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Council will not agree to amending the terms of the Resolution.

The Multinational Interception Force (MIF) conducting the maritime enforcement of sanctions against Iraq has, since my last report, encountered the busiest enforcement period since 1991, diverting 24 dhow vessels carrying Iraqi dates worth an estimated $3.5 million. Since October 1994, the MIF has diverted 50 sanctions violating vessels to Gulf ports with oil and date cargoes exceeding an estimated value of $18 million. The expeditious acceptance of these violating vessels by the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Kuwait has greatly contributed to the deterrent effect of MIF sanctions enforcement operations. It has also enhanced enforcement efforts by allowing MIF vessels escorting the diverted vessels to return to patrol operations.

We continue to achieve a significant foreign policy objective in maintaining multinational participation in the MIF. Ships from the United States, Belgium, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom participated in MIF operations during the past 2 months. Additionally, we have received firm commitments from The Netherlands and Australia to send frigates to participate in the MIF from March through July of this year.

The United States continues to work with Honduras, the United Arab Emirates, and India concerning sanctions violations committed by vessels under their flags. Honduras has designated its mission to the United Nations to conduct deflagging proceedings for vessels of Honduran registry. India has initiated ''registry deletion'' proceedings against vessels operating under its flag.

The Commander of the U.S. Fifth Fleet, who serves as the coordinator for the MIF, recently completed a series of briefings for the U.N. Iraq Sanctions Committee. The briefings continued our practice of close coordination and consultation with the Sanctions Committee and members of the Security Council on the issue of maritime Iraq sanctions enforcement. In addition to enforcement of sanctions, the U.S. force presence in the region is intended to maintain the capability to respond rapidly to possible Iraqi aggression or threats against its neighbors.

Security Council Resolution 687 affirmed that Iraq is liable under international law for compensating the victims of its unlawful invasion and occupation of Kuwait. Although the U.N. Compensation Commission (UNCC) has approved some 790,000 individual awards against Iraq, worth about $3.0 billion, it has been able to authorize the payment of only the fixed awards for serious personal injury or death (aggregating approximately $13.5 million). The remainder of the awards cannot be paid because the U.N. Compensation Fund lacks sufficient funding. The awards are supposed to be financed by a deduction from the proceeds of future Iraqi oil sales, once such sales are permitted to resume. However, Iraq's refusal to meet the Security Council's terms for a resumption of oil sales has left the UNCC without adequate financial resources to pay the awards. Iraq's intransigence means the victims of its aggression remain uncompensated for their losses 5 years after the end of the Gulf War.

To conclude, Iraq remains a serious threat to regional peace and stability. I remain determined that Iraq comply fully with all its obligations under the U.N. Security Council Resolutions. My Administration will continue to oppose any relaxation of sanctions until Iraq demonstrates peaceful intentions through its overall compliance with all of the U.N. Security Council Resolutions.

I appreciate the support of the Congress for our efforts, and shall continue to keep the Congress informed about this important issue.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 7.

Remarks Prior to Discussions With King Hussein of Jordan and an Exchange With Reporters

March 7, 1996

Middle East Peace Process

The President. Let me say that I am delighted to have King Hussein here today, es-

pecially at this important time for the Middle East. As ever, the United States is grateful for his leadership and his courage. And I look forward to discussing with him today what we can do together to continue to stand against the forces of terrorism and for the forces of peace in the region. We'll have a number of other things to talk about, but I'm so glad that he's here.

Q. Your Majesty, what do you think the prospects are for resuming the peace negotiations? And what do you think the goal is of the bombings?

King Hussein. As far as I'm concerned, I'd like to thank you, sir, for giving me the pleasure and privilege of being with you here today and with our friends.

I would like to say that we are more than shocked; we are really angered by what we have seen in the way of violence in our part of the world. And we must do everything we can to put an end to this.

And I believe it is the action of a small group against an overwhelming majority of people in our region who are seeking peace, who have seen the taste of peace and the new beginnings and the breaking of a new dawn. I hope that they will be mobilized to do whatever they can to help and be vocal in the face of extremism. And I think the objective is very clear: These people are trying to scuttle the peace process and destroy all that has been achieved. And they must never succeed, and we will do whatever we can towards that end.

Q. Mr. President, is there anything else that the United States can do to help the Israelis and the Palestinians deal with these immediate threats?

The President. Well as you know, we've taken some extra actions in the last few days, and we'll be discussing other options in the days ahead. There may be some other things we can do, but I'd rather not discuss it now until we've actually made some decisions.

Q. Mr. President, Chairman Arafat has called for an international conference to map a strategy to combat terrorism. Do you favor such a meeting?

The President. Well, we've been in contact, obviously, with Chairman Arafat and with Prime Minister Peres and others about all the options, and we haven't ruled out anything. We're working on the things that we ought to do, and we'll have some decisions in the next couple of days about where we go from here.

NAFTA

Q. Mr. President, Canada and Mexico are both raising alarms with the Helms-Burton bill, saying it will violate NAFTA. What's your reaction to that, and would you maybe consider waiving the provision before the election?

The President. Well, I believe that the bill as now written permits compliance with international law, and that is why I said that I would support and sign it.

Q. Does it also——

1996 Election

Q. Are you looking forward to running against Bob Dole?

The President. We ought to give it—I'm looking forward to getting everything settled down here and getting back to work in Washington. We need to go back to work. The main campaign we need to be waging now is a campaign for peace at home—I mean, peace abroad and prosperity at home. We've got a lot of work to do.

[*At this point, one group of reporters left the room, and another group entered.*]

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Mr. President, can you give us any reaction from Syria about the bombings in Israel? And are you satisfied with the actions of the Arab world so far?

The President. Well, I think that Chairman Arafat has made some real efforts, but I think that all of us will have to do more. And we're talking together, working together about what we can do to do more. And I have been in touch with all of our friends in the region and all the countries that are interested in what is going on there and all the countries that have a stake in continuing the peace process, and we're going to do everything we can to keep it going and also to combat terror.

Q. Do you think the peace process is endangered now, continuing, especially the Syria-Israeli track?

The President. Well, it doesn't help—what's happened. But I hope that if we all rally to the cause of peace and to the work of combating the terror, that that will permit the peace process to continue. I believe all the leaders want it to continue.

Q. If there was some—[*inaudible*]—against Iran, and the United States said that Iran is involved, would the United States back any action by Israel against Iran?

The President. Oh, I think it's inappropriate to speculate about such matters. I think that what we're going to do is to talk about what we can do to restore security, restore a basic sense of safety, and to keep going with the peace. And I think that's what we ought to focus on.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:07 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to PLO leader Yasser Arafat and Prime Minister Shimon Peres of Israel. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at Eleanor Roosevelt High School in Greenbelt, Maryland

March 7, 1996

Thank you very much. Thank you, Mark, for your fine introduction and for your fine example, and for reminding us about why this is an important day for the United States. Thank you, Dr. Boarman, for recalling my previous trip to Eleanor Roosevelt. That was a great day. I must say, when I was there then talking about the national education goals, I didn't have any idea I'd be back here a few years later in this role to discuss this issue.

I'd like to thank the Members of Congress who are here, and my good friend, Secretary Cisneros, Governor Glendening and Lt. Governor Townsend; your county executive Wayne Curry, who was with me just yesterday in the White House telling me about how this is the best county in America. I thank Reverend Jackson and all the people from the entertainment community and the other leaders who are here from across America today at this national conference.

I also want you to know that there are two graduates of this high school who work in the White House: one of my associate counsels, Cheryl Mills, and Andy Blocker, who works in Legislative Affairs. So I am a direct beneficiary of Eleanor Roosevelt High School, and I thank you for that.

When I leave you here we're going over to the conference with the delegates, but I wanted to come here with the Vice President and with General McCaffrey because, really, this conference is about you. And, frankly, this is a day when I wish that as President, it weren't my job to give a speech, that I could just spend the next hour or two sitting around visiting with a number of you and listening to you and talking with you about your future, because we're here to try to do what we can to make your lives safer and your future stronger.

You probably don't think about this very much, but already in your lives you have acquired different roles and different responsibilities, and they give you different perspectives. You are students and you're still children; you're sons or daughters. You may be brothers or sisters. If you have an association with organizations, you're in the ROTC or in an athletic club or in the band, you have obligations, doubtless, to your friends that have become more and more important to you as you get older.

That's the position that I find myself in today. I want to speak with you about this whole issue of crime and violence and drugs from the perspective of a President, the head of our Nation's Government, a citizen who understands that much of this work needs to be done in grassroots, citizens' community-based organizations, and the father of a high school-aged daughter. I see this whole issue in terms of what's good for families and what's good for the country.

You're old enough now that you're being confronted on a regular basis with tough decisions, where you have to choose right from wrong, dangerous from safe. What you may not know is that the decisions that you make also may be good or bad not only for this community but for your entire country.

That's what I want to talk to you about today: the decisions that I have to make as President to try to create more opportunity for you and a more secure environment; the decisions that we all have to make as citizens