

Sept. 7 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1996

most powerful tools available to investigate the development, production, transfer, or acquisition of chemical weapons, as well as their actual use.

We in America have been very fortunate in never experiencing a terrorist attack with chemical weapons. Japan, the only country that has suffered such an attack, saw the value of the Chemical Weapons Convention instantly. Within one month of the sarin gas attack in Tokyo, Japan completed ratification of the convention.

Let's not wait. For the safety of our troops, and to fight terror here and around the globe, the Senate should ratify the Chemical Weapons Convention now.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 3:50 p.m. on September 6 at the Church Street Station in Orlando, FL, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on September 7.

Statement on the Death of Arthur Flemming

September 8, 1996

Arthur Flemming was a close friend to me and the First Lady. He was a wonderful human being and great public servant who thought of nothing more than the health and well being of his fellow Americans. He transcended party,

generation, and race in search of consensus on some of the great issues of our day. The First Lady and I, and the country, will greatly miss him.

Remarks Announcing Counterterrorism Initiatives and an Exchange With Reporters

September 9, 1996

The President. Thank you. Let me begin by thanking the Vice President and the commission for all their hard work and for this excellent action plan. This is partnership at its best, Government and private citizens, Democrats and Republicans, joining together for the common good.

As the Vice President has said, we asked the members of this commission to do a lot of work in a little time. They rolled up their sleeves; they delivered. We know we can't make the world risk-free, but we can reduce the risks we face, and we have to take the fight to the terrorists. If we have the will, we can find the means. We have to continue to fight terrorism on every front by pursuing our three-part strategy: first, by rallying a world coalition with zero tolerance for terrorism; second, by giving law enforcement the strong counterterrorism tools they need; and third, by improving security in our airports and on our airplanes.

The Vice President's action plan goes to the heart of this strategy. So I want everyone to

understand that whenever this plan says, "the commission recommends," you can understand it to mean, "the President will."

Today I will direct the Federal aviation authority to instruct their personnel in the field to convene immediately those responsible for security at our Nation's 450 commercial airports so they can strengthen security as a team. I will direct that all airport and airline employees with access to secure areas be given criminal background checks and FBI fingerprint checks. I will direct the FAA to begin full passenger bag match for domestic flights at selected airports. And I'm proud to say that several of the commission's recommendations will be put into place immediately.

Last Thursday, Secretary Pena announced a rule to require more accurate and detailed passenger manifests on international flights, a priority for families of victims of aviation disasters. Families of victims also deserve a single point of contact for receiving information. That is why today I will sign an Executive order to give

the National Transportation Safety Board the job of coordinating the response for families of victims. And our military has agreed to provide, starting next week, several dozen canine teams for key airports.

But as the Vice President's action plan makes clear, there is much more which must be done, and we cannot meet that responsibility without willingness to commit our resources. Shortly, I will submit to Congress a budget request for more than \$1 billion to expand our FBI antiterrorism forces and to put the most sophisticated bomb detection machines in America's airports.

As a result of these steps, not only will the American people feel safer, they will be safer. Close to half our requests will be used to make the improvements in aviation security the Vice President and this commission have asked for.

As I said, we want to put the most sophisticated bomb detection equipment for screening passengers, baggage, and cargo in America's airports. We should do this as quickly as possible. We want to significantly expand the number of FBI special agents dedicated to fighting terrorism. We want to expand the use of bomb-sniffing dogs in our airports—the no-tech program the Vice President has recommended—and train additional bomb-sniffing dogs for Government use as well.

In addition to improving security in airports and airplanes, the focus of the Vice President's plan, we want to use these funds to keep advancing the other two parts of our strategy, combating terrorists beyond our borders and here at home. We need to continue to improve security at our military and diplomatic facilities overseas so we can better protect those who wear our Nation's uniform and serve our Nation's interests abroad. We need to continue to expand our intelligence capabilities to combat terrorists worldwide. We must train and equip fire departments and medical teams so they can respond to biological or chemical attacks like the sarin gas attack in the Tokyo subway. We must tighten protection at a number of high profile public sites including Government buildings, national landmarks, and national parks.

These counterterrorism funds are a smart investment in our Nation's security and our people's safety. I urge Congress to join with me in combating terrorism by giving us the resources we need to do the job right. As I requested, the Vice President and this commission

took just 45 days to deliver their action plan. Now Congress should act with the same dispatch before they leave in October to pass the funding that will bring these security measures to life. Our people deserve no less.

There are other areas where Congress can and should act to strengthen our fight against terrorism. We need new laws I have proposed to crack down on money laundering and to prosecute and punish those who commit violent crimes against American citizens abroad, to add taggants to gunpowder used in bombs so we can track down the bomb makers, to extend the same police power we now have against organized crime to tapping all the phones a terrorist uses so we can better prevent terrorist attacks. And I again call upon the Senate to ratify without delay the Chemical Weapons Convention.

We need all these laws, and we need them now, before Congress recesses for the year. Terrorists don't wait, and neither should we. The American people should be grateful that the Vice President and this fine commission didn't wait and in fact delivered on their mandate within just 45 days.

Thank you very much.

TWA Flight 800

Q. Are you any closer, Mr. President, to finding a solution to the TWA crash?

The President. Well, we don't have an answer for you. They are continuing to work, and they continue to piece the evidence together, but we don't have an answer now.

Q. Do you think a missile caused it?

The President. Excuse me?

Q. A missile?

The President. It would be wrong for me to comment until I see the people who are doing the reports' final report.

Counterterrorism Technology

Q. Mr. President, the high sophisticated technology that you mentioned this morning for screening passengers for bomb detection technology can see through clothes. Do you expect there to be a major debate over privacy issues and civil rights in connection with the deployment of this technology? And could it thwart some of the commission's actions?

The President. Do you want to answer that?

The Vice President. Let me respond to that. We think that particular concern has been great-

ly overstated in some of the preliminary reports. That's only one of several technologies that are discussed in this report. Incidentally, the commission is recommending the establishment of a civil liberties advisory board to review and give advice upon any of the recommendations that might raise privacy or civil liberties concerns. But we think that particular concern has been vastly overstated.

Iraq

Q. Mr. President, in Iraq are we abandoning Kurdish rebels who took a stand against Saddam Hussein and now are being hunted down by his forces?

The President. Well, what we know of what is happening is that the Kurdish forces themselves are continuing to fight. Obviously, Saddam Hussein is supporting one side over another now. But the primary fight is being carried on between the Turkish forces—I mean the Kurdish forces, excuse me. We're doing everything we can to get out of Iraq American citizens and those who have worked with us. And we have done everything we could to make it clear to the Kurds that we think that there should not be any cavalier killing of civilians and others who are not combatants in this.

As to the intelligence matters, I can't comment. But we are doing everything that we believe we can do and that we think is appropriate.

Hurricane Fran

Q. Have you gotten any updates on the damage from Hurricane Fran and anything else that you can do to—particularly for the people suffering from the flooding?

The President. Yes. I got updates all weekend on the extent of the damage, and I expect to hear from Mr. Witt today about where we are with the floods and whether we need to do any more to go back to try to get some extra help for the—it's quite extensive, and I think it's—the hurricane itself, except for the terrible loss of life in North Carolina, was not as damaging as we thought it would be, but the aftermath of the flooding has been, I think, worse than was anticipated. And so I expect to get a more updated report today in terms of what else should be done. And when I know something, I'll say.

The Vice President. Could I add a brief word on that, Mr. President?

In fact, a couple members of the commission coming from Virginia were impeded in their attendance at this event this morning by the flooding. And I want to single out retired General Mike Loh, who worked so hard on this commission report. And the other members of the commission are listed in the back. Not all of them could make it here this morning, and a couple of them for that reason.

Iraq

Q. Mr. President, do those that you are trying to get out of Iraq include the members of the Iraqi National Congress, who are apparently holed up in a mountain hideaway somewhere and hoping for political asylum?

The President. I think it would be better for me not to comment now. I'd like to stay with my first statement. We're doing everything we think we can to help anybody that needs to be out of Iraq.

Q. Mr. President, what are your concerns about the building strength of Saddam's ground forces, though?

The President. Well, the main thing that we wanted to say was first of all, the United States has done a great deal to help the Kurds over the years. And we've worked very hard. They make it more difficult to help them when their leaders continue to promote fights within the Kurds, within the Kurdish faction. And as you might expect, Saddam Hussein would try to take advantage of that.

Our ability to control internal events in Iraq is limited, but what we did do, which I thought was important, was when we found that what he had done contravened the United Nations resolution and constituted repression of his own people by carrying forward the military attack on Irbil himself, what we did was to expand the no-fly zone and enforce it and take out air defenses, which means that every day he has to pay a price in terms of his capacity to maneuver in his own country and threaten his neighbors.

And so we have done what we thought was appropriate there. I would still like to do more to help the Kurds, but frankly, if you want the fighting—for the fighting to be ended, the leaders of the various factions are going to have to be willing to go back to the peace table and talk it through. We have worked very hard with them, but that's a decision they're going

to have to make, which will have a lot to do with the fate of their own people.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:02 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House after receiving the initial report of the White House Commission on Aviation Safety and Security. In his remarks, he referred to President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

Memorandum on Assistance to Families Affected by Aviation and Other Transportation Disasters

September 9, 1996

Memorandum for the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, the Attorney General, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Secretary of Transportation, the Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board

Subject: Assistance to Families Affected by Aviation and Other Transportation Disasters

When an aviation or other transportation disaster occurs, the Federal Government properly bears responsibility for addressing the needs of families of the passengers involved. In the event of a disaster occurring abroad, the Department of State currently performs such functions. In the event of a disaster determined to result from criminal activity, the Department of Justice aids the families of victims. No unit of the Federal Government, however, now has clear responsibility, authority, and capacity to assist families of passengers involved in domestic disasters not determined to be criminal.

To fill the gap, I am asking the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), as the unit of the Federal Government with the lead role in investigating transportation disasters, to coordinate the provision of Federal services to the families of victims. Such services might include, as appropriate in the circumstances, providing speedy and accurate information about the accident and recovery efforts, ensuring that families who wish to travel to the accident site receive all necessary assistance, and arranging opportunities for counseling and other support. I am also asking the NTSB to work cooperatively with State and local authorities and with private relief organizations, such as the American National Red Cross, to ensure appropriate coordination

of the services they provide with those of the Federal Government.

To enable the NTSB to perform these coordinating functions effectively, I am directing the heads of the Departments of State, Defense, Justice, Health and Human Services, and Transportation, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency to recognize the NTSB as the coordinator of services to families and to cooperate fully with the NTSB regarding the prompt and effective delivery of such services.

In particular, within 15 days of the date of this directive, the head of each listed department or agency is to designate an official who has primary responsibility for working with the NTSB to provide services to families. Within 30 days of this designation, each listed department or agency is to enter into a memorandum of understanding with the NTSB, specifying services the department or agency will provide at NTSB's request, as well as specifying any other cooperative arrangements to go into effect in the event of an aviation or other transportation disaster. The heads of the listed departments and agencies shall notify me promptly of all such memoranda.

By ensuring that a single agency has the responsibility to coordinate the provision of support services and the authority to call on other departments and agencies to provide such services, this directive will improve the capacity of the Federal Government to address the needs of the families of victims of aviation and other transportation disasters. In so doing, it may provide some small measure of comfort to families that have suffered grievous loss.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON