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that's one less turkey in Washington. [*Laughter*] Happy Thanksgiving.

Attorney General Janet Reno

Q. Mr. President, how is the Attorney General?

The President. She's fine. I talked to her this morning. She said she was feeling great.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:20 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House.

Statement on Signing the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 1998

November 26, 1997

Today I have signed into law H.R. 2159, the ''Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 1998.''

I am pleased that the Act contains funding for many key international affairs programs at or near the amounts requested. The Act contains vital funding and other needed authorities in support of the Middle East peace process. It also provides for contributions to the multilateral development banks, including a down payment on the clearance of arrears, notably to the International Development Association; assistance to Eastern Europe and the Baltic States, as well as New Independent States of the former Soviet Union; international narcotics control; development assistance; and migration and refugee assistance. I am also very pleased that the Congress has fully funded my request of $222 million for the Peace Corps.

In addition, I commend the Congress for funding international planning programs without the misguided ''Mexico City'' restrictions. My Administration continues to oppose these restrictions, which would deny funding to the most experienced and qualified family planning and maternal-child health care providers. I am also pleased that the Congress has reduced the number of other restrictions on assistance, such as earmarks, that have hampered my ability to carry out U.S. foreign policy.

I deeply regret that the Congress did not include funding for the International Monetary Fund's New Arrangements to Borrow (NAB) program. The NAB is needed to ensure that sufficient resources are available to respond to monetary crises in a world of rapidly expanding trade and finance. Recent events in southeast Asia only underscore the threat of shocks to the global financial system and the need for a strong and responsive IMF. The decision by the Congress not to provide this authority is irresponsible. I call on the Congress to provide funding for the NAB, and my Administration stands ready to work with the Congress to overcome obstacles to funding this important program.

My Administration is concerned that Russia's new law on religion be implemented in a manner that is consistent with international obligations and that fully respects religious freedom. We are watching carefully to assess Russian implementation of this law. At the same time, my Administration continues to oppose legislating limits on assistance, especially without the possibility of a presidential waiver. American assistance to Russia, including to the Russian government, serves important U.S. interests. Technical assistance that promotes tax reform and aids in removing obstacles to investment and assistance in nuclear reactor safety are two good examples.

While H.R. 2159 does contain a national security waiver related to Russian assistance to the Iranian missile program, my Administration still opposes in principle legislating limits on assistance to the Russian government because this assistance serves U.S. interests. The United States is conducting critical discussions with Russia on missile technology to Iran, and legislated assistance cutoffs could harm this process.

This Act contains several provisions that raise constitutional concerns, such as requirements that the United States take particular positions in international organizations. I will apply these and other provisions in the Act consistent with my constitutional responsibilities.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
November 26, 1997.

NOTE: H.R. 2159, approved November 26, was assigned Public Law No. 105–118.

Statement on Signing the Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State, the Judiciary, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1998

November 26, 1997

Today I have signed into law H.R. 2267, the ''Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State, the Judiciary, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1998.''

This Act provides over $31 billion in discretionary budget authority for vital law enforcement, international affairs, economic development, and environmental programs, I am pleased that the Act supports many of my priorities, particularly in the areas of law enforcement and crime prevention.

For instance, H.R. 2267 provides for my request of $1.4 billion for the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program, helping us to achieve the goal of hiring 100,000 additional police officers by the year 2000. The Act also increases funding for programs to combat violence against women, and, finally, in the important area of juvenile crime prevention, the Act provides $489 million for juvenile justice, which includes a $250 million juvenile justice block grant. I am pleased that the block grant provides targeted funding for prosecutorial grants, which support prosecutors' efforts to reduce gang violence, as well as targeted funding for violent juvenile court assistance, which helps expedite the handling of juvenile offenders.

I am deeply disappointed, however, that the Congress did not enact legislation to capitalize on all of our work this year to craft a broadly supported package of reforms for the United Nations system and to provide the related arrears funding. Recent events in Iraq have underscored the need for strong U.S. leadership in the United Nations and in other international organizations that would have been supported by this legislation.

I regret that the Act does not contain the multi-year funding of the arrears package consistent with the Balanced Budget Agreement (BBA), and that the first $100 million is not available until Congress passes implementing legislation. Before the current adjournment, the Congress could have passed such legislation, but it was tied to extraneous conditions. With the United Nations making critical decisions this December on reform and funding issues, this implementing legislation would have put the United States in a good position to achieve international agreement on the kind of financial and other reforms we are seeking and to clear our arrears. Our negotiators in New York are now handicapped and must struggle to build majority support for these changes among the more than 185 members of the United Nations without being able to clearly signal the Congress' intention.

I hope that the Congress will work with me to pass swiftly upon its return such implementing legislation that firmly signals to the rest of the world community U.S. commitment to the U.N. system, our intent to honor our international obligations, and our desire to make these organizations more effective and efficient as they work for us on critical issues. Such legislation should be free of extraneous issues.

The Act does provide strong support for the operational accounts of the Department of State, including provisions to put in place the new International Cooperative Administrative Support Services (ICASS) program and to utilize revenues from Machine Readable visa fees. This support will allow the Department to modernize its technology, improve operations that support all U.S. agencies operating overseas, and continue to carry out its role in our Nation's important Border Security Program.

This Act contains provisions that raise serious constitutional concerns. For example, section 609 unconstitutionally constrains the President's authority with respect to the conduct of diplomacy and section 610 unconstitutionally constrains the President's diplomatic authority and Commander in Chief authority. I will apply these provisions consistent with my constitutional responsibilities.

The Act also includes provisions relating to the census. These provisions arose out of a disagreement whether the widely accepted statistical method known as sampling may be used in connection with the decennial census, consistent with the Constitution and the Census Act.

It is my strong conviction, and it is the opinion of the Department of Justice, that