

**Letter to Congressional Leaders
Transmitting a Report on Cyprus**

August 30, 2000

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. Chairman:)

In accordance with section 13(b) of the International Security Assistance Act of 1978, Public Law 95-384 (22 U.S.C. 2373(c)), I submit to you this report on progress toward a negotiated settlement of the Cyprus question covering the period June 1-July 31, 2000. The previous submission covered events during April and May 2000.

The United Nations resumed its efforts to bring about comprehensive negotiations between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities in Geneva on July 5. These proximity talks, which began in December 1999 in New York, are continuing. However, as my colleagues at the G-8 Summit in Okinawa and I agreed, the two parties need to intensify negotiations in order to bring about a just and lasting settlement. The United States remains committed to the United Nations process and efforts to bring about a solution based upon a bizonal, bicomunal federation.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Jesse Helms, chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 31.

**Remarks on Returning Without
Approval to the House of
Representatives the Death Tax
Elimination Act of 2000**

August 31, 2000

Thank you very much. I want to thank Secretary Mineta and John Sumption and his wife, Margaret, for being here. Martin Rothenberg, thank you very much, and thank you, Sandra, for being here.

I was listening to them talk, wishing I didn't have to say a word. [*Laughter*] It made me proud to be an American, listening to those two people talk. Didn't they do a good job? [*Applause*]

Western Wildfires

Before I begin with the remarks I have on the estate tax, and since this is my only opportunity to speak to the American people through our friends in the press today, I need to make a statement about continuing efforts to combat one of the worst wildfire seasons in the history of America.

For months now, we have been marshaling Federal resources so that the men and women fighting these blazes out West will have the tools they need to protect our public and our lands. There are already 30,000 Federal, State, and local personnel engaged in the effort to fight the wildfires, including four full military battalions. Today I'm releasing another \$90 million to ensure that the Federal firefighters have the resources they need. Now a total of \$590 million has been spent on emergency funding to combat these fires. I want you to remember that for a point I want to make later in my remarks. These things happen.

There will be no shortage of human effort. Tomorrow we are dispatching a new marine battalion from Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, to help fight the Clear Creek fire in Idaho's Salmon-Challis National Forest. Last night we issued a disaster declaration for Montana and are expediting a similar request from Idaho.

There is a lot to be done out there. Those people are working hard. The Departments of Agriculture and the Interior have begun to move 2,000 Federal supervisors into the field to assist the firefighters and to get adequate compensation for people that are working long and very stressful hours.

Our Nation owes a great debt of gratitude to the firefighters, the managers, and their loved ones who are making extraordinary sacrifices. Many of them are literally risking their lives today in service to their neighbors and their country. Our losses this year in wildfires have been much, much, much greater than the 10-year average.

And I was out in Idaho recently, and I wish every American could see what they try to do with those fires and how fast they can move and how they can go from being a foot high to 100 feet high in no time at all. So we may have to do more out there, but they're doing their best to protect as much