

The President's Radio Address *August 15, 1998*

Good morning. Two days ago, at Andrews Air Force Base, we welcomed them home: America's brave sons and daughters, carried under Stars and Stripes, flanked by the silent sentries of the honor guard. They had perished in Nairobi, cruelly and without warning, in an act of terror at the American Embassy. It was not the sort of homecoming any of us would have wished. But it was a tribute that befit their service to our Nation.

Hillary and I had the honor to meet with their families on the morning of the ceremony. They shared stories with us, stories and memories, showing us photographs. Their shoulders were heavy with sadness; their voices sometimes shook. But anyone could tell that their hearts were full of pride for the brave service of their loved ones and pride in the Nation they so ably and faithfully represented around the world. Collectively, over the course of their careers, these 12 men and women represented the United States in more than 20 countries across the globe, from Brazil to Botswana, from France to the Philippines, from South Korea to their final post, Kenya.

They represented America not simply by their deeds but by their character: by the quiet labors of a medical doctor, the careful diplomacy of a Foreign Service officer, the iron discipline of men and women in uniform. Their dedication to America was matched by their dedication to their families. In all these ways, they represented the best of our country. They showed the world our very best face and shared with its people our most cherished values.

As a nation, we have lost much. These families have lost even more. Words cannot describe and tributes cannot begin to fill the cruel vacancy left by evil acts of terror. But in the example of the proud and grieving families I met on Thursday, we find an embodiment of American resolve. They made it clear to me they did not want us to give in to terror or to turn inward or retreat, for the world is full of promise, and they do not want us to try

to stop resolving the misunderstandings that can deteriorate into the rot of hatred. Instead, they urged us to stand strong, as ever, for freedom and democracy in all countries and for all people.

And our administration will remain committed to the fight against terror. Over the last few years, working with Congress, we have passed tough new criminal penalties, tightened security at airports, strengthened protection of our troops overseas. We have created an international coalition to help us combat terrorism and have apprehended or helped to capture more than 40 terrorists abroad, including those involved in attacks on Pan Am Flight 830 and the World Trade Center and in the murder of two CIA employees in Virginia.

We must continue to lead the world toward peace, freedom, and prosperity. That is why our diplomats are on the job today around the world, working to ensure our national security, working to strengthen the global economy, working to bring peace to troubled regions, working often at risk to themselves. And that is why we now must work to rebuild our Embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam, to secure our Embassies and outposts around the world, to support our friends in Tanzania and Kenya as they rebuild. This week I have spoken with leaders in Congress, Republicans and Democrats alike. In the finest American tradition, they have pledged to join me in protecting America's presence throughout the world.

Today we think especially of those serving in our diplomatic posts. I ask all our citizens to say a prayer for them and to express gratitude for their service. The spirit of the patriots who have dedicated or lost their lives to service is the spirit of America. They help to keep our Nation strong and free, peaceful and proud, a powerful beacon of hope for the world.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:06 a.m. from the Oval Office at the White House.