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Statement on the Helicopter Tragedy at Fort Bragg, North Carolina

July 9, 1997

I was saddened to learn today that a U.S. Army *Blackhawk* helicopter had crashed at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, killing all eight soldiers aboard.

Although nothing can ease the pain of this tragic loss, I want to express my deep respect for these patriots who died proudly serving the country they loved. These eight soldiers paid the ultimate price for the peace we all enjoy.

I extend my deepest sympathy to the families of these brave soldiers and ask that all Americans join us in remembering them in our prayers.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on Iraq

July 9, 1997

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Consistent with the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution (Public Law 102–1) and as part of my effort to keep the Congress fully informed, I am reporting on the status of efforts to obtain Iraq's compliance with the resolutions adopted by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). This report covers the period from May 8 to the present. Saddam Hussein remains a threat to his people and the region and the United States remains determined to contain the threat of Saddam's regime. As Secretary of State Albright stated on March 26, the United States looks forward to the day when Iraq joins the family of nations as a responsible and law-abiding member and that, until then, containment must continue. Secretary Albright made clear that Saddam's departure would make a difference and that, should a change in Iraq's government occur, the United States would stand ready to enter rapidly into a dialogue with the successor regime.

In terms of military operations, the United States and its coalition partners continue to enforce the no-fly zones over northern Iraq under Operation Northern Watch, and over southern Iraq with Operation Southern Watch. We have not detected any confirmed, intentional Iraqi violations of either no-fly zone since late April.

In addition to our air operations, we will continue to maintain a strong U.S. presence in the region in order to deter Saddam. United States force levels include land- and carrier-based aircraft, surface warships, a marine amphibious task force, a Patriot missile battalion, and a mechanized battalion task force deployed in support of USCINCCENT operations. To enhance force protection throughout the region, additional military security personnel have been deployed for continuous rotation. USCINCCENT continues to closely monitor the security situation in the region to ensure adequate force protection is provided for all deployed forces.

United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 949, adopted in October 1994, demands that Iraq not utilize its military or any other forces to threaten its neighbors or U.N. operations in Iraq and that it not redeploy troops or enhance its military capacity in southern Iraq. In view of Saddam's accumulating record of unreliability, it is prudent to retain a significant U.S. force presence in the region in order to maintain the capability to respond rapidly to possible Iraqi aggression or threats against its neighbors.

Since my last report, the Government of Iraq has continued to flout its obligations under UNSC Resolutions. Under the terms of relevant UNSC Resolutions, Iraq must grant the U.N. Special Commission on Iraq (UNSCOM) inspectors immediate, unconditional, and unrestricted access to any location in Iraq that they wish to examine, and access to any Iraqi official whom they may wish to interview, so that UNSCOM may fully discharge its mandate to ensure that Iraq's weapons of mass destruction (WMD) program has been eliminated. Iraq continues, as it has for the past 6 years, to fail to live up to either the letter or the spirit of the commitment. Of particular concern is UNSCOM's June report to the Security Council of serious incidents involving Iraqi escort helicopters flying dangerously close to the Commission's aircraft to force it to change direction and multiple cases of Iraqi

personnel aboard UNSCOM helicopters attempting to wrest control of aircraft from their pilots.

In his June report, UNSCOM Chairman Rolf Ekeus also indicated that UNSCOM had found new indications that Iraq has not fulfilled its requirement to destroy its WMD. Chairman Ekeus told the Security Council that on June 10 and 12, Iraqi officials totally blocked UNSCOM inspectors from access to three sites suspected of containing hidden information about its prohibited weapons programs. He reported that UNSCOM inspectors observed Iraqi officials shredding, burning, or hiding documents at the sites, and that senior Iraqi government officials refused to allow UNSCOM inspectors to interview officials involved in Iraq's weapons programs. Chairman Ekeus singled out Iraq's leadership as having hindered several attempts by UNSCOM inspectors to inspect areas that are suspected of being hiding places for chemical or biological weapons or technology used to manufacture those weapons.

In response to Iraqi intransigence, the U.S. sponsored and the Security Council on June 21 passed unanimously, UNSC Resolution 1115, which 1) condemns the repeated refusal of Iraqi authorities to allow access to sites designated by UNSCOM; 2) demands that Iraq cooperate fully with UNSCOM in accordance with relevant UNSC resolutions and allow UNSCOM inspection teams immediate, unconditional, and unrestricted access to any and all areas, facilities, equipment, records, and means of transportation that they wish to inspect; 3) demands that the Government of Iraq give immediate, unconditional, and unrestricted access to officials and other persons under the authority of the Iraqi Government whom UNSCOM wishes to interview; 4) provides that the periodic sanctions reviews provided for in UNSC Resolution 687 will not be conducted until after UNSCOM's next consolidated progress report—due October 11, 1997—after which time those reviews will resume; 5) expresses the firm intention to impose additional measures on those categories of Iraqi officials responsible for Iraq's noncompliance, unless advised by UNSCOM that Iraq is in substantial compliance with this resolution; and 6) reaffirms its full support for UNSCOM.

Implementation of UNSCR 1051 continues. It provides for a mechanism to monitor Iraq's effort to reacquire proscribed weapons capabilities by requiring that Iraq notify a joint unit of UNSCOM and the International Atomic Energy Agency in advance of any imports of dual-use items. Similarly, countries must provide timely notification of exports to Iraq of dual-use items.

Regarding northern Iraq, the United States continues to lead efforts to increase security and stability in the north and minimize opportunities for Baghdad or Tehran to threaten Iraqi citizens there. Following a successful trip to northern Iraq in early April, Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs David Welch led a U.S. delegation to Turkey for a fourth round of higher-level talks on May 14 to help resolve differences between the two main Iraqi Kurd groups, Massoud Barzani of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and Jalal Talabani of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK).

During this latest meeting under the ''Ankara Process,'' the U.S., British, and Turkish cosponsors of the talks obtained agreement from KDP and PUK delegations to take several steps designed to strengthen the October 23, 1996, cease-fire between the two Iraqi Kurd groups and encourage their political reconciliation.

Representatives from the Iraqi Turkoman and Iraqi Assyrian organizations participating in the neutral, indigenous Peace Monitoring Force (PMF) also attended the fourth round of talks in Ankara. The PMF participants also continue to help the Iraqi Kurd groups move forward on several other confidence-building measures, the most recent of which included several joint committee meetings on May 29 that addressed a range of civilian services and humanitarian issues affecting all residents of the north. Local representatives of the two Kurd groups, the three countries, and the PMF continue to meet biweekly in Ankara and move forward on other confidence-building measures.

As part of the Ankara process, the United States is providing political, financial, and logistical support for the PMF in northern Iraq that has demarcated the cease-fire line and monitors the cease-fire. Our support is being provided in the form of commodities

and services in accordance with a drawdown directed by me on December 11, 1996, and in the form of funds to be used to provide other nonlethal assistance in accordance with a separate determination made by former Secretary of State Christopher on November 10, 1996. The PMF began full deployment in mid-April and continues to investigate and resolve reported cease-fire violations.

These steps, as with all our efforts under the Ankara process and concerning Iraq, maintain support for the unity and territorial integrity of Iraq. Security conditions in northern Iraq nevertheless remain tenuous at best, with the Iranian and PKK (Kurdistan Workers Party) activity adding to the ever-present threat from Baghdad.

The oil for food arrangement under UNSCR 986 was reauthorized under UNSCR 1111 on June 9, 1997. Under UNSCR 1111, Iraq is authorized to sell up to $2 billion of oil during a 180-day period (with the possibility of UNSC renewal for subsequent 180-day periods). Resolution 1111, like its predecessor, requires that the proceeds of this limited oil sale, all of which must be deposited in a U.N. escrow account, will be used to purchase food, medicine, and other material and supplies for essential civilian needs for all Iraqi citizens and to fund vital U.N. activities regarding Iraq. Critical to the success of UNSCR 1111 is Iraq's willingness to follow through on its commitments under the resolution to allow the U.N. to monitor the distribution of humanitarian goods to the Iraqi people. Iraq has suspended any further oil sales until a new distribution plan is approved, which will probably occur sometime in July. The Iraqi Government has prepared a new distribution plan, which is subject to the approval of the U.N. Secretary General.

Iraq continues to stall and obfuscate rather than work in good faith toward accounting for the hundreds of Kuwaitis and third-country nationals who disappeared at the hands of Iraqi authorities during the occupation. It has also failed to return all of the stolen Kuwaiti military equipment and the priceless Kuwaiti cultural and historical artifacts that were looted during the occupation.

The human rights situation throughout Iraq remains unchanged. Iraq's repression of its Shi'a population continues with policies that are destroying the Marsh Arabs' way of life in southern Iraq, as well as the ecology of the southern marshes. The U.N., in its most recent reports on implementation of UNSCR 986, recognized that the Government of Iraq continues to forcibly deport Iraqi citizens from Kirkuk and other areas of northern Iraq still under the Iraqi Government's control. Saddam Hussein shows no signs of complying with UNSCR 688, which demands that Iraq cease the repression of its own people. The effort by various Iraqi opposition groups and nongovernmental organizations to document Iraqi war crimes and other violations of international humanitarian law, known as INDICT, continues.

The Multinational Interception Force (MIF) continues its important mission in the Arabian Gulf. The United States Navy provides the bulk of the forces involved in the maritime sanctions enforcement although we receive much-needed help from a number of close allies. In recent months, ships from the Netherlands, Canada, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom have participated in MIF operations. We continue active pursuit of broad-based international participation in these operations.

Illegal smuggling of Iraqi gasoil from the Shatt Al Arab waterway continues to increase. We estimate that over 81,000 metric tons of gasoil each month is exported from Iraq in violation of UNSCR 661. The smugglers utilize the territorial waters of Iran with the complicity of the Iranian Government, which profits from charging protection fees for these vessels, to avoid interception by the MIF in international waters. Cash raised from these illegal operations is used to purchase contraband goods, which are then smuggled back into Iraq by the same route. We continue to brief the U.N. Sanctions Committee regarding these operations and have pressed the Committee to compel Iran to give a full accounting of its involvement. We have also worked closely with our MIF partners and the Gulf Cooperation Council states to take measures to curb sanctions-breaking operations. Recent announcements by the government of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) that it intends to crack down on

smugglers who operate UAE-flagged vessels is a positive step in this regard.

The United Nations Compensation Commission (UNCC), established pursuant to UNSCR 687, continues to resolve claims against Iraq arising from Iraq's unlawful invasion and occupation of Kuwait. The UNCC has issued almost 1.1 million awards worth approximately $5.9 billion. Thirty percent of the proceeds from the oil sales permitted by UNSCR 986 have been allocated to the Compensation Fund to pay awards and finance the operations of the UNCC, and these proceeds will continue to be allocated to the Fund under UNSCR 1111. Initial payments out of the Compensation Fund are currently being made on awards in the order in which UNCC has approved them, in installments of $2,500.00.

To conclude, Iraq remains a serious threat to regional peace and stability. I remain determined to see Iraq comply fully with all of its obligations under U.N. Security Council resolutions. My administration will continue to oppose any relaxation of sanctions until Iraq demonstrates its peaceful intentions through such compliance.

I appreciate the support of the Congress for our efforts and shall continue to keep the Congress informed about this important issue.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 10.

Message to the Senate Transmitting the Poland-United States Extradition Treaty

July 9, 1997

To the Senate of the United States:

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, I transmit herewith the Extradition Treaty between the United States of America and the Republic of Poland, signed at Washington on July 10, 1996.

In addition, I transmit, for the information of the Senate, the report of the Department of State with respect to the Treaty. As the report explains, the Treaty will not require implementing legislation.

This Treaty will, upon entry into force, enhance cooperation between the law enforcement communities of both countries. It will thereby make a significant contribution to international law enforcement efforts.

The provisions in this Treaty follow generally the form and content of extradition treaties recently concluded by the United States.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to the Treaty and give its advice and consent to ratification.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
July 9, 1997.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 10.

Message to the Senate Transmitting the France-United States Extradition Treaty

July 9, 1997

To the Senate of the United States:

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, I transmit herewith the Extradition Treaty between the United States of America and France, signed at Paris on April 23, 1996.

In addition, I transmit, for the information of the Senate, the report of the Department of State with respect to the Treaty. As the report explains, the Treaty will not require implementing legislation.

This Treaty will, upon entry into force, enhance cooperation between the law enforcement communities of both countries. It will thereby make a significant contribution to international law enforcement efforts.

The provisions in this Treaty, which includes an Agreed Minute, follow generally the form and content of extradition treaties recently concluded by the United States.