

Foreword

The first half of 1995 was a time of challenge and change. The election of a new Republican Congress set the stage for a fundamental public debate over the role of government, the country's values, and the way we could move forward as one people. Throughout this debate, I remained firmly committed to this ideal: America is strong only when America is united, and when we leave no one behind.

As I made clear in my State of the Union Address, we have an obligation to offer the American people a new kind of government for new times. My Administration recognizes that there isn't a program for every problem, but that we can produce a government that works better and costs less. We launched a top-to-bottom overhaul of Federal rules in an effort to bring common sense to often complex regulation. We streamlined the regulatory process by abolishing 16,000 pages of regulations. We reformed environmental workplace safety and pharmaceutical regulation and we trimmed red tape and business burdens, without hurting public safety and health. We eliminated the 10,000 page Federal personnel manual and we cut 136,000 positions from the Federal work force.

As we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe, we reaffirmed our commitment to lead for peace and freedom. At a summit meeting in Russia, I joined the Russian leader in advancing the security of our people and the world—by deepening our common efforts to reduce the nuclear threat, agreeing to improve our cooperation against terrorism, and pledging to work as partners for an undivided Europe. In Haiti, I thanked our troops for securing the transition from dictatorship to democracy. And at the 50th anniversary of the United Nations, we took stock of half a century of achievement and pledged to adapt the UN for the challenges of the 21st century.

Pursuing our mission to create a safer world, the United States led the international effort among 170 countries to secure the indefinite and unconditional extension of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. And by applying steady, patient pressure to North Korea, we secured an agreement that froze its dangerous nuclear program.

In furthering our commitment to open markets and expand opportunities for U.S. exports, we reached an historic agreement with Japan to open further its automotive market to potentially billions of dollars worth of American cars and parts.

In April, our Nation was shaken by the tragic terrorist bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City. One hundred sixty-eight Americans lost their lives. But moments of tragedy often bring out the best in people, and thousands of Americans turned their energy and prayers toward helping the people of Oklahoma endure and overcome their enormous loss.