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Jews pray for a sweet new year, symbolized by dipping bread and fruit in honey.

In this age of possibility and promise, let all who celebrate this holiday work to strengthen the bonds that tie person to person, neighbor to neighbor, and community to community. As we continue our efforts to broaden and strengthen the fragile Middle East peace, let us pray for a brighter world for our children.

Best wishes for a joyous Rosh Hashana and for a healthy and peaceful new year.

Bill Clinton

NOTE: This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

September 7, 1996

Good morning. Let me begin by saying our thoughts and prayers are with those in the Southeastern part of our Nation who have been affected by Hurricane Fran. Our FEMA Director, James Lee Witt, and other officials from our administration are in the region, and we'll do everything we can to help the people build back from this terrible storm.

This week our Nation's Armed Forces once again have shown their extraordinary skill and strength, this time in a critical mission in Iraq. I ordered our military to take strong action after Saddam Hussein, in the face of clear warnings from the international community, attacked and seized the Kurdish controlled city of Irbil in northern Iraq. Our missile strikes against Saddam's air defense sites in southern Iraq made it possible for us to expand the no-fly zone that has been in place over southern Iraq, the staging ground for the Kuwait invasion in 1990, and the area where Saddam massed his troops and menaced Kuwait again in 1994.

We have denied Saddam control of the skies from the suburbs of Baghdad to the Kuwaiti border. Our action has reduced his ability to strike out against his neighbors and increased our ability to prevent future acts of violence and aggression. As a result of our efforts, Saddam is now strategically worse off than he was before he crossed the lines imposed by the international community.

Once more, we have seen that at home and abroad our service men and women go the extra mile for us. And we must go the extra mile for them. Today I am announcing that I intend to sign the defense authorization bill for 1997 now before the Congress. This bill makes good on our pledge to give our Armed Forces the finest equipment there is so that they have the technological edge to prevail on the battlefields of tomorrow. It also carries forward our commitment to give our troops the quality of life they deserve by funding family and troop housing improvements that we want and by providing a raise of 3 percent, nearly one percent beyond what the law automatically provides now.

The dangers our troops face every day underscore the importance of continuing our work against the forces of destruction. In particular, we must redouble our efforts to stop the spread of weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons such as those that Iraq and other rogue nations have developed. This effort has taken on new urgency now that terrorists can also turn to chemical weapons, whose terrible impact we saw in the sarin gas attack last year in the Tokyo subway.

In the week to come, the Senate faces an historic opportunity to take chemical weapons out of military arsenals and help keep them out of the hands of terrorists. The Senate will vote on ratification of the Chemical Weapons Convention. By voting for this treaty, the Senate can help to banish poison gas from the Earth and make America's citizens and soldiers much more secure.

The convention requires all who sign it to destroy their chemical weapons stockpiles and to foreswear ever developing, producing, or acquiring chemical weapons. It will dramatically reduce the chance of American troops facing such weapons on the battlefield, which is why our military leaders strongly support the treaty. What's more, the treaty provides a strong system of verification, including inspections of suspicious facilities on short notice.

I ask the leaders of both parties in Congress to pull together and pass this treaty. It will make life tougher for rogue states like Iraq. Those few nations that refuse to sign

will find themselves increasingly isolated. Tough new trade controls will prohibit anyone from selling them ingredients for chemical weapons, making it more difficult for them to build the weapons.

The treaty will increase the safety of our citizens at home as well as our troops in the field. The destruction of current stockpiles, including at least 40,000 tons of poison gas in Russia alone, will put the largest potential sources of chemical weapons out of the reach of terrorists. And the trade controls will deny terrorists easy access to the ingredients they seek.

Of course, these controls can never be perfect. But the convention will give us new and vital tools for preventing a terrorist attack involving chemical weapons. By tying the United States into a global verification network and strengthening our intelligence sharing with the international community, this treaty can be an early warning that is essential for combating terrorism.

Congressional action on the Chemical Weapons Convention will also strengthen the hand of our law enforcement officials while protecting our civil liberties. Right now we have a limited ability to investigate people suspected of planning a chemical attack. Today, for example, there is no Federal law on the books prohibiting someone from actually cooking up poison gas. The legislation that is needed to put the treaty into place would change that and give us the 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 Counter-Terrorism 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 counter-terrorism 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."