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Statement on the United Nations Security Council Vote on Iraq

March 2, 1998

Tonight's unanimous vote of the United Nations Security Council sends the clearest possible message: Iraq must make good on its commitment to give the international weapons inspectors immediate, unconditional, and unrestricted access to any suspect site, any place, any time. All of the members of the Council agree that failure to do so will result in the severest consequences for Iraq.

In the days and weeks ahead, the inspectors will renew their mission to find and destroy Iraq's chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons capacity and the missiles to deliver them. Iraq now has the responsibility to turn the commitment it has made into full compliance.

Remarks at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library Foundation Dinner

March 2, 1998

Thank you very much, Senator, Vicki, Caroline and Ed, other members of the Kennedy family, Paul Kirk. And I say a special word of thanks to all of you who have made this evening possible. I thank Senator Jeffords and Senator Thurmond and Senator Hatch for being here tonight to restrain the partisan impulses that might otherwise overtake Senator Kennedy and me. [*Laughter*] I thank Yo Yo Ma and Jill and all the other musicians who have come here. Mr. Secretary General, thank you for the wonderful job you do here at the OAS.

I think I should begin by saying that for me this is not an obligation, it is an honor, not only because like every other member of my generation I was inspired by President Kennedy but because Hillary and Chelsea and I have been profoundly moved by the uncommon kindnesses of this family to ours.

In 1991 I had an event in New York when no one in New York knew my name, and I looked up and John Kennedy was there. I think it would be fair to say that his name recognition was 5 times higher than mine among all in attendance. [*Laughter*] Early in 1992 Mrs. Kennedy came to an event for me and later went out of her way to be helpful and kind to Hillary and to Chelsea in ways that are difficult to relate but impossible to overestimate.

The other day we were spending a weekend in Camp David, and I went out with a couple of Members of Congress, cavorting around in the lousy weather. Hillary stayed home with her friends and watched Jackie Kennedy's White House special, marveling again about the incredible work that was done to preserve America's house by Mrs. Kennedy.

And I do believe that, no matter who writes the history books, when people look back on this century, they will say that Edward Kennedy was one of the ablest and most productive, most compassionate, and most effective men who served in the United States Senate in the entire history of the country.

The JFK Library and its museum are national treasures, but I would like to talk about three things that are to some extent both more intangible and more tangible in the legacy of President Kennedy that will be enshrined forever if all of us do our job and keep this great enterprise going.

First, the spirit of citizen service, most clearly embodied in the Peace Corps. President Kennedy said that he wanted to speak to those peoples in the huts and villages of half the globe struggling to break the bonds of mass misery. We pledged to them our best efforts to help them help themselves. Five weeks later, 37 years ago yesterday, the Peace Corps was born. In 3 weeks, when I travel to Africa, my first stop will be Ghana, the first place President Kennedy's Peace Corps volunteers went to serve. Now they have gone, over the years, to 132 nations.

Tomorrow America will celebrate these accomplishments during the first ever Peace Corps Day, when thousands of former Peace Corps volunteers, including Secretary Shalala, who was a volunteer in Iran, and I might add has volunteered to go back if it will help our new efforts. [*Laughter*] Thousands of Peace Corps volunteers have agreed to talk with students around our country about their life-changing experiences.