

So I hope that since Massachusetts is one of the first States to agree to voluntarily participate, I hope all of you will support this, and I hope that if you have the opportunity, you will encourage the Members of Congress and your Senators to support it, because to me, it's the last major step. I have done all I could to push more decisions down to the school district into the school level. We have dramatically reduced paperwork in the Department of Education. We have dramatically increased the ability of local school districts to spend Federal money—and States—according to their own designs, within the general framework of the intent of Congress. So I want more decisionmaking done at the local level, but I still think we ought to have national standards that give our children a chance to do well in the global economy. And I believe that they all can do well.

And I believe that the poorest of our kids, the kids that come from the most difficult backgrounds, need it more than others, because they look to you, they look to the schools to give them the chances that their own parents didn't have. I know it's harder for you, and I know a lot of you have to contend with problems that these children bring from home that weren't there a generation ago, but every single thing you can mention just means that they need it more, not less.

So I expect this to be one of the major debating issues of the next few weeks when I go back home to go back to work. And I came here to thank you for what you do, to ask you to continue to support the educational excellence, and to send a clear message that you believe that excellence and accountability and high aspirations are for all our children, because we know they can make it. And we know that for their sakes, we have to expect them to do so.

Thank you, and bless you.

[At this point, Oak Bluffs Selectman Richard Combra presented a gift to the President.]

The President. Let me say, I actually believe I could pass a history exam on Oak Bluffs. *[Laughter]* This is one of the most interesting communities that I have ever heard anything about, and its history over the last 100 years, particularly, is fascinating to me, and I always spend a lot of time here

when we come to the Vineyard, and I'm grateful for this.

I also should tell you that someone gave Hillary and Chelsea and me that huge 1,000-piece jigsaw puzzle—*[laughter]*—and we did it. So I am now prepared for a detailed geography examination on Martha's Vineyard in general and Oak Bluffs in particular.

I also want to say this is a magnificent school and just before I came in here, I was offered the chance by your principal to actually decorate one of the tiles. I have no doubt that mine will not be nearly as good as the students' or the staff's, but I'll give it my best shot.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:53 a.m. in the library. In his remarks, he referred to Dr. Kriner Cash, superintendent, Martha's Vineyard Schools; and Laury Binney, principal, Oak Bluffs School.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting the Report on the Partnership For Peace September 3, 1997

Dear _____:

In accordance with section 514(a) of Public Law 103-236 (22 U.S.C. 1928(a)), I am submitting to you this report on implementation of the Partnership for Peace (PFP) initiative.

The recent NATO Summit in Madrid highlighted the tremendous success of the Partnership for Peace and the important role PFP plays as a permanent security structure for the undivided Europe of the 21st century. On the second day of the Summit, 27 Partner Heads of State and Government met with their NATO counterparts under the auspices of the new Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council. This meeting, the first of its kind, underscored the strength of the cooperative relationship NATO has built with the Partners in the 3-½ years since the creation of PFP.

The Partnership for Peace has been instrumental in helping countries prepare for NATO membership. At the same time, it has also been a critical tool in helping all the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, regardless of their desire to join NATO, to build stronger ties with the Alliance and de-

velop closer cooperative relationships with all their neighbors. As you will see from the attached report, NATO and its Partners have made impressive progress in broadening and deepening the Partnership over the past year. With the creation of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council and the implementation of enhancements to the PFP program, Allies and Partners together will help bring about our shared goal of a Euro-Atlantic community that is safe, secure, and united by common values and common understanding.

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; and Benjamin A. Gilman, chairman, and Lee H. Hamilton, ranking member, House Committee on International Relations.

Message to the Senate Transmitting the Inter-American Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters and Documentation
September 3, 1997

To the Senate of the United States:

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, I transmit herewith the Inter-American Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters ("the Convention"), adopted at the twenty-second regular session of the Organization of American States (OAS) General Assembly meeting in Nassau, The Bahamas, on May 23, 1992, and the Optional Protocol Related to the Inter-American Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters ("the Protocol"), adopted at the twenty-third regular session of the OAS General Assembly meeting in Managua, Nicaragua, on June 11, 1993. Both of these instruments were signed on behalf of the United States at the OAS headquarters in Washington on January 10, 1995. In addition, for the information of the Senate, I transmit the report of the Department of State with respect to the Convention and the Protocol.

When ratified, the Convention and the Protocol will constitute the first multilateral convention between the United States and other members of the OAS in the field of

international judicial cooperation in criminal matters. The provisions of the Convention and Protocol are explained in the report of the Department of State that accompanies this message.

The Convention and Protocol will establish a treaty-based system of judicial assistance in criminal matters analogous to that which exists bilaterally between the United States and a number of countries. These instruments should prove to be effective tools to assist in the prosecution of a wide variety of modern criminals, including members of drug cartels, "white-collar" criminals, and terrorists. The Convention and Protocol are self-executing, and will not require implementing legislation.

The Convention provides for a broad range of cooperation in criminal matters. Mutual assistance available under the Convention includes: (1) taking testimony or statements of persons; (2) providing documents, records, and articles of evidence; (3) serving documents; (4) locating or identifying persons or items; (5) transferring persons in custody for testimony or other purposes; (6) executing requests for searches and seizures; (7) assisting in forfeiture proceedings; and (8) rendering any other form of assistance not prohibited by the laws of the Requested State.

The Protocol was negotiated and adopted at the insistence of the United States Government, and will permit a greater measure of cooperation in connection with tax offenses. I believe that the Convention should not be ratified by the United States without the Protocol. If the Convention and Protocol are ratified, the instruments of ratification would be deposited simultaneously.

One significant advantage of this Convention and Protocol is that they provide uniform procedures and rules for cooperation in criminal matters by all the states that become Party. In addition, the Convention and Protocol would obviate the expenditure of resources that would be required for the United States to negotiate and bring into force bilateral mutual assistance treaties with certain OAS member states.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to the Convention and the Protocol, and that it gives its