

work hard every day to build our country, we can realize the promise of this great Nation.

You know, there is a lot of talk in Washington about empowerment. Sometimes people in the other party mean giving people more choice but not caring much about whether they can exercise the choice. Well, we want empowerment, too. We want to make sure every person, every family, every community, has what it takes to make the most of their own lives and live up

to their dreams. With your help, we will realize that goal.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at noon by satellite from Suite 520 of Media Technologies to the convention meeting in Chicago, IL. In his remarks, he referred to Richard Cordtz, interim president, Service Employees International Union, and John Sweeney, president, AFL-CIO.

Remarks on Signing the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996

April 24, 1996

Thank you very much, Mary Jo White, for the work you do every day. Thank you, Attorney General Reno. Thank you, Mr. Vice President. To Senator Dole and Chairman Hatch and Chairman Hyde, the other Members of Congress who are here; Governor Keating and the attorneys general who are here and the others in law enforcement; to the members of the administration, and especially to the victims' families who are here.

I thank the families for coming today. I thank their advocates for coming. But I think we should all acknowledge that the importance of this event is embodied in no small measure by the fact that the families were willing to come here, knowing that it would in some measure force them to relive the pain that they have endured because of acts of terror. It took a lot of courage for them to endure that pain. So while this is a good day for America, we can't really say it is a happy day. Not all good days can be happy days, but every American is in debt to these families for standing up for the need for the changes that we have experienced. And I ask the rest of us to acknowledge that. And we thank you.

I also would point out that Presidents can advocate and the executive branch can enforce the laws, but this would not have happened but for the remarkable convergence of Republicans and Democrats in the Congress. The Vice President introduced those who were especially active in the leadership, who are over here to my left, who will come up in a moment when we sign the bill. But there are so many more

Members of Congress here, for the benefit of all of you, I would like to ask every Member who is here and who worked so hard on this legislation to please stand and be recognized. Would the Members of Congress please stand? [Applause] Thank you very much.

This is a good day because our police officers are now going to be better prepared to stop terrorists, our prosecutors better prepared to punish them, our people being better protected from their designs. This legislation is more important today because of the very forces which have unlocked so much potential for progress: the new technologies, the instant communications, the open borders. These things have done so much good. But they have also made it easier for the organized forces of hatred and division to endanger the lives of innocent people. We have seen terrorism take its horrible toll all around the world, from Tokyo to London to Jerusalem and, of course, in our own country.

When a terrorist car bomb took the lives of 241 American Marines in Beirut, we felt the shock waves here at home. When savage killers took the life of Leon Klinghoffer, countless Americans wept for him and for his family. When Pan Am 103 went down over Lockerbie, Scotland, killing 270 people including 189 Americans, we saw again that there are no borders or bounds on the forces of hatred. When the bomb exploded at the World Trade Center, as Mary Jo said, by the grace of God killing only 6 but injuring over 1,000 people, we knew again that we had no place to hide. And of course, 5 days ago we marked the first anniversary of

the most terrible terrorist attack upon these shores in our history, reminding us that even the very young and the most innocent are not immune.

We also have to remember as we remember those who were lost that, as painful as that loss is, their deaths and their destructions are not the terrorists' only goals, for each and every act of terrorism is also a means to another end, the unbelievable idea that it is all right to kill an innocent person to achieve a political goal, to stop us from living our lives in the light of liberty, to force us to cower in the dark grip of fear, to terrify us as targets into submission.

So let us honor those who lost their lives by resolving to hold fast against the forces of violence and division, by never allowing them to shake our resolve or break our spirit, to frighten us into sacrificing our sacred freedoms or surrendering a drop of precious American liberty. Rather we must guard against them, speak against them, and fight against them.

Fighting terrorism is and will for a long time to come be one of the top security priorities of the United States. On our own and with our allies, we have implemented strong sanctions against states that harbor terrorists and encourage them. We have intensified partnerships with other countries to stand together against terrorists around the world. We have increased our investment, our personnel, and our training for law enforcement efforts here at home.

I sent Congress antiterrorism legislation over a year ago, and after the Oklahoma City bombing I asked for additional measures. I applaud the great majority of Congress who stood up for the safety of the American people, worked through the policy debates, and made sure that in the end politics faltered and common sense prevailed. Democrats and Republicans, Republicans and Democrats, people who love their country as patriots came together, worked together, and got the job done.

The antiterrorism bill is grounded in common sense and steeled with force. Because of this bill, law enforcement will be better prepared than ever to stop terrorists before they strike and to bring them to justice when they do. From now on we can quickly expel foreigners who dare to come to America and support terrorist activities. From now on American prosecutors can wield new tools and expanded penalties against those who terrorize Americans at home

or abroad. From now on we can stop terrorists from raising money in the United States to pay for their horrible crimes. From now on criminals sentenced to death for their vicious crimes will no longer be able to use endless appeals to delay their sentences, and families of victims will no longer have to endure years of anguish and suffering.

We have new laws and better controls against chemical and biological weapons. We have agreed to put chemical markers in plastic explosives that will help us to detect explosives like those used to bring down Pan Am 103. We will be able to require chemical taggants in some other explosive materials as well. They will make it easier for police to trace bombs to the criminals who made them and bring those criminals to justice.

This legislation is a strong step forward for our security, but we mustn't stop there. I am directing the Secretary of the Treasury to complete the study of taggants required by Congress and propose appropriate regulations as quickly as possible. We must also address the problem of black and smokeless powders, routinely used to make illegal smokeless devices like pipe bombs. I'm directing Secretary Rubin to consult with industry representatives and the law enforcement community to report back with appropriate recommendations.

Finally, I believe we have to take additional steps. I believe we must do more to help police keep terrorists who are—suspected terrorists under surveillance. I believe we should give law enforcement more time to investigate and prosecute terrorists who use machine guns, sawed-off shotguns, and explosive devices. I agree with police officers that instead of creating a commission to study them, in the end we must ban cop-killer bullets.

Nonetheless, make no mistake about it: This bill strikes a mighty blow against terrorism, and it is fitting that this bill becomes law during National Crime Victims' Rights Week, because it stands up for victims in so many important ways. There are a lot of victims' advocates and victims here, and I thank them for their presence today. This bill recognizes that victims have a compelling interest in the trials of those accused of committing crimes against them and requires closed-circuit television coverage when Federal trials are moved far away, a provision we owe to the vigilance of the Members of

Congress from Oklahoma. And we thank you for it.

I'd like to close with a word to all of the family members of Americans slain by terrorists and to the survivors of terrorism, to the children who lost their parents in Pan Am 103 and parents who lost their children in Israel, to all of you from Oklahoma City, to Andrew Kerr on my staff of the National Security Council whose father was murdered in Beirut, to each and every one of you with us today and those who are watching all across this great land of ours. Your endurance and your courage is a lesson to us all. Your vigilance has sharpened our vigilance.

And so I sign my name to this bill, in your names. We renew our fight against those who seek to terrorize us, in your names. We send

a loud, clear message today all over the world, in your names: America will never surrender to terror. America will never tolerate terrorism. America will never abide terrorists. Wherever they come from, wherever they go, we will go after them. We will not rest until we have brought them all to justice and secured a future for our people, safe from the harm they would do—in your names.

Thank you. God bless you, and God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:50 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Mary Jo White, New York U.S. Attorney, whose office prosecuted the World Trade Center bombing. S. 735, approved April 24, was assigned Public Law No. 104–132.

Statement on Signing the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996

April 24, 1996

I have today signed into law S. 735, the “Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996.” This legislation is an important step forward in the Federal Government’s continuing efforts to combat terrorism.

I first transmitted antiterrorism legislation to the Congress in February 1995. Most of the proposals in that legislation, the “Omnibus Counterterrorism Act of 1995,” were aimed at fighting international terrorism. After the tragedy in Oklahoma City, I asked Federal law enforcement agencies to reassess their needs and determine which tools would help them meet the new challenge of domestic terrorism. They produced, and I transmitted to the Congress, the “Antiterrorism Amendments Act of 1995” in May 1995.

Together, these two proposals took a comprehensive approach to fighting terrorism both at home and abroad. I am pleased that the Congress included most of the provisions of these proposals in this legislation. As a result, our law enforcement officials will have tough new tools to stop terrorists before they strike and to bring them to justice if they do. In particular, this legislation will:

- provide broad new Federal jurisdiction to prosecute anyone who commits a terrorist attack in the United States or who uses the United States as a planning ground for attacks overseas;
- ban fundraising in the United States that supports terrorist organizations;
- allow U.S. officials to deport terrorists from American soil without being compelled by the terrorists to divulge classified information, and to bar terrorists from entering the United States in the first place;
- require plastic explosives to contain chemical markers so that criminals who use them—like the ones that blew up Pan Am Flight 103—can be tracked down and prosecuted;
- enable the Government to issue regulations requiring that chemical taggants be added to some other types of explosives so that police can better trace bombs to the criminals who make them;
- increase our controls over biological and chemical weapons;
- toughen penalties over a range of terrorist crimes;