

Thank you all. Let's go in here.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:12 p.m. in the Diplomatic Reception Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Cyprus

December 17, 2001

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

In accordance with Public Law 95-384 (22 U.S.C. 2373(c)), I submit to you this report on progress toward a negotiated solution of the Cyprus question covering the period October 1 through November 30, 2001. The previous submission covered August 1 through September 30, 2001. The United Nations continued in its efforts to sustain the proximity talks that started in December 1999. The United States remains committed to the United Nations effort to find a just and lasting settlement to the Cyprus problem.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 18.

Statement on Congressional Action on Education Reform Legislation

December 18, 2001

I commend Members of Congress for acting boldly and in an overwhelmingly bipartisan way to help make sure no child in America is left behind. These historic reforms will improve our public schools by creating an environment where every child can learn through real accountability, unprecedented flexibility for States and school districts, greater local control, more options for parents, and more funding for what works.

Many share in the credit for making these reforms a reality. I look forward to standing side by side with the bipartisan leadership,

Congressman Boehner, Senator Kennedy, Senator Gregg, and Congressman Miller, early next year and signing these important reforms into law.

By putting aside partisan differences and working to find common ground, we can get things done so that all our children have the opportunity for a better and brighter future.

Statement on Signing the Department of Transportation and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2002

December 18, 2001

Today I have signed into law H.R. 2299, the "Department of Transportation and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2002."

I appreciate the bipartisan effort that has gone into producing this Act. The bill abides by the agreed upon aggregate funding level for Fiscal Year 2002 of \$686 billion and supports several of my Administration's key initiatives with:

- \$140 million for border safety to ensure an open border for trade between the United States and Mexico through the establishment of an inspection and certification system that will ensure a high level of motor carrier safety;
- \$5 billion for Coast Guard operations and capital expenses, including \$243 million to support expanded drug interdiction efforts as authorized in the Western Hemisphere Drug Elimination Act;
- \$1.2 billion for the newly created Transportation Security Administration to enhance airport and aircraft security;
- \$32.8 billion for key highway infrastructure and safety initiatives in compliance with authorized levels;
- \$10.2 billion for aviation operations and airport improvement grants to expand safety, security, and capacity; and
- \$6.7 billion for mass transit grants and capital programs.

Several provisions in the bill purport to require congressional approval before executive branch execution of aspects of the bill. I will interpret such provisions to require notification only, since any other interpretation

would contradict the Supreme Court ruling in *INS v. Chadha*.

George W. Bush

The White House,
December 18, 2001.

NOTE: H.R. 2299, approved December 18, was assigned Public Law No. 107-87.

Proclamation 7515—To Modify the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States, To Provide Rules of Origin Under the North American Free Trade Agreement for Affected Goods, and for Other Purposes

December 18, 2001

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

1. Section 1205(a) of the Omnibus Trade and Competitiveness Act of 1988 (the “1988 Act”) (19 U.S.C. 3005(a)) directs the United States International Trade Commission (the “Commission”) to keep the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States (HTS) under continuous review and periodically to recommend to the President such modifications in the HTS as the Commission considers necessary or appropriate to accomplish the purposes set forth in that subsection. The Commission has recommended modifications to the HTS pursuant to sections 1205(c) and (d) of the 1988 Act (19 U.S.C. 3005(c) and (d)) to conform the HTS to amendments made to the International Convention on the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (the “Convention”).

2. Section 1206(a) of the 1988 Act (19 U.S.C. 3006(a)) authorizes the President to proclaim modifications to the HTS, based on the recommendations of the Commission under section 1205 of the 1988 Act (19 U.S.C. 3005), if he determines that the modifications are in conformity with the obligations of the United States under the Convention and do not run counter to the national economic interest of the United States. I have determined that the modifications to the HTS proclaimed in this proclamation pursuant to section 1206(a) are in conformity

with the obligations of the United States under the Convention and do not run counter to the national economic interest of the United States.

3. (a) Presidential Proclamation 6641 of December 15, 1993, implemented the North American Free Trade Agreement (the “NAFTA”) with respect to the United States and, pursuant to sections 201 and 202 of the North American Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act (the “NAFTA Implementation Act”) (19 U.S.C. 3331 and 3332), incorporated in the HTS the tariff modifications and rules of origin necessary or appropriate to carry out the NAFTA.

(b) Because the substance of the changes to the Convention will be reflected in slightly differing form in the national tariff schedules of the three parties to the NAFTA, the rules of origin and interpretative rules set forth in Appendix 6.A of Annex 300-B, Annex 401, and Annex 403.1 to the NAFTA must be changed to ensure that the tariff and certain other treatment accorded under the NAFTA to originating goods will continue to be provided under the tariff categories that are being modified to reflect the amendments to the Convention. The NAFTA parties have agreed to make these changes.

4. Section 202 of the NAFTA Implementation Act provides rules for determining whether goods imported into the United States originate in the territory of a NAFTA party and thus are eligible for the tariff and other treatment contemplated under the NAFTA. Section 202(q) of the NAFTA Implementation Act (19 U.S.C. 3332(q)) authorizes the President to proclaim the rules of origin set out in the NAFTA and any subordinate tariff categories necessary to carry out the NAFTA Implementation Act consistent with the NAFTA.

5. I have determined that the modifications to the HTS proclaimed in this proclamation pursuant to sections 201 and 202 of the NAFTA Implementation Act are necessary in order to ensure that the tariff and certain other treatment accorded under the NAFTA, including previously proclaimed staged reductions in rates of duty, will continue to be given to NAFTA originating goods under tariff categories that are being