

dren and your grandchildren the America and the world they deserve.

God bless you, and God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:20 a.m. in Michie Stadium. In his remarks, he referred to Lt. Gen. Daniel W. Christman, USA, Superintendent, and Adam K. Ake, valedictorian, U.S. Military Academy; and Gen. Dennis J. Reimer, USA, Chief of Staff, U.S. Army.

### **Statement on the Department of Justice's Report on Crime**

*June 1, 1997*

Four years ago, my administration made a commitment to take our streets back from crime and violence. We have a comprehensive anticrime plan, and it is working. More community police, tougher punishments, and fewer guns in the hands of criminals are making a difference. Today's Justice Department release marks the largest one-year decline in murder, aggravated assault, and violent crime in the past 35 years. The continued downward trend over the past 4 years is further evidence that we are on the right track with increased community policing, tougher penalties, and greater juvenile crime prevention efforts.

Much work remains to be done, however. Juvenile crime and violence must be our top law enforcement priority for the next 4 years. My antigang and youth violence strategy declares war on juvenile crime and gangs, with new prosecutors and tougher penalties; an extension of the Brady bill, so violent teenage criminals will never have the right to purchase a handgun; and resources to keep schools open after hours, on weekends, and in the summer. While the House-passed juvenile crime legislation falls short of the goals outlined in my strategy, I am hopeful that the Senate will improve on this measure and pass it without delay. We must keep the crime rate coming down, and every child's prospect of a bright future going up.

NOTE: This statement was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 30, but it was embargoed for release until 6 p.m., June 1.

### **Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on the Situation in Sierra Leone**

*May 30, 1997*

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

On May 25, soldiers from the Republic of Sierra Leone Military Forces (RSLMF) mutinied against the country's democratically elected President, Ahmed Tejan Kabbah. Battles between the mutineers and the President's Nigerian security guard resulted in several rocket propelled grenade rounds hitting the U.S. Embassy. In addition, the RSLMF soldiers have engaged in looting, rape, armed robbery, and carjackings throughout the city. Sporadic gunfire and looting diminished with the arrival of additional Nigerian military forces that attempted to restore order. However, the security situation is deteriorating as tensions rise between Nigerian troops on the one hand and the mutineers and their supporters on the other hand. While there is no evidence that Americans are being directly targeted, the disorder and violence in Freetown subjects American citizens to continued risks ranging from criminal acts to random violence.

On May 29 and May 30, due to the uncertain security situation and the possible threat to American citizens and the American Embassy in Sierra Leone, approximately 200 U.S. military personnel, including an 11-member special forces detachment, were positioned in Freetown to prepare for the evacuation of certain U.S. Government employees and private U.S. citizens. Evacuation operations began on May 30, as U.S. military helicopters transported U.S. citizens and designated third-country nationals to immediate safety aboard the U.S.S. *Kearsarge* from where they will be taken to Conakry, Guinea, for further transportation. In addition to those evacuated by helicopter, 18 U.S. citizens departed Sierra Leone on May 29 via a British charter airline flight.

The Marines involved in this operation are from the Marine Expeditionary Unit currently embarked aboard U.S.S. *Kearsarge*, operating off the west coast of Africa. Special forces personnel are from the U.S. Army Third Special Forces Group, Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Although U.S. forces are

equipped for combat, the evacuation has been undertaken solely for the purpose of protecting American citizens and property. United States forces will redeploy as soon as evacuation operations are complete and enhanced security at locations in and around Freetown is no longer required.

I have taken this action pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct the foreign relations of the United States and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive.

I am providing this report as part of my efforts to keep the Congress fully informed, consistent with the War Powers Resolution. I appreciate the support of the Congress in this action to protect American citizens and the American Embassy in Freetown, Sierra Leone.

Sincerely,

**William J. Clinton**

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Strom Thurmond, President pro tempore of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 2.

### **Statement on the Oklahoma City Bombing Trial**

*June 2, 1997*

I cannot comment on the jury's verdict, but I will say that this is a very important and long overdue day for the survivors and families of those who died in Oklahoma City. And I am very, very proud of the work of Attorney General Janet Reno, the prosecutors, the FBI, and the ATF.

Two years ago, I spoke to the families of 168 people who lost their lives at the Murrah Federal building. I told them that though they had lost much, they had not lost everything—and they had not lost America. I pledged then and I pledge now that we will stand with them for as many tomorrows as it takes. Today I say to the families of the victims, no single verdict can bring an end to your anguish, but your courage has been an inspiration to all Americans. Our prayers are with you.

### **Statement on the Resumption of the Belfast Talks**

*June 3, 1997*

Today in Belfast, Senator George Mitchell reconvened the talks on the future of Northern Ireland that began almost a year ago. I call on the political leaders to seize this precious opportunity and begin the hard but worthwhile work of negotiating a just and lasting settlement. To engage in serious negotiations, to be willing to make principled compromises, requires courage and creativity. Now is the time for the representatives of the people to show the good sense and goodwill that I saw in such abundance when I visited Northern Ireland. The United States will continue to stand with them as they take on, with the two Governments, the demanding task of shaping a peaceful and prosperous future in which all the people of Northern Ireland will have an equal stake.

As I have said so many times, ideally all the elected parties should be at the table when the decisions that shape the future are made. If the IRA declares and implements an unequivocal cease-fire, I am confident that Sinn Fein will be invited to add its voice to the other parties' at the table as they forge a new future for themselves and their children.

### **Memorandum on Emigration Policies of Certain Former Eastern Bloc States**

*June 3, 1997*

Presidential Determination No. 97-27

*Memorandum for the Secretary of State*

*Subject:* Presidential Determination Under Subsections 402(a) and 409(a) of the Trade Act of 1974, as Amended—Emigration Policies of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine

Pursuant to the authority vested in me by subsections 402(a) and 409(a) of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2432(a) and 2439(a) (the "Act")), I determine that Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine are not in violation of paragraph (1), (2), or (3)