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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