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Flight 103 Families Drop-by 4/16/90 [OA 6895]

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Stack:	Row:	Section:	Shelf:	Position:
<b>G</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>

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Davis/Martin  
May 15, 1990  
Draft two  
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PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: DROP-BY FLIGHT 103 FAMILIES  
ROOM 450  
TUESDAY, MAY 16, 1990

I want to begin by thanking Chairman Ann McLaughlin, the members of the Commission and their staff for a comprehensive, independent review of aviation security. Their report sets a standard for future efforts to protect the American traveling public from criminal and terrorist attacks. But most of all, I want to thank the families of the Pan Am 103 victims for their leadership and principled determination.

This report, born of your trauma and grief, holds the promise of helping to prevent future tragedies. And our government-wide effort, born of your outrage, **may one day lead to justice.**\\\

Of course, it is true that while flights and passenger-miles flown by air carriers increase, bombings and hijackings decrease. But you know better than anyone, that a near-perfect safety record can still be tragic. And the tragedy of Pan Am 103 must be an everlasting reminder for vigilance: vigilance to counter new tactics and new equipment, vigilance against remote-control cowards who continually probe for a "weak link" in our aviation security system.

The Commission concludes that there were lapses in security procedures. **If mistakes were made, we must learn from them.** So those commission recommendations, not already implemented, will

be taken under urgent review by Secretaries Baker, Skinner and the rest of the Cabinet. And we will do one thing more -- changes are being made to ensure that departments of your government will from now on treat families of terrorist victims with sensitivity and professionalism.\\\

But the United States cannot alone ensure the safety of the skies. Sadly, more than one thousand passengers on civil aircraft from 14 different member states of the International Civil Aviation Organization have been victims of sabotage over the last decade. So air terrorism is a global problem. And it will require a global solution -- beginning with a commitment to increase minimum security standards for all airlines.

Finally, let me say that the bombing of Pan Am 103 was not only a crime, it was a cowardly attack against the United States. American citizens were killed because they were on an American aircraft with an American flag emblazoned on its tail.

This report suggests that we cannot solely rely on criminal judicial processes that limit the range of responses to acts of terror against our people. The criminal process is essential to bring terrorists and murderers to justice; but it is only one way in which we can respond to state-sponsored terrorism. Do not be misled by what you may read or hear about our resolve.

I hope you take comfort from the hope that from this report, lives may be saved. But in the end, I know that even this will not compensate your loss. I can only promise you action -- action to stop the terror and, I pray, one day, to see justice

for the murderers who deserve the same mercy they showed their victims.

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