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forward to realizing NAFTA's full benefits in the years ahead.

NAFTA has also contributed to the prosperity and stability of our closest neighbors and two of our most important trading partners. NAFTA aided Mexico's rapid recovery from a severe economic recession, even as that country carried forward a democratic transformation of historic proportions.

NAFTA is an integral part of a broader growth strategy that has produced the strongest U.S. economy in a generation. This strategy rests on three mutually supportive pillars: deficit reduction, investing in our people through education and training, and opening foreign markets to allow America to compete in the global economy. The success of that strategy can be seen in the strength of the American economy, which continues to experience strong investment, low unemployment, healthy job creation, and subdued inflation.

Export growth has been central to America's economic expansion. NAFTA, together with the Uruguay Round Agreement, the Information Technology Agreement, the WTO Telecommunications Agreement, 22 sectoral trade agreements with Japan, and over 170 other trade agreements, has contributed to overall U.S. real export growth of 37 percent since 1993. Exports have contributed nearly one-third of our economic growth—and have grown three times faster than overall income.

Workers, business executives, small business owners, and farmers across America have contributed to the resurgence in American competitiveness. The ability and determination of working people across America to rise to the challenges of rapidly changing technologies and global economic competition is a great source of strength for this Nation.

Cooperation between the Administration and the Congress on a bipartisan basis has been critical in our efforts to reduce the deficit, to conclude trade agreements that level the global playing field for America, to secure peace and prosperity along America's borders, and to help prepare all Americans to benefit from expanded economic opportunities. I hope we can continue working together to advance these vital goals in the years to come.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
July 11, 1997.

Message to the Congress Transmitting the District of Columbia Fiscal Year 1998 Budget Request

July 11, 1997

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with section 202(c)(5)(C)(ii) of the Financial Responsibility and Management Assistance Act of 1995 (''the FRMA Act''), I am transmitting the Council of the District of Columbia's ''Fiscal Year 1998 Budget Request Act of 1997.''

The Council's proposed Fiscal Year 1998 Budget was disapproved by the Financial Responsibility and Management Assistance Authority (the ''Authority'') on June 12. Under the FRMA Act, if the Authority disapproves the Council's financial plan and budget, the Mayor must submit that budget to the President to be transmitted to the Congress. My transmittal of the District Council's budget, as required by law, does not represent an endorsement of its contents. The budget also does not reflect the effect of my proposed Fiscal Year 1998 District of Columbia revitalization plan.

The Authority is required to transmit separately to the Mayor, the Council, the President, and the Congress a financial plan and budget. The Authority sent its financial plan and budget to the Congress on June 15.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
July 11, 1997.

Message to the Congress Transmitting the Report of the National Endowment for the Arts

July 11, 1997

To the Congress of the United States:

It is my pleasure to transmit the Annual Report of the National Endowment for the Arts for 1996.

One measure of a great nation is the vitality of its culture, the dedication of its people to nurturing a climate where creativity can flourish. By supporting our museums and theaters, our dance companies and symphony orchestras, our writers and our artists, the National Endowment for the Arts provides such a climate. Look through this report and you will find many reasons to be proud of our Nation's cultural life at the end of the 20th century and what it portends for Americans and the world in the years ahead.

Despite cutbacks in its budget, the Endowment was able to fund thousands of projects all across America—a museum in Sitka, Alaska; a dance company in Miami, Florida; a production of a Eugene O'Neill play in New York City; a Whistler exhibition in Chicago; and artists in schools in all 50 States. Millions of Americans were able to see plays, hear concerts, and participate in the arts in their hometowns, thanks to the work of this small agency.

As we set our priorities for the coming years, let's not forget the vital role the National Endowment for the Arts must continue to play in our national life. The Endowment shows the world that we take pride in American culture here and abroad. It is a beacon, not only of creativity, but of freedom. And let us keep that lamp brightly burning now and for all time.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
July 11, 1997.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

July 5

The President and Hillary Clinton traveled to Palma de Mallorca, Spain, where they were greeted by King Juan Carlos I and Queen Sofia of Spain and toured Bellver Castle.

In the evening, they toured the cathedral.

July 7

In the afternoon, the President and Hillary Clinton traveled to Madrid, Spain.

In the evening, the President met with NATO Secretary General Javier Solana in the Miguel Angel Hotel.

Later, the President and Hillary Clinton attended an informal dinner for NATO leaders and their spouses hosted by Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar of Spain in the Garden of the Official Residence at Moncloa Palace. Following the dinner, the President met with Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom at the Miguel Angel Hotel.

The President declared a major disaster in Texas and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe thunderstorms and flooding beginning June 21 and continuing.

The President declared a major disaster in Wisconsin and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and flooding June 21–23.

July 8

In the morning and afternoon, the President attended NATO Summit sessions in the Palacio Municipal de Congresos. In the late afternoon, he met with President Jacques Chirac of France.

In the evening, the President and Hillary Clinton attended a dinner for NATO leaders and their spouses hosted by King Juan Carlos I and Queen Sofia at the Royal Palace.