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NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Statement on Juvenile Crime Legislation

May 8, 1997

Today, the House of Representatives missed an important opportunity to fight and prevent the scourge of juvenile crime. I oppose passage of H.R. 3, the Juvenile Crime Control Act, because it fails to provide a comprehensive plan to crack down on youth and gang violence.

As I began my second term as President, I made juvenile crime and gangs my top law enforcement priority over the next 4 years. I called on every police officer, prosecutor, and parent in America to work together to keep our young people safe and to keep young criminals off our streets.

America's Anti-Gang and Youth Violence strategy must declare war on gangs; target funding for additional local prosecutors to pursue, prosecute, and punish gang members; extend the Brady law so violent teen criminals will never have the right to purchase a gun; require Federal dealers to sell a child safety lock with every gun, to protect our kids from using guns to hurt each other or themselves; and target resources to keep schools open late, on weekends, and in the summer, to keep young people off the street and out of trouble.

The legislation passed in the House today fails to provide any of these necessary measures to give law enforcement, prosecutors, and parents the tools they need to combat gangs and youth violence in their communities.

Four years ago, we made a commitment to take our streets back from crime and violence. We had a comprehensive plan of 100,000 new community police officers on the street, tough new penalties on the books, and steps to keep guns out of the hands of criminals with the assault weapons ban and the Brady bill.

Our plan is working. Last year, violent crime came down for the 5th year in a row. And for the first time in 7 years, the rate of young people arrested for violent crime and murder has gone down. But we cannot waste this opportunity to bring down violent juvenile crime even further. I will continue to work with Congress to ensure passage of legislation that will give our children the safest and most secure future possible.

Proclamation 7001—Jewish Heritage Week, 1997

May 8, 1997

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

The American Jewish community, with its rich and diverse culture, has served as a continuous source of ethical and moral values for our great Nation since its founding. The principles of Jewish heritage—family, community, faith, and service—parallel the ideals that inspired our country's founders and that anchor our modern democracy.

Members of the Jewish faith have long added to America's cultural life a legacy of law and human compassion, a struggle for freedom and fairness, and a love of learning and the arts. Drawing from their proud heritage, Jewish citizens have made vital contributions to every sector of society, as scientists and soldiers, judges and teachers, artists, entrepreneurs, and philanthropists.

Jewish traditions lend special meaning to the spring season. The recent celebration of Passover commemorates the exodus of Jew-

ish slaves from ancient Egypt. The observance of this religious and historical milestone also honors the character of the Jewish people, who, despite continual hardship, clung to their enduring faith in God and the promise of a brighter future. The annual spring commemorations of Passover, Holocaust Memorial Day, and Israel's Independence are occasions for deep reflection by American Jewry and demonstrate to all Americans the importance of remembrance, faith, freedom, and justice.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim May 11 through May 18, 1997, as Jewish Heritage Week. I urge all Americans to observe this week with appropriate programs and to pay tribute to American Jews for sharing their message of hope and perseverance with all of us.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this eighth day of May, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-first.

William J. Clinton

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NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on May 12.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Iraq

May 8, 1997

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Consistent with the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution (Public Law 102-1) and as part of my effort to keep the Congress fully informed, I am reporting on the status of efforts to obtain Iraq's compliance with the resolutions adopted by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). This report covers the period from March 7 to the present.

Saddam Hussein remains a threat to his people and the region and the United States remains determined to contain the threat of

Saddam's regime. Speaking on behalf of the Administration on March 26, 1997, in her first major foreign policy address, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright stated that the United States looks forward to the day when Iraq rejoins the family of nations as a responsible and law-abiding member and that, until then, containment must continue. Secretary Albright also made clear that Saddam's departure would make a difference and that, should a change in Iraq's government occur, the United States would stand ready to enter rapidly into a dialogue with the successor regime.

In terms of military operations, the United States and our coalition partners continue enforcement of the no-fly zones over northern Iraq under Operation Northern Watch, the successor mission to Operation Provide Comfort, and over southern Iraq through Operation Southern Watch. On April 22, 1997, Saddam Hussein announced that Iraqi military helicopters would be flown through the southern no-fly zone for the purpose of transporting Iraqi pilgrims from the vicinity of the Iraqi-Saudi border to various areas in Iraq, publicly disregarding the prohibition against operating Iraqi rotary and fixed wing aircraft south of the 33rd parallel. The next day, 10 helicopters crossed the southern no-fly zone and arrived at a ground staging base in western Iraq, just north of the Iraqi-Saudi border, to await the arrival of the pilgrims. Because of the possible danger to innocent Iraqi civilians, the non-threatening nature of these flights, and the religious sensitivity of the situation, the United States and our coalition partners agreed not to take military action to intercept the helicopters.

On April 25-27, the same Iraqi helicopters returned the pilgrims to their homes in various locations throughout Iraq, transiting the northern and southern no-fly zones in the process. Again, the United States and its coalition partners decided not to act against these flights for humanitarian and policy reasons. We have made clear to the Government of Iraq and to all other relevant parties, however, that the United States and its partners will continue to enforce both no-fly zones, and that we reserve the right to respond appropriately and decisively to further Iraqi provocations.