

quality of life—the ability of families to raise their children, the ability of people to get better education, the ability of people to live in peace, the ability of people to look beyond their noses and the struggles of putting food on the table today to the need to reconcile our growing economy with our fragile environment around the globe.

That's what this is about. That's why your presence here is so important. And that's what I ask you to think of. Yes, America is blessed. Yes, we're doing well. Yes, we're making money from the global economy. Yes, we can make more money and have more jobs and enjoy more prosperity. But in the end, the purpose of all this is to improve the quality, the depth, the texture of life, not only for ourselves but for the cause of peace and freedom throughout the world.

I believe we can do it. I hope you will support that. And I hope very much that, once again in the coming year, we will make great advances here in the United States to that end.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:35 p.m. in the Atrium at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center. In his remarks, he referred to Lionel Ogelsby, student, Washington Irving High School, who introduced the President; and C. Michael Armstrong, Chairman, President's Export Council and chief executive officer, AT&T.

Statement on Signing the International Anti-Bribery and Fair Competition Act of 1998

November 10, 1998

It is with great pleasure that I sign today S. 2375, the "International Anti-Bribery and Fair Competition Act of 1998." This Act makes certain changes in existing law to implement the Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions, which was negotiated under the auspices of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The Convention was signed on December 17, 1997, by the United States and 32 other nations. On July 31, 1998, the Senate gave its advice and consent to ratification of the Convention. With enactment

of this bill, the United States is able to proceed with the deposit of its instrument of ratification, and it is my hope that the Convention will enter into force by the end of 1998, the target date established by OECD Ministers.

The United States has led the effort to curb international bribery. We have long believed bribery is inconsistent with democratic values, such as good governance and the rule of law. It is also contrary to basic principles of fair competition and harmful to efforts to promote economic development. Since the enactment in 1977 of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA), U.S. businesses have faced criminal penalties if they engaged in business-related bribery of foreign public officials. Foreign competitors, however, did not have similar restrictions and could engage in this corrupt activity without fear of penalty. Moreover, some of our major trading partners have subsidized such activity by permitting tax deductions for bribes paid to foreign public officials. As a result, U.S. companies have had to compete on an uneven playing field, resulting in losses of international contracts estimated at \$30 billion per year.

The OECD Convention—which represents the culmination of many years of sustained diplomatic effort—is designed to change all that. Under the Convention, our major competitors will be obligated to criminalize the bribery of foreign public officials in international business transactions. The existing signatories already account for a large percentage of international contracting, but they also plan an active outreach program to encourage other nations to become parties to this important instrument. The United States intends to work diligently, through the monitoring process to be established under the OECD, to ensure that the Convention is widely ratified and fully implemented. We will continue our leadership in the international fight against corruption.

Section 5 of S. 2375 is unrelated to the Convention. However, it can be implemented in a manner that advances U.S. objectives for the privatization of the international satellite organizations, and does not

put the United States in breach of its obligations under international agreements.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
November 10, 1998.

NOTE: S. 2375, approved November 10, was assigned Public Law No. 105-366.

**Remarks in a Telephone
Conversation With Tipper Gore on
Hurricane Damage in Central
America**

November 10, 1998

The President. Hello?

Tipper Gore. Hello, Mr. President.

The President. Hi, Tipper.

Mrs. Gore. Hi, how are you? Thank you very much for the honor of leading the delegation. It's a privilege to bring the aid and the assistance to the people of Honduras. They need it. They have suffered an incredible amount of devastation, and they're very grateful for the \$70 million and the additional \$10 million that you authorized and that I was able to tell them about today.

The President. Well, what have you seen?

Mrs. Gore. Well, I took a helicopter tour along with the delegation of the area that had a great deal of devastation. We've seen communities and neighborhoods and entire areas wiped out. You can see that the base of their infrastructure is completely destroyed—farming, bridges knocked out. From the air I've seen dead animals, lots of vultures.

But I can tell you something else that's very important, and that is that in working in a neighborhood outside the capital with people that so have an inspirational spirit, they have learned how to reorganize, and we all worked to help them clean the mud out of a schoolhouse so it can be converted for medical facilities, first and foremost.

The President. That's really good. I wonder, what are your thoughts about how well we're doing in getting our aid down there, how we're going to handle extra volunteer help, all the other things you could do. What's the most important thing we could give next—that we should do next after the money that you brought down?

Mrs. Gore. I think the most important thing—and they are very, very appreciative of the money that you authorized and we brought—but the next most important thing would probably be if some of the FEMA—the Spanish-speaking FEMA people who have worked in Puerto Rico and have experience after Hurricane Georges be sent over here in order to help, again, with the acute relief effort. I think that would be a tremendous asset if that could be arranged.

The President. We'll arrange it.

Mrs. Gore. That's wonderful. That's wonderful.

The President. When you meet with the President and you finish your trip, I think when you come back, the thing that I think would be most helpful is if you could brief me and also brief Hillary before she goes down and be—let us know specifically what you really think we ought to do. I think everyone in the United States wants to do as much as we possible can to help, both in the immediate aftermath of this horrible tragedy and also for the long-term rebuilding.

And so one of the reasons I was hoping that you could go is to get a firsthand feel for what's going on that even the pictures don't give us here or the telephone calls, and just let me know exactly what you think we ought to do.

Mrs. Gore. Well, I will, and one thing I can tell you is this is a catastrophe of Biblical proportions. It's really unbelievable, and yet the spirit of the people is inspirational. And I will listen; I'm going into a meeting with the President. I've been with Mary Flores all day, working. And the delegation and I look forward to giving you a full report and telling you what we have learned and what we think will be the most helpful for you.

The President. That's great. Where are you going to spend the night tonight?

Mrs. Gore. I'm going to spend the night—we're pitching tents. We don't want to take any assets away from the relief effort, so we're pitching some tents, and we're going to sleep in those.

The President. That's good.

Mrs. Gore. And we're going to get up and go to Nicaragua tomorrow.

The President. That's great.

Mrs. Gore. Thank you again for allowing us to bring this and to work shoulder-to-