in between, gratitude and ceremonies are not enough. We must protect the benefits you have earned, address fully the dangers imposed by modern warfare, and preserve what you fought for: the American dream at home and our leadership around the world.

I've said a lot in other places about preserving the American dream at home in this new global economy, and I won't talk a lot about it today, except just to say that it is going to be a constant struggle for us to make sure that in the next century every American has the chance to get a good education, to have a good job, to do better than their parents, to pass along the values of opportunity to their children. And I'll be saying more about that in other places. Today I want to talk a little about the tradition of America's leadership because that tradition is under siege.

If the new isolationists in our Nation have their way, America would abandon policies backed by Republicans and Democrats that have guided us for half a century, policies that won the cold war and that won us unparalleled prosperity here at home.

I know that at this time we have to spend more attention and more energy and more investment on the problems we have at home. And goodness knows, that's what I have been working to do for the last 2 years. But there are those who would back away from any of our commitments abroad. They would back away from institutions like the United Nations, which promotes stability around the world. They would have us give up our support for peacekeeping and for fragile democracies, support which enables others to share the burden with us, and which undermines the risks that we have to bear and makes us safer. They would cut deeply into our support for emerging market democracies. Even some would put our efforts to make peace in the Middle East on the chopping block.

Now, no one knows better than the veterans the grave dangers of simply withdrawing from the world. The last time isolationism held sway during the years after World War I, Europe and Asia slid into catastrophe, and we had to fight a Second World War because

we walked away from the world at the end of the First World War. Now, those of you in this room, whenever you served, wherever you served, you know what could happen if we retreat from today's turbulent world.

Yes, it is true that the cold war is over, that the nuclear threat is receding. And I'm going to do everything I can to push it back even further this year, with a whole series of ambitious and aggressive efforts to push back the nuclear threat. Yes, nations on every continent—[*applause*]—yes, nations on every continent are embracing democracy and free markets. But open societies and free people still face many enemies. You know it as well as I do: the proliferation of other kinds of weapons of mass destruction; aggression by terrorists, by rogue states; threats that go across national lines, like overpopulation and environmental devastation, drug-trafficking and other organized crime activities; terrible ethnic conflicts; and as we've seen recently in Mexico, just the difficulties that poor nations are going to face when they try to embrace democracy and free-market economics and relate well to the rest of the world.

Now, we cannot intervene everywhere; we can't be involved in solving all these problems. We shouldn't be. But we must be able to protect our own vital interests. And we must be able to work with other countries through multinational organizations to keep the world moving in the right direction. It is not an automatic. It is not given that 20 and 30 and 50 years from now we'll have more democracy, more prosperity, more peace, and less danger. It is not an accident; we have to keep working for it.

Just think about the recent history. Consider what might have happened in the last 2 years alone if we had abandoned our responsibilities. If we hadn't pushed for expanding trade, trade wars could have erupted without our leadership on the GATT World Trade Agreement, which will open great new markets to America, generate hundreds of thousands of jobs, but also give people all around the world a chance to work together in peace. Think what would have happened if we had not moved to try to help stem this crisis in Mexico, what could have happened on our borders in terms of an increase in illegal immigration and reduced ability to continue to fight the drug-trafficking that we fight every single week. Think what might have happened if we hadn't stood up in Haiti for democracy and against the military dictators. We could have had thousands and thousands more immigrants at our borders, people with no place to go because they couldn't stay home, living under oppression. Peace might not even have caught a foothold in the Middle East if we hadn't had the constant political and economic support there for the parties in the Middle East.

These events and others prove the timeless wisdom of the words Franklin Roosevelt set down in the last speech he wrote, when he said, ''We have learned in the agony of war that great power involves great responsibility.'' President Roosevelt observed, ''We as Americans do not choose to deny our responsibility, nor do we intend to abandon our determination that within the lives of our children and our children's children, there will not be a third world war.''

Your devotion and the service of millions and millions of other veterans has helped to prevent that war and helped to bring an end to the cold war. You helped to stop the spread of Communist tyranny across the globe. You helped democracy and prosperity to grow for our allies in Europe and beyond. And when dictators raised their heads, you stood up and you stopped them.

We must be clear about this: In the understandable desire of millions of Americans to look first to our problems at home which are real, your legacy is being threatened, a half a century of American leadership that you worked for and that you fought for. At all costs, we must preserve America's leadership so that our children can have the future they deserve. We simply cannot be strong at home unless we are also strong abroad. There is no dividing line in this global economy. There is no dividing line when terrorism and ethnic conflicts and economic problems and organized crime and drug-trafficking spread across national lines. There is no place to walk away from.

As Commander in Chief, I have done everything in my power to protect and build on the legacy that you have left your country, to make certain that our country moves into

the next century still the strongest nation in the world, still the greatest force for freedom and democracy. And that's exactly what we have to keep doing.

We will meet that goal only if first we protect and strengthen the Armed Forces. More than anything else, our Armed Forces guarantee our security and our global influence. They're the backbone of our diplomacy. They ensure our credibility.

Just take, for example, the Persian Gulf. Last year, where our troops deployed swiftly and convinced Saddam Hussein not to make the same mistake twice, we would not have been able to do that had it not been for the lessons we learned from the Gulf war, the pre-positioning of our equipment, our continued efforts to be able to move our troops quickly and rapidly around the world wherever they needed to be.

Take Haiti, for example, when the news that our forces were poised to invade convinced the generals that they had to go. If it hadn't been for the military, for the year of planning for the most truly jointly planned military operation in American history, and for the planes in the air, it would not have happened. Or in the last few weeks, when our troops showed such great professionalism in transferring Cuban refugees from Panama to Guantanamo and covering the safe withdrawal of United Nations peacekeepers from Somalia.

Time and again, the American military has demonstrated its extraordinary skills. As I pledged from the beginning of our administration, the United States will have the best equipped, best trained, best prepared military in the world. We are keeping that promise every day.

Our forces are ready to fight. But to maintain that high state of readiness and to keep our military strong, I have asked the Congress to increase defense funding by $25 billion spread over the next 6 years. We have fewer troops today, and yet we ask them to perform more and more different missions than ever before. So our combat pilots must fly as often as they need to fly to be properly trained. Our sailors must get the hands-on experience they deserve. Our ground forces must train so they can be at peak levels. And we also have to deal with the strains that all of these different missions put on the people who are in uniform today.

So some of this money will be used to raise military pay and to provide better housing and child care for those who serve and the families who stand by them. We simply must improve the quality of life in the military if we want to continue to draw educated and motivated Americans who can be trained into the high professionalism that we have sometimes come almost to take for granted from the American military. Our men and women in uniform, some of them your sons and daughters, are clearly the finest fighting force in the world. And we must all be determined to keep them that way.

We must also recognize another simple truth: the troops of tomorrow will only be as good as our commitment to veterans today. The people in uniform look to us to see how we relate to you. Long after you have shed your uniforms, not just for a few months or a few years, but for your entire lives, our Nation must meet its solemn obligations to you for the service you gave.

When I sought this office, I vowed to fight for the interests of our country's veterans, and our administration has kept that pledge. The White House doors have been open to veterans as never before. Ask Commander Kent, who came to visit me recently, to discuss the case for protecting your benefits. We have consistently looked to veterans to help shape our policy for veterans. Much of your influence is due to the outstanding work of Secretary Jesse Brown. I thank him for that.

We've protected veterans' preference for Federal jobs when your national commander wrote us last year and said it was in danger. When interest rates fell, we reached out to veterans all around America to tell you about opportunities to refinance homes bought under the GI bill. We made sure that military retirees received their full cost-of-living adjustments when Congress approved them 6 months later than for civilian retirees. And of course, we have worked to improve health care for veterans. We expanded long-term care programs and established comprehensive care centers for women veterans. And we're working to process claims faster so that you can get the benefits you're owed.

Last year, we sent to Congress the only health plan that would have expanded your choices of health care, improved veterans health facilities, and given those facilities the flexibility to serve you better. We have confronted head-on the long-neglected problem of Agent Orange. We have reached out to 40,000 veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange and told them about expanded benefits now available to them. We made certain that when a U.S. delegation visited Hanoi, representatives of the VFW and other veterans groups were there to discuss the painful issues of MIA's. And we have continued to press for the fullest possible accounting for those lost while serving our Nation.

Our administration has brought the voices of veterans to the highest councils of government, protected your interests when they've been threatened, and worked hard every day to improve the services you receive. We have done this even as we have cut the Federal deficit by more than $600 billion, shrunk the Federal Government faster than at any time in modern history.

In the last 2 years, we have cut more than 150,000 positions from the Federal bureaucracy. We have cut spending in more than 300 Federal programs. And this year, while we cut the budget of almost every Federal agency, we still are able to say we are going to the mat for America's future and America's obligations to the past, for Head Start for our children, for the School Lunch Program, for nutrition for pregnant women and their children, for immunizing kids in their early years, for programs for young people who don't go to college but do need good training to get good jobs, for more affordable loans for middle class young people, for 100,000 new police on our streets, for military readiness, and, yes, for better health care for America's veterans.

Our administration is pushing for $1.3 billion more for the Department of Veterans Affairs over the next 5 years, $1 billion of that to the veterans health care system. That means care for 43,000 more veterans, 2 new hospitals, 3 new nursing homes, and other major improvements.

Sadly, some in Congress see that the need to improve your health care services is not very important. Indeed, legislation approved by the House Appropriations Committee just last week, if passed by the Congress, will cut very deeply. They seek to eliminate more than $200 million for veterans health, including money for veterans' outpatient clinics and millions of dollars for new medical equipment for veterans health services. And their cuts would also abolish a successful Department of Labor program that reintegrates homeless veterans by providing them with temporary housing and with help with job training and job placement.

Now, I believe these cuts are unwise and unnecessary. They would harm the veterans who need their nation's help the most. I pledge to you today that I will fight for those interests and for you every step of the way. But we need your help. You have to speak up. You have to speak out. Only your voices will make it clear. Caring for veterans is not a national option or a partisan program. It is a national tradition and a national duty.

Let me say again that fulfilling that duty means more than just meeting the promises of the past. It also means today making every effort we can to respond to the needs of today's soldiers.

Michael Sills of Villa Park, Illinois, is one of those soldiers. He's 34 years old, a veteran of America's victory in the Persian Gulf. He has a disabling illness. But neither he nor his doctors know how he got it. There are thousands of veterans like Michael Sills, thousands who served their country in the Gulf war and came home to find themselves ill. And neither they nor their doctors know how they got it.

Even though in so many of these cases we do not know the causes of their symptoms, we know their problems are real and cannot be ignored while we wait for science to provide all the answers. And that's why last year I supported and signed landmark legislation that for the first time in our history pays benefits to disabled veterans with undiagnosed illnesses that have not been scientifically linked to their military service, when we know good and well that's what happened.

Two weeks ago I met with Michael Sills, one of the first veterans to get benefits under this new law. I sat with him in the Oval Office for several minutes as I listened to his description of what happened to him and how

he began to get sick and what the symptoms were and how it had affected his family. And then I listened to his plans about how he wanted to get on with his life. And I did my best to assure him that we will keep looking for the answers that he and his comrades deserve.

In the past few weeks, the First Lady has visited Gulf war veterans at Walter Reed and the Washington V.A. Medical Center. Some of them are here today. She met with Gunner Kent and Bob Currieo of the VFW and other groups to discuss these illnesses and what must be done.

When she was working on health care over the last 2 years, she kept getting letters from people all across America, saying, ''Mrs. Clinton, please look into this, there's something wrong here. I love my country. I wouldn't fake an illness. I don't want anything I'm not entitled to.'' We've read and reread so many of these letters from veterans, the accounts of the unexplained illnesses, of the breathing problems, of the joint and muscle pain, of the persistent headaches, of the memory loss. We received a letter from Dylan and Theresa Callahan, of Hampton, New Hampshire, who referred to Dylan's undiagnosed illness as the, quote, ''never-ending nightmare,'' and added simply, ''Our lives may be in your hands.''

From the beginning of our administration, we have listened to these veterans' messages. Working together with Democrats and Republicans in Congress, we determined the treatment for these veterans couldn't be delayed as it was for Vietnam veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange. That's why we moved to provide medical care and to compensate fully and fairly these Gulf veterans while making every effort to find the answers.

Today, as a result of these actions, Gulf war veterans are receiving comprehensive exams and treatment at VA and DOD medical facilities. Those on active duty receive specialized care in military hospitals. VA and DOD have opened specialized care centers that focus on veterans who are especially difficult to diagnose. Tens of thousands of Gulf veterans have received free physical exams, and those who are ill are getting free medical care. VA and DOD have registered more than 55,000 Gulf veterans with health concerns to help avoid the kinds of problems that delayed care and compensation for those exposed to Agent Orange.

We've enlisted some of our finest scientists and more than 30 research projects aimed at determining the causes of these veterans' illnesses. Research topics include the possible impact of oil fires and diseases common in the Gulf area. The Defense Department is declassifying all documents related to the possible causes of these illnesses. And both VA and DOD have set up toll-free hotlines to provide Persian Gulf veterans easy access to information about care.

Still, with all this, I believe we must do more. That is why I am announcing today the creation of a Presidential advisory committee to review and make recommendations to me regarding Government efforts aimed at finding the causes and improving the care available to Gulf war veterans. This committee will be made up of scientists, doctors, veterans, and other distinguished citizens. It will work closely with the Secretaries of Veterans Affairs, Defense, and Health and Human Services, and report through them to me. In the year ahead, we will also step up our treatment efforts and launch new research initiatives. The Departments of Veterans Affairs, Defense, and Health and Human Services will spend up to $13 million on new research. Projects will examine the possible causes of Gulf veterans' illnesses, including the potential effects of pesticides and other environmental toxins, antitank ammunition containing depleted uranium, and drugs used to protect against chemical and biological weapons.

VA will begin to survey 30,000 veterans and active duty personnel to learn more about the frequency and nature of Persian Gulf illnesses. The study will also examine whether illnesses have been transmitted to spouses and to children. Data including information regarding cancers and other serious illnesses among Gulf war veterans will continue to be made more accessible to the public. And the Defense Department will strengthen future training for troops on the risks of toxic exposure and will follow up and document information about troops when they return from their service.

We must listen to what the veterans are telling us and respond to their concerns. Just as we relied on these men and women to fight for our country, they must now be able to rely on us to try to determine what happened to them in the Gulf and to help restore them to full health. We will leave not a stone unturned. And we will not stop until we have done everything we possibly can for the men and women who, like so many veterans throughout our history, have sacrificed so much for the United States and our freedom.

Last month at the Iwo Jima commemoration, we heard two Latin words repeated again and again: *semper fidelis*, always faithful. The Marines' noble motto is one which serves well for a great branch of our military service but also for our whole Nation. Being faithful to one another and faithful to our traditions, these are tied together. Being true to our tradition of leadership in the world means reaching out across the oceans to support democracy and freedom and all the benefits they bring back home to us. Being faithful to one another requires us to keep faith with our veterans as we keep faith with our future.

You know better than anyone what these bonds of reliance are. As Dan Pollock, an Iwo Jima veteran and a member of the VFW, recalled just last month, and I quote his words, ''You never had to watch your back,'' he said, ''because in the midst of terrible battle, you belong to,'' what he called, ''a band of brothers.'' Whether it's five decades later for the World War II veterans or just 4 years later for the Gulf war veterans, you should know that your Nation will never forget your service and will always, always, need your support for America's strength and leadership.

As long as I am President, the sacred tradition of protecting our veterans will continue and a strong America will march forward. You put your faith in America. America will continue to keep faith with you.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11 a.m. at the Sheraton Washington. In his remarks, he referred to Allen F. ''Gunner'' Kent, commander in chief, VFW; Gen. Gordon R. Sullivan, Chief of Staff, U.S. Army; and actor Charles Durning, Chair, Department of Veterans Affairs 1995 Salute to Hospitalized Veterans.

Statement on the 25th Anniversary of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty

March 6, 1995

March 5 marked the 25th anniversary of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). This historic arms control agreement—to which 172 nations have now adhered—is the foundation of international efforts to stem the spread of nuclear weapons.

Last week, in a speech at the Nixon Center, I reaffirmed this Nation's commitment to the goals and obligations of the NPT. This treaty strengthens our security and that of all nations. It creates a dependable security environment that makes other arms control and disarmament measures possible. For these reasons, the United States strongly supports universal NPT membership.

Six weeks from now, an international conference in New York will consider extension of the NPT. The United States is firmly committed to the indefinite extension of the NPT without conditions. We will work closely with other parties to the treaty to achieve this objective.

The indefinite and unconditional extension of the NPT tops an ambitious global arms control agenda. Implementation of the START I treaty is already yielding dramatic reductions in nuclear forces. We seek early ratification of START II and the Chemical Weapons Convention. We have taken steps to accelerate the conclusion of a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and are pushing for a global ban on the production of fissile material for weapons. We seek to strengthen the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. These and other steps will significantly reduce the nuclear threat to America's cities and citizens.