

Christmas, 1970

Statement by the President. December 24, 1970

Christmas is a family time. Let us make it, at Christmas 1970, a time when we have a very special sense of Americans as a national family. Let us put aside what divides us and rediscover what unites us—concern for one another, love of liberty and justice, pride in our own diversity. Let us resolve to work together to right old wrongs and heal old wounds, to do what needs to be done to make this a better country and a better world for all of our children.

Our greatest hope at Christmas 1970—and at every Christmastime of course—is for peace in the world. This Christmas we can be thankful that we are making progress toward peace.

Peace is a fragile thing, and there are dangers that threaten it in many parts of the world. But I firmly believe that, in this Christmas season, we can look forward with greater confidence than at any time since World War II to the prospect that our children can have, at last, what we all devoutly hope for: a generation of peace.

Bill for the Relief of Miloye M. Sokitch

The President's Memorandum of Disapproval. December 24, 1970

I have withheld my approval from H.R. 3571, "Relief of Miloye M. Sokitch."

This bill would permit the Foreign Claims Settlement Commission to consider the claim of Miloye M. Sokitch under the Italian claims program administered by the Commission. The amount determined by the Commission to be due to Mr. Sokitch would be paid by the Secretary of the Treasury out of the Italian Claims Fund.

After World War II the Italian Government transferred funds to the United States for the payment of claims of Americans for the loss or damage of their property in Italy during the war. While the statutory authorization for this program originally limited the eligibility of claimants to those who were American nationals at the time their property was lost or damaged, the law was amended in 1958 to include persons, so-called late nationals, who had become nationals of the United States prior to August 9, 1955, and who had filed claims under the original statute prior to September 30, 1956.

Mr. Sokitch has a claim of \$215,200 for property losses he suffered in Italy during the war. He was not eligible to have his claim considered under the original legislation, however, because he did not become an American citizen until 1947, and he was not eligible to have his claim considered as a late national under the 1958 amend-

ment because he had not filed a claim within the time prescribed in that amendment.

In 1967, the Executive Branch recommended general legislation which would have recognized the claims of Mr. Sokitch and approximately 50 other late nationals similarly situated but Congress refused to enact it. At the same time, since approximately \$1 million was still left in the Italian claims program, Congress did authorize the settlement of the claims of Americans who lost property in areas ceded by Italy after the war, primarily the Dodecanese Islands.

I can find no true equities to support approval of H.R. 3571. Mr. Sokitch's claim is no different from those of the 50 other late nationals whose claims for property losses in Italy are barred by existing law. Along with these other claimants, Mr. Sokitch was also denied relief when the general legislation that would have recognized their claims was rejected by Congress. Mr. Sokitch would thus be given special and preferential treatment over a number of other persons whose cases differ in no material respect from his.

Further, permitting Mr. Sokitch to have his claim adjudicated and paid, if otherwise found meritorious, would be unfair to those persons whose claims for property losses in the areas ceded by Italy are now under consideration. I am advised that asserted claims under this ongoing program aggregate approximately \$24 million as compared with the \$1 million available for their payment. Any settlement paid Mr. Sokitch under the preferential provisions of H.R. 3571 will obviously reduce the settlements that can be paid to the persons already eligible for payment under the general provisions of the ceded areas program.

For the foregoing reasons, I feel compelled to withhold my approval from H.R. 3571.

RICHARD NIXON

The White House
December 24, 1970

Bill To Promote Training in Family Medicine

The President's Memorandum of Disapproval. Dated December 24, 1970. Released December 26, 1970

I am withholding my signature from S. 3418, a bill designed to promote training in family medicine. The authority provided in this bill is unnecessary and represents the wrong approach to the solution of the nation's health problems.

In my press conference on December 10, I stated that a health program will be one of the highest priority proposals I will submit to the Congress next year. We will

propose a broad pattern of reforms to deal with the nation's health problems and needs on a systematic and comprehensive basis. In contrast, the piecemeal bill I am rejecting today simply continues the traditional approach of adding more programs to the almost unmanageable current structure of Federal Government health efforts.

The Federal Government already has at least four programs on the books that provide funds which can be used to promote the training of family medicine practitioners. Moreover, the entire concept of American medicine is in an evolutionary stage. There are differing opinions on how best to organize and train personnel to provide comprehensive and continuing care to individuals and families.

Under these circumstances, I do not believe it wise to place heavy emphasis on the establishment of separate departments of family medicine in medical schools, as S. 3418 would do. This is only one—and not necessarily the most efficient—method of achieving our national health care objectives, and should not be fixed in law.

RICHARD NIXON

The White House
December 24, 1970

Family Planning Services and Population Research Act of 1970

*Statement by the President Upon Signing the
Bill Into Law. December 26, 1970*

On July 18, 1969, I sent to the Congress a message proposing the creation of a Commission on Population Growth and the American Future. The Congress acted promptly on my proposal and the Act establishing the Commission was signed by me on March 16, 1970. The Commission is now functioning: its interim report will be due in the spring of 1971, and its final report will be submitted in the spring of 1972.

At the same time, I called for a national commitment to provide adequate family planning services within the next 5 years to all those who want them but cannot afford them. It was clear that the domestic family planning services supported by the Federal Government were not adequate to provide information and services to all who want them on a voluntary basis.

To implement this national commitment, I asked for expanded research in contraceptive development and the behavioral sciences, reorganization of family planning service activities within the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, and legislation which would help the Department to implement this important program by providing broader and more precise legislative authority and a clearer source of financial support. The National

Center for Family Planning Services was established in the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare shortly after my message.

The bill before me today, the "Family Planning Services and Population Research Act of 1970," completes the legislation I requested in my message on population. This measure provides for expanded research, training of manpower, and increased family planning services. In addition, it provides for the development of family planning and population growth information and education.

It is noteworthy that this landmark legislation on family planning and population has had strong bipartisan support. I am confident that by working together—at Federal, State and local levels—we can achieve the goal of providing adequate family planning services within the next 5 years to all those who want them but cannot afford them.

I am proud to affix my signature to this important legislation and share this pride with so many who have worked so hard towards its enactment.

NOTE: As enacted, the bill (S. 2108) is Public Law 91-572, approved December 24, 1970.

Use of Herbicides in Vietnam

*Announcement of United States Policy on
Use of Herbicides. December 26, 1970*

In response to the President's direction to reduce the use of herbicides in Vietnam, the Secretary of Defense has reported the following actions to the President:

Steps are being taken so that there will be strict conformance in Vietnam with policies governing the use of herbicides in the United States.

Ambassador Bunker and General Abrams are initiating a program for an orderly, yet rapid phase-out of the herbicide operations.

During the phase-out, the use of herbicides in Vietnam will be restricted to perimeter of firebases and U.S. installations or remote, unpopulated areas.

The ban on the herbicide known as "ORANGE" remains in effect.

United States Prisoners of War in Southeast Asia

*The President's Open Letter to Wives and Families
of American Prisoners of War. December 26, 1970*

Although I have corresponded with many of you individually, I would like, during this Christmas season,