

Aug. 6 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1998

Statement on Iraq's Failure To Comply With United Nations Weapons Inspections

August 6, 1998

Iraq's latest refusal to cooperate with the international weapons inspectors is unacceptable. Far from hastening the day the international community lifts sanctions against Iraq, as Iraq intends, its failure to live up to its obligations will perpetuate those sanctions and keep the Iraqi economy under tight international control.

As a condition of the cease-fire in the Gulf war, the United Nations demanded and Iraq agreed to account for its nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons and the missiles to deliver them within 15 days and to destroy them. Last February Iraq reiterated that commitment in an agreement it signed with U.N. Secretary-General Annan. In short, Iraq has had it within its power to end the sanctions by meeting this affirmative obligation, letting the inspectors finish their job, and complying with the other relevant Security Council resolutions.

Instead of cooperating, Iraq has spent the better part of this decade avoiding its commitments to the international community. Recent discoveries by the weapons inspectors, including new documents on chemical munitions used in the

Iran-Iraq war and nerve gas residue on Iraqi warheads, only underscore Iraq's failure to meet its obligations to the world.

Iraq's most recent refusal to cooperate with U.N. weapons inspectors is another misguided attempt to divide the international community in order to gain the lifting of the sanctions. These sanctions have denied Iraq over \$120 billion in resources to rebuild its military and build more weapons of mass destruction. Its current tactics once again will backfire. Unless Iraq reverses course and cooperates fully with the international weapons inspectors, the United States will stop any and all efforts to alter the sanctions regime. This will deny the Iraqi leadership what it wants most: an end to sanctions. Because of the expanded oil-for-food arrangement we created last winter, the Iraqi people will continue to receive the food, medicine, and other essential supplies they need.

The burden has always been and remains on Iraq to disclose and dismantle its weapons of mass destruction capability. We remain determined to see that Iraq keeps that commitment.

Remarks on Signing the Workforce Investment Act of 1998

August 7, 1998

Thank you very much, and good morning. Thank you very much, Mr. Antosy, to Benny Hernandez, examples of what we come here to celebrate and enhance today. Thank you, Secretary Herman, for your leadership on this bill which was so essential to its passage. Chairman Goodling, Senator DeWine, Congressman Clay, Congressman McKeon, Congressman Kildee, many other Members of the House Representatives who are here. To Senator Jeffords and others who are not here, who, along with Senator DeWine, worked on the passage in the Senate.

I'd also like to thank the representatives of the National Association of Counties and other local groups who are here. And I will say more about all of you in a moment.

I hope you will understand why I feel the need to comment on the fact that early this morning bombs exploded outside two of our American Embassies in Africa. An explosion in Nairobi, Kenya, killed and wounded scores of people. We have reports that several Americans are among the dead. Another explosion in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, also caused many casualties. At this time, there are no reports that any Americans were killed in that attack, although our Embassy appears to have been the target.

Both explosions caused large-scale damage to our Embassies and to surrounding buildings, as you may have already seen from the pictures coming in. Though the attacks appear to have been coordinated, no one has yet claimed responsibility for them.

As I speak, we have dispatched Defense Department and State Department-led emergency response teams to the region. The teams include medical personnel, disaster relief experts, criminal investigators, counter-terrorism specialists. We have taken appropriate security measures at our Embassies and military facilities throughout the region and around the world.

These acts of terrorist violence are abhorrent; they are inhuman. We will use all the means at our disposal to bring those responsible to justice, no matter what or how long it takes. Let me say to the thousands and thousands of hard-working men and women from the State Department and from our other Government agencies who serve us abroad in these Embassies, the work you do every day is vital to our security and prosperity. Your well-being is, therefore, vital to us, and we will do everything we can to assure that you can serve in safety.

To the families and loved ones of the American and African victims of these cowardly attacks, you are in our thoughts and prayers. Out of respect for those who lost their lives, I have ordered that the American flag be flown at half-staff at all Government buildings here at home and around the world. We are determined to get answers and justice.

Now, we are here to do something very important for America's long-term future today. I mentioned the Congressmen and Senators who played a leading role who are here. I'd like to also acknowledge those who are out there whose names I have, and if I make a mistake, stand up and be recognized. [Laughter] If I say you're here, and you're not, just let it go. [Laughter]

In addition to Senator DeWine and Chairman Goodling and Mr. Clay and Mr. McKeon, Mr. Kildee, we have here Congressman Barrett, Congressman Chaka Fattah, Representative Sheila Jackson Lee, Representative Dennis Kucinich, Representative Carrie Meek, Representative Dan Miller, Representative Patsy Mink, Representative Louis Stokes, Representative Steve LaTourette, Representative George Brown, Representative Paul Kanjorski, Congressman Bruce Vento, Congressman Donald Payne, and Congressman Tim Roemer with his own version of America's future in his lap. [Laughter]

I'd also like to thank, again, Alexis Herman and Erskine Bowles and all the people on my staff for their role in this. But one person above

all who has been with me since 1991 and who shared my dream of consolidating this blizzard of Government programs into one grant that we could give a person who was unemployed or underemployed so that they could decide, as Mr. Antosy did, what to do with the help we were giving them on the theory that they would know their own best interest and be able to pursue it, and that is Gene Sperling, who has worked on this for years and years. This is—his heart is in this bill. And I want to thank him as well as all the staff people in Congress.

As Secretary Herman said, this bill fulfills principles for reform of our work force training program that I outlined in my first campaign for President over 6 years ago and that the Vice President set out in our National Performance Review. It is a model of what we should be doing, and also the way we did it is a model of how our Government ought to work. It was a truly bipartisan, American effort.

This morning we received some more good news about our economy. Even though the latest economic report shows the effects of the now settled GM strike, we still see that, over the past year, wages have risen at more than twice the rate of inflation, the fastest real wage growth for ordinary Americans in 20 years. This past month our unemployment rate held firm, in spite of the GM strike, at 4½ percent. For nearly a quarter century, not once had our Nation's unemployment rate gone below 5 percent. It's now been below 5 percent for 13 months in a row. We have low unemployment, low inflation, strong growth, and higher wages.

But to maintain this momentum, we must continue to change and move forward. Over the long run, in the face of daily new challenges in the global marketplace, we simply must press forward with the economic strategy outlined 5½ years ago: fiscal discipline, expanded trade, investment in our people and communities. To maintain fiscal discipline, we must save every penny of our surplus until we save the Social Security system. To maintain exports, we must immediately support the international efforts to stabilize our customers in Asia to reform and lift their economies. In recent weeks we have clearly seen that the crisis in Asia is having an impact on our economy. You can talk to any American grain farmer who will tell you that. For our economy to remain strong, therefore, we must pay our dues to the International Monetary Fund. To invest in our people we

have to give all our people access to world-class education and training, beginning with our children before their school years and ending with people who have access to education throughout a lifetime.

The story Mr. Antosy told is a moving and heartening story. There are a lot of people in his position. In a dynamic global economy, more and more people, even if they stay with the same employer, will have to change the nature of their work several times over the course of a lifetime. It is, therefore, very important that every person who is willing to work hard to make the most of his or her own life should be able to become the success stories we celebrate with Benny Hernandez and James Antosy.

Therefore, we have to do more than we have been doing, even though we have been making progress. The vast majority of corporate managers say the number one prerequisite for continued prosperity is finding a way to fill all our high-skill jobs.

I'm telling you today, there are—even with the unemployment rate as low as it is, there are hundreds of thousands of jobs which are going begging that are high-wage, high-skill jobs, undermining the ability of our free enterprise economy to maximize its benefits to all our people to reach into all the urban neighborhoods and the rural communities and the places that it has not yet reached. Therefore, giving all Americans the tools they need to learn for a lifetime is critical to our ability to continue to grow.

We are making progress in building an America where every 8-year-old can read, every 12-year-old can log on to the Internet, every 18-year-old can go on to college. And today we celebrate a big step forward in making sure that every adult can keep on learning for a lifetime, where no disadvantaged child, no displaced worker, no welfare parent, no one willing to learn and work is left behind.

This is the crowning jewel of a lifetime learning agenda: the Work Force Investment Act to give all our workers opportunities for growth and advancement. It, as Mr. Goodling said and Mr. Clay said in specifying what was in the bill, has many things that will help millions of workers enhance our Nation's competitive age.

Let me just mention some of the things that are most important to me. It empowers workers, not Government programs, by offering training grants directly to them, so they can choose for

themselves what kind of training they want and where they want to get it. There was a time, decades ago, when Congress actually needed to pass specified training programs with specific purposes and mechanisms to implement them. But that time has long since passed. Almost every American is within driving distance of a community college or some other mechanism of advanced training. And almost every American has more than enough sense to decide what is in his or her best interest, given a little good helpful advice on the available alternatives.

The law streamlines and consolidates a tangle of training programs, therefore, into a single, commonsense system. And it also expands our successful model of one-stop career centers so people don't have to trot around to one different agency after another when they find themselves in the position that Mr. Antosy found himself in. It enhances accountability for tough performance standards for States and communities and training providers, even as it gives more flexibility to the States to develop innovative ways to serve our working people better.

It helps to create opportunities for disadvantaged youth. And I think that is terribly important. Everybody is concerned about the juvenile crime rate. We need to be concerned, therefore, about the number of juveniles that are out here on the street, out of school, not doing what could be done to give them a more constructive future.

And finally, it does two more things that I think are quite important. It has a real emphasis on helping people with disabilities prepare for employment, and it gives adults who need it literacy support to move ahead. You cannot train for a lot of these programs if you cannot read at an adequate level. And I think that is terribly important.

What all this amounts to is that we get to celebrate Labor Day a month early this year. At long last, we're giving our workers the tools they need to move quickly to 21st century jobs, higher incomes, and brighter futures. I thank all those on this stage, all those in this audience, and those who could not be here who have worked and waited for this day.

Let me also say that just a couple of minutes ago I had the chance to sign another bill that helps all Americans share in our prosperity, the Credit Union Membership Access Act. Credit unions serve a vital and unique purpose; they

make sure financial services and credit are available to people of modest means. The law I signed strengthens them, helps them to withstand hard economic times, clarifies who can join, and ensures that those who are in credit unions now won't ever get locked out. It will help extend greater credit to those who need it most. It is also good for our economy.

Both these bills are bipartisan bills. They passed with overwhelming bipartisan majorities. They show what can happen when we can put our differences aside and put progress ahead of partisanship and people ahead of politics. That's a good thing because our plate is still full. In the few days remaining in this legislative session, we must still work together to save Social Security first; secure funding for the International Monetary Fund to stabilize our own economic growth; to pass a strong Patients' Bill of Rights, a very crowded education agenda built on excellence and opportunity, and an important

element of our environmental agenda to preserve our environment and grow the economy.

We can do all these things. And as we see today on this very happy occasion, when we do it, we strengthen our country and the future of the children over there with Congressman Roemer and all the others like them throughout America.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:04 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to job training beneficiary James Antosy, who introduced the President; and college student Benny Hernandez, a former gangmember. H.R. 1385, approved August 7, was assigned Public Law No. 105-220. H.R. 1151, the Credit Union Membership Access Act, also approved August 7, was assigned Public Law No. 105-219. The proclamation of August 7 on the victims of the bombing incidents in Africa is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Statement on Signing the Credit Union Membership Access Act *August 7, 1998*

Today I am pleased to sign into law H.R. 1151, the "Credit Union Membership Access Act," which will ensure that millions of Americans have the choice of getting consumer financial services from a credit union.

Our credit unions are special institutions. Providing primarily consumer loans—for cars, education, home improvement and home purchases—and other financial services, like checking accounts and certificates of deposit, they are democratically controlled, member-owned cooperatives, with volunteer, unpaid directors. Because they are not-for-profit organizations, credit unions often can charge lower fees, require lower minimum deposits, and provide more personalized service.

Early this year, a decision by the Supreme Court created uncertainty about the future of credit unions in a case about how credit unions could draw their membership. This bill will re-

store membership flexibility to credit unions, allowing, for example, employees of a number of smaller companies or members of a number of churches to join together to form a credit union. The bill also provides important new safety and soundness reforms. Unfortunately, the bill does not include some important reforms to reaffirm the responsibility of credit unions to meet the needs of low- and moderate-income persons, and to assess their performance in meeting that goal. However, on balance, this bill will significantly strengthen credit unions, which provide so many benefits to consumers.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
August 7, 1998.

NOTE: H.R. 1151, approved August 7, was assigned Public Law No. 105-219.