

Situation in Indonesia

Q. With regard to Indonesia, sir, do you anticipate using U.S. forces to safeguard the lives of Americans in that country, and would the United States be prepared to give Soeharto asylum if it would help ease him from power?

President Clinton. Well, with regard to the first question, I have been given no indication that it is necessary at this time. And with regard to the second, the prospect has not been presented. As you probably know, just as we were fixing to come in here, there are all kinds of new stories which may or may not be accurate about very rapidly unfolding developments in Indonesia. And I expect that all of you may want to come back to me in 2 or 3 hours or 4 hours for comments on things that may be clearer than they are now.

Let me just say again what I think the real issue is here. We want this country to come back together, not come apart. We want the military to continue to exercise maximum restraint so there will be minimum loss of life and injury. We want civil society to flourish there. We believe that Indonesia was headed for some tough times because there has to be some tough economic decisions taken no matter what government has been in. But the absence of a sense of political dialog and ownership and involvement obviously has contributed to the difficulties there. And then there has been a heart-breaking loss of life of all the people who burned to death, for example.

So what we're looking for now and what we're going to be working for is the restoration of

order without violence and the genuine opening of a political dialog that gives all parties in this country a feeling that they are a part of it. They should decide, the Indonesian people, who the leader of Indonesia is. And then we're going to do our best, when things settle down and human needs are taken care of and there's order, to try to get them back on the road to economic recovery. Because all of us have a big interest in the future success of a country that has done some fabulous things in the last 30 years, but it had a very bad few moments here.

Thank you.

Prime Minister Blair. Thank you very much, indeed.

President Santer. Thank you.

NOTE: The President's 159th news conference began at 1:20 p.m. at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The President met with Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom, in his capacity as President of the European Council, and President Jacques Santer of the European Commission. In the news conference the following people were referred to: Ambassador Dennis B. Ross, Special Middle East Coordinator; Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu of Israel; Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority; Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral of India; Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan; Sir Leon Brittan, Vice President of the European Commission; President Soeharto of Indonesia; and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).

European Union/United States Joint Statement on Shared Objectives and Close Cooperation on Counterterrorism

May 18, 1998

1. The United States, the European Union and its member states are strategic allies in the global fight against terrorism—a grave threat to democracy, and to economic and social development. They oppose terrorism in all its forms, whatever the motivation of its perpetrators, oppose concessions to terrorists, and agree on the need to resist extortion threats. They condemn absolutely not only those who plan or commit terrorist acts, but also any who support, finance

or harbour terrorists. They recognize that terrorism operates on a transnational scale, and cannot effectively be dealt with solely by isolated action using each individual state's own resources. They work together to promote greater international cooperation and coordinated effort to combat terrorism by all legal means and in all relevant bilateral and multilateral fora—from the Transatlantic Dialogue to the United Nations.

The International Legal Framework

2. Extradition and mutual legal assistance arrangements are in operation or will be developed between EU partners and the United States. The EU and US cooperate in the United Nations framework to elaborate the necessary international legal instruments for the fight against terrorism. They work in tandem to promote universal adherence to the eleven international counter-terrorism conventions. EU partners contributed to the rapid and successful negotiation of the most recent UN Convention (for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings) based on a draft proposed by the US. Now they are cooperating to consider the terms of a draft UN Convention on the Suppression of Nuclear Terrorism.

Areas of current EU/US mutual interest

3. (i) Terrorist Fund-raising: EU partners are pooling their knowledge and experience to work to cut off terrorists' sources of funding. They have agreed a set of action points, and their operational agencies are working on joint initiatives against terrorist funding. The US participated in an EU seminar in 1997 which shaped this work, is briefed regularly on current developments in this key area, and will take part in a follow-up EU seminar in Vienna in October 1998.

(ii) Chemical/Biological Terrorism and other threats: During the UK Presidency the EU and US have shared their thinking and compared best practice in the areas of CB terrorism, Terrorist arms trafficking and Bomb scene management.

(iii) The Middle East Peace Process: The EU briefs the US regularly on its current 3-year programme of counter-terrorism cooperation to enhance the effectiveness of the Palestinian Authority in this key area, including an extensive programme of human rights training. To strengthen EU/Palestinian links still further in

the fight against terrorism, a declaration creating a joint Security Committee was agreed in April 1998. The Committee now meets regularly to discuss security issues.

EU/US Consultation and Information Exchange

4. Policy cooperation is developed bilaterally and at EU/US level. Operational cooperation, including intelligence-sharing, is handled bilaterally by national law enforcement agencies, and is given high priority. To identify and assess the scale of the terrorist threat, the EU member states and the US exchange information and assessments on terrorist trends and latest developments. The regular meetings on counter-terrorism between the US and the EU Troika of the Second and Third Pillars are used to exchange views on all aspects of terrorism policy, including trends in countries of particular current concern in the Middle East and elsewhere. Information is also shared on significant developments on either side of the Atlantic, eg the creation of Europol, which will include terrorism within its remit soon after its launch. The US has updated EU partners on the impact of its decision last October to designate 30 foreign terrorist organisations.

Further Cooperation

5. While recognising the wide range of work successfully accomplished hitherto, both sides see scope to strengthen further their close ties in the field of counter-terrorism, and are working to do so—by additional information-sharing at their regular Troika meetings, enhanced bilateral intelligence exchanges, and sustained co-operation at the United Nations and in other fora to advance their common objectives.

NOTE: This statement was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 18 but was not issued as a White House press release. An original was not available for verification of the content of this statement.