

Statement on the Crash Landing of American Airlines Flight 1420 at Little Rock National Airport

June 2, 1999

Hillary and I were saddened to learn of the terrible crash landing of American Airlines Flight 1420 at Little Rock National Airport late last night. We join the American people in extending our deepest sympathies to the families of those who died or were injured.

Our Government is doing everything possible to aid the victims and help determine the cause

of this tragedy. Family assistance counselors and other personnel from the National Transportation Safety Board are already on the ground in Little Rock, and FAA inspectors are assisting the NTSB. I have asked my staff to update me on our efforts throughout the day. I ask all Americans to remember in their prayers the passengers and their families.

Remarks Following a Cabinet Meeting

June 3, 1999

Good afternoon. I have just completed a very good meeting with the Cabinet. We discussed many issues; three in particular I would like to discuss with you.

Situation in the Balkans

First, with regard to Kosovo: As you know, we have been working closely with President Ahtisaari and Mr. Chernomyrdin to try to achieve an agreement that would allow the refugees to go home with security, safety, and self-government. Movement by the Serbian leadership to accept these conditions established by NATO and the international community is, of course, welcome, but based on our past experience, we must also be cautious.

First, we must have clarity that the Serbian leadership has fully accepted these conditions and intends to fully implement them. Until then and until Serb forces begin a verifiable withdrawal from Kosovo, we will continue to pursue diplomacy, but we will also continue the military effort that has brought us to this point.

In a few moments, I will meet with the Joint Chiefs of Staff to speak about the progress of our campaign and our planning for the force that would enter Kosovo when NATO's conditions are met. NATO and our military have been working hard to ensure that we can sustain our campaign and deploy KFOR quickly and effectively when that is necessary. We have worked to ensure that we can do this while maintaining our overall military posture around the world.

They have my complete confidence and support as we move forward.

Legislative Agenda

The second thing we discussed today was the budget and the importance of maintaining fiscal discipline, which has helped our Nation reach historic levels of prosperity, honored our values of opportunity, responsibility, and community, and enabled us to begin to meet the challenges of America in the 21st century.

Last fall my Cabinet and I worked very hard to put together a budget that reduces the publicly held debt to its lowest point since before World War I, safeguards the solvency of Social Security and Medicare and makes improvements in both programs, offers targeted tax cuts for long-term retirement savings, stays within the budget caps, and makes substantial new investments in the benefit of the American people, from education to the environment to new technology.

Unfortunately, the Republican majority in Congress is moving ahead with a budget plan that, in the end, may do none of these things. It fails to extend the solvency of Social Security and Medicare. It fails to make new, crucial investments. It requires deep cuts in areas of great national need, from law enforcement to education to the environment. These cuts would be so damaging that Congress, itself, to date has been unwilling and unable to move some

of the most basic and normally noncontroversial spending bills out of their committees.

The majority budget plan is simply not realistic. It is a blueprint for chaos, and we can do better. I urge Congress when it returns to work with me in a bipartisan way for a budget that is both fiscally responsible and honors our values and prepares for our future.

Federal Energy Policy

I also discussed with the Cabinet new actions to deal with what, in my State of the Union Address, I said was our most fateful environmental challenge, global warming. Almost every month, we see disturbing new evidence of climate change. Scientists now believe that last year, 1998, was very likely the warmest year in a millennium. Whole species of frogs are disappearing from forests in Costa Rica because the air there is getting hotter and drier. In the Arctic, the permafrost has started to warm and the sea ice is shrinking. These are alarming signs for what it means to biodiversity and the potential of a rising water level around the globe.

Yet some still insist that the vast majority of scientists are simply wrong, and that we should do nothing. Others call for a raft of new regulations and new taxes. I believe there is a third way here, a better way, to invest in technologies that reduce greenhouse gases while also spurring economic growth. Many of those technologies are on hand right now.

As the single largest consumer of energy in our country, the Federal Government should be leading the way. That is why today I am directing all Federal departments and agencies to take steps to markedly improve the energy efficiency of our buildings. With new technologies and contracts with private companies, the Federal Government will cut its greenhouse gas emissions by 30 percent. That is the equivalent of taking 1.7 million cars off the road. By taking these steps, we will also save the taxpayers over

\$750 million a year when they are fully implemented.

I'm also pleased to announce that the Defense Department will award, by the end of this month, the largest energy-saving contract in the history of the Federal Government. Under this contract, the Government pays no up-front costs, the contractor wins a share of the energy savings; greenhouse pollution is reduced; and taxpayers will save over \$200 million.

I want to express my thanks to Secretary Cohen and Secretary Richardson for turning the idea of these win-win energy contracts into a reality. And I want to urge Congress, again, to pass the new research investments and the new tax incentives I have proposed in my balanced budget, so that America's consumers and businesses can reap the benefits of energy-saving technologies that exist today, and the new, better technologies that are soon to be developed.

So, in closing, let me say we have some encouraging news on Kosovo, but we should be cautious, and we should see real results.

We have presented a good budget to the Congress; the one they have come back with won't work. We've got to work together to give the American people one that will. The problem of climate change and global warming is real, but we don't have to have an economic breakdown to deal with it; what we need is a vigorous embrace of effective technologies, first by the Federal Government and then by all the American people.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:52 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Martti Ahtisaari of Finland and Special Envoy and former Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin of Russia. The Executive order on Government energy management is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Statement on the Resignation of Alice Rivlin as Vice Chair of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System

June 3, 1999

I am sorry to hear that Alice Rivlin is stepping down as Vice Chair of the Federal Reserve.

During my administration, she has served with distinction and integrity both as Vice Chair of