

Apr. 13 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1994

the present, "It is too much for the senses, too crowded, too confusing, too present to imagine." But soon the present will be past, and all the athletes will fully comprehend, with the benefit of time, the magnitude of their achievement in making our Olympic team and what they mean in their own lives and to the lives of their friends and families and what they can mean to the lives of so many millions of others in America. The Olympic moment may be over,

but their lifetime of training will bring a lifetime of benefits to themselves and to all the rest of us as well.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:10 p.m. at the Washington Hilton Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Leroy Walker, president, U.S. Olympic Committee.

Statement on the Bombing in Hadera, Israel *April 13, 1994*

The United States strongly condemns this terrorist act. On behalf of the American people, I want to express my condolences to the families of the innocent victims killed on Israel's day of remembrance for those who fell in war. This action, like those before it, is a further attempt by extremists to derail the peace process. They must not be allowed to succeed.

We strongly support Prime Minister Rabin's pledge that he will continue the peace negotia-

tions regardless of such terrorist acts. We also welcome Chairman Arafat's rejection of attacks on innocent Israeli civilians intended to strike at the peace process. We believe the best response to the enemies of peace is to demonstrate that negotiations can change realities on the ground and give hope to Israelis and Palestinians for a peaceful future.

Statement by the Press Secretary on the President's Telephone Call to Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin of Israel *April 13, 1994*

The President called Prime Minister Rabin of Israel this afternoon to express his condolences over the killings of Israeli civilians in Hadera and to express his sense of urgency regarding concluding the agreement on implementation of the Israel-Palestinian Declaration of Principles. Prime Minister Rabin agreed with the President that it was important to accelerate

the negotiations and reach prompt agreement. Both leaders underscored the need to ensure that the enemies of peace do not succeed. The President made it clear that the United States was ready to do its part to ensure that the negotiations reached a successful conclusion as rapidly as possible.

Nomination for the Export-Import Bank of the United States *April 13, 1994*

The President today announced his intention to nominate Julie Belaga as a member of the

Board of Directors of the Export-Import Bank of the United States.

“Julie Belaga’s impressive range of public and private sector experience, particularly in the area of the environment, will be a valuable addition to the Export-Import Bank Board,” said the President.

NOTE: A biography of the nominee was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary.

Remarks on the American Helicopter Tragedy in Iraq and an Exchange With Reporters

April 14, 1994

The President. On behalf of the American people, I want to begin by expressing my deep sorrow at the tragedy this morning in Iraq and to extend my personal condolences to the families and the loved ones of all those who lost their lives.

Three years ago, our Armed Forces joined in a multinational mission to provide humanitarian relief to the oppressed Kurdish minority civilians in northern Iraq. Those who died today were a part of that mission of mercy. They served with courage and professionalism, and they lost their lives while trying to save the lives of others. The important work they were doing must, and will, continue.

According to initial reports, two American helicopters were mistakenly identified as Iraqi helicopters and shot down by United States aircraft. I have met with Secretary Perry this morning. I have talked with him and with General Shalikashvili, and I have instructed him to lead a full inquiry into the circumstances of this terrible incident. We will get the facts. And when we get the facts, we will make them available to the American people and to the people of Britain, France, and Turkey, our partners in Operation Provide Comfort.

Later today, Secretary Perry and General Shalikashvili will be providing further briefings to you as we know more and more facts. The facts are still coming in, and we will give them to you just as soon as we have verified exactly what occurred.

At this moment, let me close by saying that we should join together in terrible sorrow and also in honoring the high purpose for which these individuals served and in which they lost their lives. The Nation and the world should remember them in gratitude.

Thank you.

Helicopter Tragedy

Q. Mr. President, what’s your preliminary assessment, though? What are you being told of how this could have happened? And is there any suggestion that the troops there are on too fine of a hair trigger?

The President. Well, all that will have to be, obviously, evaluated in light of the real facts here. There are at least three points of inquiry involving, first, the actions of the American jets; second, the AWACS and their actions; and third, the actions of the helicopters themselves. And again, I will tell you we will give you as much information as we can. I just am very reluctant to say anything until we’re absolutely sure. I want you to have good information, and we will be doing continuous briefings and updates all day long as we know more.

Q. Do you know anything, Mr. President, about the numbers of people that might be involved and whether they were all American?

The President. We know that there were probably more than 20 people involved and that they were not all American. We do not believe they were all American. We believe there were some other people on the helicopters.

Q. And just to follow, you seem to be indicating—

The President. We do not have—let me say, as of the moment I walked out here, we do not have an absolute roster of the people on the helicopters. I would tell you if I knew. But we think there were approximately 12 total crewmembers, and we know there were some other people on the helicopters. And we know there were some other member countries in the operations. We do not know any more than that. When we know who was on there, we will tell you. As you know, we’ve dispatched an American team to the site to get all the facts.