

Week Ending Friday, August 16, 1996

The President's Radio Address

August 10, 1996

Good morning. Earlier this week Hillary and I were honored to welcome America's Olympic team to the White House. I believe the centennial Olympics were the best ever. The competition was wonderful; a record 197 teams were involved. The crowds were enormous and enthusiastic. Our athletes amassed a terrific record. There were powerful moments of courage in victory and defeat that captured the imagination of the entire world.

I think most of us wish the world would work more like the Olympics. There were all kinds of people bound together by mutual respect and acceptance of the rules of the game. All the individuals and teams had a chance, gave it their best, and win or lose, were better off for their efforts.

As heroic as the feats of the athletes in this Olympics was the way all those involved in the Atlanta games pressed on in the face of adversity. Just 2 weeks ago today a pipe bomb exploded in Centennial Olympic Park. It was a terrorist act aimed not only at the innocent people there but the very spirit of the Olympics. This was brutal evidence that no nation is immune from terrorism and an urgent reminder that we must do everything we can to fight the terrorists.

The world we live in is more open than ever. People have more opportunities than ever because people and technology and information travel quickly across national borders. But these things that make us all closer and give us more chances also make us more vulnerable to the forces of organized destruction, to the drug traffickers, the organized criminals, the people who sell weapons of mass destruction, and of course, especially to the terrorists.

What happened in the Olympic Centennial Park, that wonderful public space open to all people who visited Atlanta, is symbolic of the world's problem with terrorism. Now,

that's why terrorism must be a central national security priority for the United States. Our efforts must and will be unrelenting, coordinated, and strong.

We are pursuing a three-part strategy against terrorism:

First, we're rallying the world community to stand with us against terrorism. From the Summit of the Peacemakers in Sharm al-Sheikh, Egypt, where 13 Arab nations for the very first time condemned terror in Israel and throughout the Middle East, to the antiterror agreements we reached with our G-7 partners in Russia last month to take specific common actions to fight terrorism, we are moving forward together. Our intelligence services have been sharing more information with other nations than ever, to stop terrorists before they act, capture them if they do, and see that they're brought to justice. We've imposed stiff sanctions with our allies against states that support terrorists. When necessary, we're acting on our own. A law I signed this week will help to deny Iran and Libya the money they use to finance international terrorism.

Second, our antiterrorism strategy relies on tough enforcement and stern punishment here at home. We made terrorism a Federal offense, expanded the role of the FBI, imposed the death penalty. We've hired more law enforcement personnel, added resources, improved training. And I'm proposing a new law that will help to keep terrorists off our soil, fight money laundering, and punish violent crimes committed against Americans abroad.

Third, we're tightening security on our airplanes and at our Nation's airports. From now on, we'll hand-search more luggage and screen more bags and require preflight inspections for any plane flying to or from the United States. I've asked Vice President Gore to head an effort to deploy new high-technology inspection machines at our air-

ports and to review all our security operations.

We'll continue to press forward on all three of these fronts. But we cannot cast aside any tools in this fight for the security of our country and the safety of our people. That is exactly what the Republican majority in Congress did by stripping from the antiterrorism legislation key provisions that law enforcement needs to help them find out, track down, and shut down terrorists.

Law enforcement has asked for wiretap authority to enable them to follow terrorists as they move from phone to phone. This is the only way to track stealthy terrorists as they plot their crimes. This authority has already been granted to our law enforcement officials when they're dealing with organized criminals. Surely, it is even more urgent to give them this authority when it comes to terrorists. But Congress said no.

And law enforcement has also asked that explosives used to make a bomb be marked with a taggant, a trace chemical or a microscopic plastic chip scattered throughout the explosives. This way sophisticated machines can find bombs before they explode, and when they do explode police scientists can trace a bomb back to the people who actually sold the explosive materials that led to the bomb.

Now, tagging works. In Switzerland over the past decade it's helped to identify who made bombs and explosives in over 500 cases. When it was being tested in our country several years ago, it helped police to find a murderer in Maryland.

In the last 2 weeks since the Olympic bombing, our law enforcement officers have been working around the clock, but they have been denied a scientific tool that might help to solve investigations like this one.

Our antiterrorism bill would have given us the ability to require tagging gunpowder often used in making pipe bombs. The Republicans in Congress could give law enforcement this antiterrorism tool, but once again they're listening to the gun lobby over law enforcement. It may be good politics, but it's not good for the American people.

This is a reasonable proposal from our law enforcement community. It doesn't have anything to do with limiting people's ability

to own or use guns in a lawful manner. The same people who opposed the Brady bill and the assault weapons ban are opposing this provision. I'd just like to remind them that no hunter or sportsman has lost a weapon or the right to use a weapon in a lawful manner as a result of the Brady bill or the assault weapons ban, but we're getting rid of 19 deadly assault weapons, and 60,000 felons, fugitives, and stalkers have not gotten handguns because of the Brady bill.

We should have a good taggants provision in our antiterrorism legislation. So let's put aside interest group politics and honor the victims of terrorism, protect our people, and support our law enforcement officials by giving them the tools they plainly need.

This fight against terrorism will be long and hard; there will be setbacks along the way. But let's remember, we can win. Already we have prevented planned terrorist attacks on the Holland Tunnel in New York, on the United Nations building, on our airplanes flying out of our west coast airports. Already we have succeeded in extraditing terrorists back to America and convicting terrorists and arresting others who are suspected of terrorism. We can whip this problem.

Just as no enemy could drive us from the fight to meet our challenges and protect our values in World War II and the cold war, we cannot be driven from the fight against today's enemy, terrorism. We know that if we all work together, America will prevail.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 3:30 p.m. on August 9 at the Chapman Ranch in Jackson Hole, WY, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on August 10.

Remarks on Signing the New World Mine Property Agreement at Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming
August 12, 1996

Thank you. This is not the hardest speech I ever had to give. [*Laughter*] What a happy day. Let me thank you, Sue Glidden, for all the work you've done. Just before she came up here one of the folks sitting back here with us said, "Well, now what are you going to do?" And she said, "Now I have my life