

NOTE: This address was recorded at 3:50 p.m. on June 25 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on June 26.

Address to the Nation on the Strike on Iraqi Intelligence Headquarters

June 26, 1993

My fellow Americans, this evening I want to speak with you about an attack by the Government of Iraq against the United States and the actions we have just taken to respond.

This past April, the Kuwaiti Government uncovered what they suspected was a car bombing plot to assassinate former President George Bush while he was visiting Kuwait City. The Kuwaiti authorities arrested 16 suspects, including 2 Iraqi nationals. Following those arrests, I ordered our own intelligence and law enforcement agencies to conduct a thorough and independent investigation. Over the past several weeks, officials from those agencies reviewed a range of intelligence information, traveled to Kuwait and elsewhere, extensively interviewed the suspects, and thoroughly examined the forensic evidence.

This Thursday, Attorney General Reno and Director of Central Intelligence Woolsey gave me their findings. Based on their investigation there is compelling evidence that there was, in fact, a plot to assassinate former President Bush and that this plot, which included the use of a powerful bomb made in Iraq, was directed and pursued by the Iraqi intelligence service.

We should not be surprised by such deeds, coming as they do from a regime like Saddam Hussein's, which is ruled by atrocity, slaughtered its own people, invaded two neighbors, attacked others, and engaged in chemical and environmental warfare. Saddam has repeatedly violated the will and conscience of the international community. But this attempt at revenge by a tyrant against the leader of the world coalition that defeated him in war is particularly loathsome and cowardly. We thank God it was unsuccessful. The authorities who foiled it have the appreciation of all Americans.

It is clear that this was no impulsive or random act. It was an elaborate plan devised by the Iraqi Government and directed against a former President of the United States because

of actions he took as President. As such, the Iraqi attack against President Bush was an attack against our country and against all Americans. We could not and have not let such action against our Nation go unanswered.

From the first days of our Revolution, America's security has depended on the clarity of this message: Don't tread on us. A firm and commensurate response was essential to protect our sovereignty, to send a message to those who engage in state-sponsored terrorism, to deter further violence against our people, and to affirm the expectation of civilized behavior among nations.

Therefore, on Friday I ordered our forces to launch a cruise missile attack on the Iraqi intelligence service's principal command-and-control facility in Baghdad. Those missiles were launched this afternoon at 4:22 eastern daylight time. They landed approximately an hour ago. I have discussed this action with the congressional leadership and with our allies and friends in the region. And I have called for an emergency meeting of the United Nations Security Council to expose Iraq's crime.

These actions were directed against the Iraqi Government, which was responsible for the assassination plot. Saddam Hussein has demonstrated repeatedly that he will resort to terrorism or aggression if left unchecked. Our intent was to target Iraq's capacity to support violence against the United States and other nations and to deter Saddam Hussein from supporting such outlaw behavior in the future. Therefore, we directed our action against the facility associated with Iraq's support of terrorism, while making every effort to minimize the loss of innocent life.

There should be no mistake about the message we intend these actions to convey to Saddam Hussein, to the rest of the Iraqi leadership, and to any nation, group, or person who would harm our leaders or our citizens. We will com-

bat terrorism. We will deter aggression. We will protect our people.

The world has repeatedly made clear what Iraq must do to return to the community of nations. And Iraq has repeatedly refused. If Saddam and his regime contemplate further illegal provocative actions, they can be certain of our response.

Let me say to the men and women in our Armed Forces and in our intelligence and law enforcement agencies who carried out the investigation and our military response: You have my gratitude and the gratitude of all Americans.

You have performed a difficult mission with courage and professionalism.

Finally, I want to say this to all the American people: While the cold war has ended, the world is not free of danger. And I am determined to take the steps necessary to keep our Nation secure. We will keep our forces ready to fight. We will work to head off emerging threats, and we will take action when action is required. That is precisely what we have done today.

Thank you, and God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:40 p.m. from the Oval Office at the White House.

Remarks and an Exchange With Reporters Prior to a Cabinet Meeting June 28, 1993

The President. First, I want to say that this morning I received a report from the National Security Adviser about the action in Iraq over the weekend, confirming that we did in fact cripple the Iraqi intelligence capacity, which was the intent of the action. Our allies have been quite positive in their response. And I want to say a special word of compliment to Ambassador Albright for the work she did at the United Nations yesterday. I thought it was an excellent job.

I think it's very important today at this Cabinet meeting that we move on to other matters, that we go back to the domestic agenda. We have to prepare for the conference on the budget and the economic plan. We need to think about and talk a little about the upcoming G-7 summit in Tokyo and what that means for our economic prospects here at home. And there are a number of other issues that I want to discuss today, including our efforts to seek rapid passage of the national service act.

So I'm anxious to go forward. I do want to acknowledge, the first time as a confirmed member of this Cabinet, Lee Brown. He was here last time, but he's been confirmed since he was here before. Tom Glynn, the Deputy Secretary of Labor, is here, for those of you who don't know him, because Mr. Reich is moving his family to Washington today. I suppose that means he's going to stay on for a while. [*Laughter*]

Strike on Iraqi Intelligence Headquarters

Q. Mr. President, what kind of message were you sending, first of all, to other terrorist nations, given what we now know about the possibility of Iran and potentially Saddam? And what message do you think this sends also to other countries and to the military here about your resolve in your capacity as Commander in Chief?

The President. Well, the action I took I thought was clearly warranted by the facts. And I think other terrorists around the world need to know that the United States will do what we can to combat terrorism, as I said in my statement on Saturday evening. It is plainly what we ought to be doing.

Q. [*Inaudible*—the events last week in New York and the attack over the weekend in Baghdad, should the American people be concerned about terrorism on American shores in the next few weeks?

The President. I think the American people should be reassured, in the New York instance, that the Federal authorities and the New York Police Department did a good job. I think the American people know enough about terrorism to know that it is always a potential problem, but we are going to be very aggressive in dealing with it, and we're going to do everything we possibly can to deal with it.

Q. Mr. President, how does the decision to have gone ahead and bombed Baghdad on Sat-