

*Aug. 20 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1998*

## Remarks in Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts, on Military Action Against Terrorist Sites in Afghanistan and Sudan

*August 20, 1998*

Good afternoon. Today I ordered our Armed Forces to strike at terrorist-related facilities in Afghanistan and Sudan because of the threat they present to our national security.

I have said many times that terrorism is one of the greatest dangers we face in this new global era. We saw its twisted mentality at work last week in the Embassy bombings in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam, which took the lives of innocent Americans and Africans and injured thousands more. Today we have struck back.

The United States launched an attack this morning on one of the most active terrorist bases in the world. It is located in Afghanistan and operated by groups affiliated with Usama bin Ladin, a network not sponsored by any state but as dangerous as any we face. We also struck a chemical weapons-related facility in Sudan. Our target was the terrorists' base of operation and infrastructure. Our objective was to damage their capacity to strike at Americans and other innocent people.

I ordered this action for four reasons: first, because we have convincing evidence these

groups played the key role in the Embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania; second, because these groups have executed terrorist attacks against Americans in the past; third, because we have compelling information that they were planning additional terrorist attacks against our citizens and others with the inevitable collateral casualties we saw so tragically in Africa; and fourth, because they are seeking to acquire chemical weapons and other dangerous weapons.

Terrorists must have no doubt that, in the face of their threats, America will protect its citizens and will continue to lead the world's fight for peace, freedom, and security.

Now I am returning to Washington to be briefed by my national security team on the latest information. I will provide you with a more detailed statement later this afternoon from the White House.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:55 p.m. in the gymnasium at Edgartown Elementary School, prior to his departure for Washington, DC.

## Address to the Nation on Military Action Against Terrorist Sites in Afghanistan and Sudan

*August 20, 1998*

Good afternoon. Today I ordered our Armed Forces to strike at terrorist-related facilities in Afghanistan and Sudan because of the imminent threat they presented to our national security.

I want to speak with you about the objective of this action and why it was necessary. Our target was terror; our mission was clear: to strike at the network of radical groups affiliated with and funded by Usama bin Ladin, perhaps the preeminent organizer and financier of international terrorism in the world today.

The groups associated with him come from diverse places but share a hatred for democracy, a fanatical glorification of violence, and a horrible distortion of their religion to justify the

murder of innocents. They have made the United States their adversary precisely because of what we stand for and what we stand against.

A few months ago, and again this week, bin Ladin publicly vowed to wage a terrorist war against America, saying, and I quote, "We do not differentiate between those dressed in military uniforms and civilians. They're all targets."

Their mission is murder and their history is bloody. In recent years, they killed American, Belgian, and Pakistani peacekeepers in Somalia. They plotted to assassinate the President of Egypt and the Pope. They planned to bomb six United States 747's over the Pacific. They