

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall:

- take the necessary administrative action to ensure that a sufficient appeals process is in place throughout the Veteran's Health System by September 30, 1998; and
- issue a policy directive to ensure that beneficiaries in the Veteran's Health System are provided information consistent with the Patient Bill of Rights by September 30, 1998.

The Secretary of Defense shall:

- establish a strong grievance and appeals process consistent with the Patient Bill of Rights throughout the military health system by September 30, 1998;
- issue a policy directive to promote greater use, within the military health system, of providers who have specialized training in women's health issues to serve as primary care managers for female beneficiaries and to ensure access to specialists for beneficiaries with chronic medical conditions by September 30, 1998; and
- issue a policy directive to ensure that all patients in the military health system can fully discuss all treatment options. This includes requiring disclosure of financial incentives to physicians and prohibiting "gag clauses" by September 30, 1998.

The Secretary of Labor shall:

- propose regulations to strengthen the internal appeals process for all Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA) health plans to ensure that decisions regarding urgent care are resolved within 72 hours and generally resolved within 15 days for non-urgent care; and
- propose regulations that require ERISA health plans to ensure the information they provide to plan participants is consistent with the Patient Bill of Rights.

**William J. Clinton**

### **Videotaped Remarks on Expansion of United Nations Security Council Resolution 986**

*February 20, 1998*

No people have suffered more at the hands of Saddam Hussein than the Iraqi people themselves. I have been very moved, as so many others around the world have been, by their plight. Because of Saddam Hussein's failure to comply with U.N. resolutions, the sanctions imposed by the U.N. at the end of the Gulf war to stop him from rebuilding his military might are still in place.

As a result, the people of Iraq have suffered. They are the victims of Saddam's refusal to comply with the resolutions he promised to honor. The United States strongly supports the U.N. Secretary General's recommendation to more than double the amount of oil Iraq can sell in exchange for food, medicine, and other humanitarian supplies. We will work hard to make sure those funds are used to help the ordinary people of Iraq.

Since the Gulf war, our policy has been aimed at preventing Saddam from threatening his region or the world. We have no quarrel with the Iraqi people who are heirs to a proud civilization and who have suffered for so many years under Saddam's rule.

From the beginning, the international sanctions that are aimed at denying Saddam Hussein the funds to rebuild his military machine have permitted food and medicine into Iraq. The United States has led the way in trying to make sure Iraq had the resources to pay for them. In 1991, with out leadership, the U.N. Security Council encouraged Iraq to sell oil to pay for these critical humanitarian supplies. Saddam Hussein rejected that offer for 4 years, choosing instead to let his people suffer. What resources he had went not to caring for his people but to strengthening his army, hiding his weapons of mass destruction, and building lavish palaces for his regime.

In 1995 America led a new effort to aid the Iraqi people. After refusing the proposal for a year, Saddam finally accepted U.N. Security Council Resolution 986, which permits the sale of oil for food. Then he engaged in delay and bureaucratic wrangling for yet another year before allowing the resolution to take effect.

Perhaps worst of all, Saddam deliberately and repeatedly delayed the pumping of oil, which held up shipments of food and medicine to the Iraqi population. Even so, the international community has managed to deliver to the Iraqi people more than 3 million tons of food.

Just as Saddam deprives his people of relief from abroad, he represses them at home, brutally putting down the uprisings of the Iraqi people after the Gulf war, attacking Irbil in 1996, and draining the marshes of Southern Iraq.

Saddam's priorities are painfully clear: not caring for his citizens but building weapons of mass destruction and using them—using them not once but repeatedly in the terrible war Iraq fought with Iran, and not only against combatants but against civilians, and not only against a foreign adversary but against his own people. And he's targeted Scud missiles against fellow Arabs and Muslims in Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Bahrain.

Now, he is trying to rid Iraq of the international inspectors who have done such a remarkable job in finding and destroying his hidden weapons—weapons he himself promised in 1991 to report and help destroy. If Saddam is allowed to rebuild his arsenal unchecked, none of the region's children will be safe.

America is working very hard to find a diplomatic solution to this crisis Saddam has created. I have sent my Secretary of State, my Defense Secretary, and my Ambassador to the United Nations literally around the world to work with our friends and allies. If there is a way to resolve this peacefully, we will pursue it to the very end.

But from Europe to the Persian Gulf, all agree on the bottom line: Saddam must allow the U.N. weapons inspectors to complete their mission with full and free access to any site they suspect may be hiding material or information related to Iraqi weapons of mass

destruction programs. That is what Saddam agreed to as a condition for ending the Gulf war way back in 1991.

Nobody wants to use force. But if Saddam refuses to keep his commitments to the international community, we must be prepared to deal directly with the threat these weapons pose to the Iraqi people, to Iraq's neighbors, and to the rest of the world. Either Saddam acts, or we will have to.

Saddam himself understands that the international community places a higher value on the lives of the Iraqi people than he does. That is why he uses innocent women and children as human shields, risking what we care about—human lives—to protect what he cares about—his weapons. If force proves necessary to resolve this crisis, we will do everything we can to prevent innocent people from getting hurt. But make no mistake: Saddam Hussein must bear full responsibility for every casualty that results.

To all our Arab and Muslim friends, let me say America wants to see a future of security, prosperity, and peace for all the people of the Middle East. We want to see the Iraqi people free of the constant warfare and repression that have been the hallmark of Saddam's regime. We want to see them living in a nation that uses its wealth not to strengthen its arsenal but to care for its citizens and give its children a brighter future. That is what we'll keep working for and what the people of Iraq deserve.

NOTE: These remarks were videotaped at approximately 4 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House for later broadcast, and they were released by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 20.

### **Statement on the Northern Ireland Peace Process**

*February 20, 1998*

Today's decision to suspend Sinn Fein from the Northern Ireland peace talks shows that the UK and Irish Governments are committed to an inclusive process but one that reaffirms that it is unacceptable to mix politics and violence.

Peace in Northern Ireland is best served if all the political leaders of Northern Ireland