

ic growth. We owe it to our children to cultivate for another time of flowering and approve this agreement.

We also owe it to our children to put the illegal drug trade out of business. That's why when I visited Toronto recently for the economic summit of the major industrial nations, I was particularly pleased by one action the summit nations took. It's called the Bush initiative. For it, thank Vice President Bush and Canada's Prime Minister Brian Mulroney. Not long ago, these two leaders decided that the best new place to hit the drug trade was in its most vulnerable spot: money laundering. Now that's what all the major industrial nations are going to do.

Yes, our nation's agenda is full, whether

it's keeping our defenses strong or cutting unnecessary spending; getting Congress to pass a welfare reform bill that requires work; and trade legislation that will open, not close, markets; or helping freedom fighters around the world. But that's what democracy is all about—a big agenda, America's agenda, for all of us to work on together, to build a bright tomorrow for our blessed land. Here at the White House, our sleeves are rolled up, and we're hard at work on our agenda for the future.

So, happy Fourth of July! And until next week, thanks for listening, and God bless you.

Note: The President spoke at 12:06 p.m. from Camp David, MD.

Statement on the Destruction of an Iranian Jetliner by the United States Navy Over the Persian Gulf

July 3, 1988

I am saddened to report that it appears that in a proper defensive action by the U.S.S. *Vincennes* this morning in the Persian Gulf an Iranian airliner was shot down over the Strait of Hormuz. This is a terrible human tragedy. Our sympathy and condolences go out to the passengers, crew, and their families. The Defense Department will conduct a full investigation.

We deeply regret any loss of life. The course of the Iranian civilian airliner was such that it was headed directly for the

U.S.S. *Vincennes*, which was at the time engaged with five Iranian Boghammar boats that had attacked our forces. When the aircraft failed to heed repeated warnings, the *Vincennes* followed standing orders and widely publicized procedures, firing to protect itself against possible attack.

The only U.S. interest in the Persian Gulf is peace, and this tragedy reinforces the need to achieve that goal with all possible speed.

Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate on the Destruction of an Iranian Jetliner by the United States Navy Over the Persian Gulf

July 4, 1988

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

On July 3, 1988, the USS *VINCENNES* and USS *ELMER MONTGOMERY* were operating in international waters of the Persian Gulf near the Strait of Hormuz. (On

July 2, the *MONTGOMERY* had responded to a distress signal from a Danish tanker that was under attack by Iranian small boats and had fired a warning shot, which caused the breaking off of the attack.) Having indi-

cations that approximately a dozen Iranian small boats were congregating to attack merchant shipping, the VINCENNES sent a Mark III LAMPS Helicopter on investigative patrol in international airspace to assess the situation. At about 1010 local Gulf time (2:10 a.m. EDT), when the helicopter had approached to within only four nautical miles, it was fired on by Iranian small boats (the VINCENNES was ten nautical miles from the scene at this time). The LAMPS helicopter was not damaged and returned immediately to the VINCENNES.

As the VINCENNES and MONTGOMERY were approaching the group of Iranian small boats at approximately 1042 local time, at least four of the small boats turned toward and began closing in on the American warships. At this time, both American ships opened fire on the small craft, sinking two and damaging a third. Regrettably, in the course of the U.S. response to the Iranian attack, an Iranian civilian airliner was shot down by the VINCENNES, which was firing in self defense at what it believed to be a hostile Iranian military aircraft. We deeply regret the tragic loss of life that occurred. The Defense Department will conduct a full investigation.

The actions of U.S. forces in response to being attacked by Iranian small boats were taken in accordance with our inherent right of self-defense, as recognized in Article 51

of the United Nations Charter, and pursuant to my constitutional authority with respect to the conduct of foreign relations and as Commander in Chief. There has been no further hostile action by Iranian forces, and, although U.S. forces will remain prepared to take additional defensive action to protect our units and military personnel, we regard this incident as closed. U.S. forces suffered no casualties or damage.

Since March 1987, I and members of my Administration have provided to Congress letters, reports, briefings, and testimony in connection with developments in the Persian Gulf and the activities of U.S. Armed Forces in the region. In accordance with my desire that Congress continue to be fully informed in this matter, I am providing this report consistent with the War Powers Resolution. I look forward to cooperating with Congress in pursuit of our mutual, overriding aim of peace and stability in the Persian Gulf region.

Sincerely,

RONALD REAGAN

Note: Identical letters were sent to Jim Wright, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and John C. Stennis, President pro tempore of the Senate. The letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 5.

Remarks at a White House Briefing for Conservative Political Leaders

July 5, 1988

I can't top that. I might as well just—[laughter]. Well, thank you all very much, and welcome to the White House complex. White House complex—that's what our opponents have after 8 years out of power. [Laughter]

You know, for 8 years, this White House has been guided by your vision and your ideals. And what an 8 years it's been—so much achieved in so many areas. It reminds me of what a Hollywood great, Sam Goldwyn, one of the founders of MGM, once

said when he got worked up about a script. Sam Goldwyn had a way with words. He said, "That story is wonderful. It's magnificent. It's prolific." [Laughter] Well, "wonderful, magnificent, and prolific" describe the 8 years of what the press never tires of saying is the most conservative administration to come to Washington in generations. Well, of course, for some of us a generation is forever. [Laughter]

We all remember the inflation and stagnation that the taxes, the spending, and reg-