

Now, I am, obviously, willing to do whatever I can to continue whatever constructive talks can be continued. But I showed up today ready to do my part, and the thing that you have in this business that has to work is when you say you're going to do something, it has to be that way.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President's 111th news conference began at 3:47 p.m. in the Briefing Room at the White House.

Message on the Observance of Christmas, 1995

December 20, 1995

Warm greetings to everyone celebrating Christmas.

The Christmas story is dear and familiar to us all—shepherds and angels, Wise Men and Kind Herod, Mary and Joseph, and, at the heart of it all, a Child. This Child was born into poverty in a city too crowded to offer Him shelter. He was sent to a region whose people had endured suffering, tyranny, and exile. And yet this Child brought with Him riches so great that they continue to sustain the human spirit two thousand years later: the assurance of God's love and presence in our lives and the promise of salvation.

Each year at Christmas, we celebrate these gifts with family and friends. We place candles in the window as a sign that there is always room for Christ in our homes. We put angels and stars and twinkling lights on the Christmas tree to remind us of the glory and mystery of Christ's birth. We sing the old and beloved Christmas carols to express the joy filling our hearts, and we share special gifts with those we love, just as God shared His Son with us. And, in contemplating the nativity scene under the tree or in a neighbor's yard, we realize that children hold a special place in God's heart, since He sent His only Son to us as a little Child.

With this simple truth in mind, let us observe Christmas this year by making a solemn commitment to the children of our communities, our nation, and the world. Let us pledge to love and nurture them and promise

to give them strong values and a chance to make the most of their God-given talents. Let us resolve that they will grow up in a world that is free and at peace. By cherishing the children God sends us, we express our love and gratitude for the one Child He sent whose coming offers forgiveness and hope to us all.

Hillary and I send best wishes for a blessed and joyous Christmas season and every happiness in the new year.

Bill Clinton

Statement on the Welfare Reform and Budget Negotiations

December 21, 1995

I am disappointed that Republicans are trying to use the words "welfare reform" as cover to advance a budget plan that is at odds with America's values. Americans know that welfare reform is not about playing budget politics; it is about moving people from welfare to work.

I am determined to work with Congress to achieve real, bipartisan welfare reform. But if Congress sends me this conference report, I will veto it and insist that they try again. This welfare bill includes deep cuts that are tough on children and at odds with my central goal of moving people from welfare to work. The Republican budget cuts in Medicaid and the earned-income tax credit would undermine real reform and penalize people who choose work over welfare.

At a time when we are trying to engage in serious negotiations toward a balanced budget that is consistent with our priorities—one of which is to "reform welfare," as last month's agreement between Republicans and Democrats made clear—this is a sign of bad faith by the Republican leadership and an affront to those in both parties who genuinely want to enact real reform. My administration remains ready at any moment to sit down in good faith with Democrats and Republicans in Congress to work out a real welfare reform plan.

**Executive Order 12983—
Amendment to Executive Order
12871**

December 21, 1995

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, and in order to improve the functioning of the National Partnership Council, it is hereby ordered that Executive Order No. 12871, entitled "Labor-Management Partnerships," ("the order") is amended as follows:

Section 1. Section 1(a) of the order is amended to delete "and" at the end of item (9), delete the period at the end of item (10), add "; and" at the end of item (10), and add item "(11) one elected office holder each from both the Senior Executives Association and the Federal Managers Association."

Sec. 2. Section 1(b) of the order is amended to delete "and" at the end of item (4), delete the period at the end of item (5), add "; and" at the end of item (5), and add "(6) reporting to the President by October 1996 on the progress of and results achieved through labor-management partnership throughout the executive branch."

Sec. 3. Section 1(c)(2) of the order is revised to read: "(2) The Council shall seek input from nonmember Federal agencies, particularly smaller agencies. It also may, from time to time, invite experts from the private and public sectors to submit information. The Council shall also seek input from Federal manager and professional associations, companies, nonprofit organizations, State and local governments, Federal employees, and customers of Federal services, as needed."

Sec. 4. Section 1(c)(4) of the order is revised to read: "(4) Members of the Council shall serve without compensation for their work on the Council, but may be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, as authorized by law, for persons serving intermittently in Government service."

William J. Clinton

The White House,
December 21, 1995.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 2:41 p.m., December 22, 1995]

NOTE: This Executive order was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 22, and it will be published in the *Federal Register* on December 27.

**Letter to Congressional Leaders on
Bosnia-Herzegovina**

December 21, 1995

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Mr. President:)

I last reported to the Congress on December 6, 1995, concerning U.S. support for the United Nations and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) efforts to bring peace to the former Yugoslavia. In that report I noted the success of our diplomatic efforts at Dayton, Ohio, to assist the parties to reach a negotiated settlement to the conflict in the former Yugoslavia and reported the deployment of a NATO "enabling force" and U.S. support forces in order to lay the groundwork for the deployment of the main body of the NATO-led Implementation Force (IFOR). I am now able to report that on December 14, 1995, the peace agreement that was initiated in Dayton was formally signed in Paris.

Following the formal signing of the peace agreement by all the parties, and consistent with our consultations with the Congress, United Nations Security Council Resolution 1031, and the North Atlantic Council (NAC) decision of December 16, 1995, I have ordered the deployment of approximately 20,000 U.S. military personnel to participate in the IFOR in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, principally in a sector surrounding Tuzla. Approximately 5,000 U.S. military personnel will also deploy as part of the IFOR in other states of the former Yugoslavia, principally Croatia. The IFOR, including U.S. forces assigned to it, will be under NATO operational control and will operate under NATO rules of engagement. In addition, a total of approximately 7,000 U.S. support forces, under U.S. command and control and rules of engagement, will deploy in Hungary, Croatia, Italy, and other states in the region in support of IFOR. These force levels are those stated by U.S. commanders to be