

*July 13 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1994*

that people will have in their businesses and these little towns that have had all their business districts wiped out will not become apparent until after the waters go down.

Our commitment is to stay in this for the long run and to do whatever is necessary. Mr. Panetta told me on the way down here today that we can make all these commitments we've made today and make good on them with the budgets that we have. We don't need—except for the farm assistance that I just mentioned, we don't need to go back to the Congress and ask for any more legislation on appropriations now. But we may or may not in the future, depending on what the facts are. And I just want to reemphasize to all of you, we will stay in this for the long run.

We are still working with Governor Chiles in Florida on the aftermath of Hurricane Andrew. The bad news is, we have to do it; the

good news is, we are doing it. So we know that this will not be done overnight. And we want a clear message to go out to the citizens in Georgia, in Alabama, in Florida that we will stay in this for the long run; we will stay until the job is done. We know this is going to be a personal agony for tens of thousands of people. But we will do the best we can to help you put your lives back together.

Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:58 p.m. in the Ayres Corp. Building at the Southwest Regional Airport. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Lawton Chiles of Florida; Gov. Jim Folsom of Alabama; Gov. Zell Miller of Georgia; Lt. Gov. Pierre Howard of Georgia; Max Cleland, Georgia secretary of state; Tommy Irvin, Georgia agriculture commissioner; and Mayor Paul Keenan of Albany.

## Statement on the Report on the American Helicopter Tragedy in Iraq *July 13, 1994*

I have been briefed on the report prepared by Major General Andrus of the 3d Air Force on the accidental downing on April 14 of two U.S. Army helicopters that were flying over Iraq as part of Operation Provide Comfort. The men and women on these helicopters were serving their countries in a humanitarian effort to help ensure the safety and welfare of the Iraqi-Kurdish people in the aftermath of the Gulf War.

I commend Secretary Perry, General Shalikashvili, and General Andrus for producing a thorough analysis of what went wrong on that terrible day and for ordering a sensible program of corrective actions to help prevent such tragedies in the future. I intend to ensure that these actions are implemented, and I look forward to receiving progress reports from Secretary Perry and General Shalikashvili on this process.

In considering this report, we necessarily are drawn to the errors of commission and omission that produced the tragedy. At the same time, we must keep in mind that Operation Provide Comfort has been and continues to be a very

successful coalition effort that has effectively deterred Iraq from disrupting peace and order in the UN-established security zone. Because of Operation Provide Comfort, human rights abuses against the Kurdish population of northern Iraq have been curtailed.

The 26 brave Americans, allied and Iraqi-Kurdish personnel who died in the crashes served with courage and professionalism, and they lost their lives trying to save the lives of others. The important work they were doing must, and will, continue.

To the families and loved ones of those who were killed, I offer my sincere condolences and, on behalf of the United States of America, the gratitude of our entire Nation.

In remarks at the memorial service for the victims, I said that it is our duty to find the answers to this tragedy that these families rightfully seek. The report Secretary Perry is releasing today is an important step toward fulfilling that pledge.