

June 27 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1996

Thank you very much. God bless America, and *vive la France*.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:30 p.m. at Liberty Place. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor

Guy Passarat de la Chapelle of Perouges, France; Mayor Christian Bussy of Meximieux, France; and Philippe Ritter, Prefect of the Ain.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With President Jacques Chirac of France in Lyons

June 27, 1996

Terrorist Attack in Saudi Arabia

Q. Mr. President, is there any way the tragedy in Saudi Arabia could have been avoided, given the history of terrorism in the Middle East, especially in the aftermath of the agency bombing in Beirut? Why weren't those airmen protected?

President Clinton. Well, as you know, they were behind a fence that gave them a 35-yard cushion, and the bomb was just bigger than anyone calculated could be gotten in that close to the building.

So I think the casualties were far smaller than they would have been had not the security precautions been taken. But you may be sure that the Defense Department and the others who are in charge of this are reviewing the security operations to see what else should be done, to see if we can even do better in the future.

Q. Is there any indication yet who is responsible for that?

President Clinton. We're working on it, but I don't want to announce a conclusion until I know what the facts are. We're working very hard, and so are the Saudis. And I want to thank, I might say if I could, I'd like to thank President Chirac for his expression of condolences and support for the United States. And he said to me—and I hope that you will have some statement coming out later today.

President Chirac. I just want to say to the American press how deeply horrified the French people were at this barbaric act that has been perpetrated in Saudi Arabia. And I can assure you that you have the heartfelt condolences of France to the families of the victims and those who have been wounded and to the American people.

NOTE: The exchange began at 3 p.m. at the Prefecture. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With Prime Minister John Major of the United Kingdom in Lyons, France

June 27, 1996

Terrorist Attack in Saudi Arabia

Q. Mr. President, what do you do if you discover that there was a state sponsorship behind the Saudi Arabian incident? What happens?

President Clinton. Well, I will take whatever action I believe is appropriate based on what the facts are. But let's wait until we see what the facts are.

Q. [Inaudible]—has said that there was intellectually a very strong case for the bombers. What is your reaction to that?

Prime Minister Major. I haven't seen the context of what he said, but I can see no case, intellectual or any other sort of case, for the sort of activity in Dhahran. It is indefensible by any tenet.

Q. Do you think there are further measures which you can agree here jointly with the other leaders to combat both the sort of terrorism

you saw in Dhahran and also that we saw in Manchester from the IRA last week?

President Clinton. I do.

Prime Minister Major. So do I.

Q. Like what?

Prime Minister Major. Well, we have some—

President Clinton. Well—go ahead, please.

Prime Minister Major. We had some ideas discussed. We had some British ideas. I understand there are some American ideas. We will discuss them bilaterally, I'm sure, and we will discuss them with our colleagues. But I think we will probably unveil them after the discussions.

Q. Mr. President, you were going to talk about your ideas?

President Clinton. No, I was just going to say that we have already agreed on a number of things that we will do together to deal with the problems of international crime that specifically bear on terrorism. And we may come up now with some other things that we can do together.

But I think all of us understand that terrorism is a problem from which no one can hide and on which we must all cooperate. We have had terrorism in the United Kingdom, we have had terrorism in the United States, had this awful attack in Dhahran, had the problem in the Tokyo subway. This is the security challenge of the 21st century, I'm afraid, and we have to get after it.

Extraterritorial Impact of Sanctions

Q. Mr. Prime Minister, are you concerned about the U.S. efforts to impose sanctions on foreign companies that deal with Iran and Libya and Cuba? Is this a problem you're discussing—

Prime Minister Major. I don't think that's a—I don't think that's particularly a G-7 subject. It's a matter I have no doubt will come up in discussions at some stage.

NOTE: The exchange began at 4:21 p.m. at the Sofitel Hotel. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto of Japan in Lyons, France June 27, 1996

Terrorism

Q. Mr. President, now that you have had the chance to meet with a few European leaders, do you get any sense that they would be more willing to crack down on Iran and other nations that are known to sponsor terrorism and perhaps not have business dealings and other dealings with them?

President Clinton. Well, let me say I think they're going to support a lot of the recommendations we have made, as far as cooperation. I believe they will be willing to do more. We now know that no one can hide from terrorism. We've had terrorist attacks in Japan, in the United States, Great Britain, of course now the terrible incident in Saudi Arabia. So I believe we will see a high level of support for common activities.

Q. Does that include, perhaps, other nations ceasing economic activity?

President Clinton. Well, let's wait and see. You know what my position is on that, so we'll just keep working on it.

Q. Prime Minister Hashimoto, is there any possibility that you would agree to an extension of the U.S.-Japan semiconductor agreement that is scheduled to expire at the end of July?

Prime Minister Hashimoto. Before going to that question, I would like to add a few words to what President Clinton has just said. On the moment I saw President Clinton in the lobby, the first words that I said to him was my sincerest condolences to the deceased and their families that—in the tragic incident in Saudi Arabia.

This was painful enough for me to think about as we were approaching Lyons, and on the moment we arrived in Lyons we heard of another tragic incident concerning Israel. We must eliminate terrorism. We must make utmost ef-