

News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Oct. 18, 1996

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Clinton owes apology for using 'terrorist' demagoguery about the TWA Flight 800 crash to attack Bill of Rights

Clinton should now repeal unconstitutional laws he requested, says Harry Browne

WASHINGTON, DC — Investigators have found "no evidence" that a terrorist bomb destroyed TWA Flight 800 — so President Clinton owes the American public an apology for having demagogued that tragic incident into an excuse to curtail civil liberties, says his Libertarian presidential challenger.

"President Clinton should admit that he was wrong, and should seek the immediate repeal of the unconstitutional laws he demanded to fight the fictitious terrorists he claimed destroyed Flight 800," said Harry Browne, the Libertarian candidate on the ballot in all 50 states.

"Clinton should also return to the taxpayers the \$1 billion Congress appropriated to fight this kind of non-terrorist incident. And he should apologize to the families of the people who died on Flight 800 — and beg their forgiveness for using the innocent victims of a mechanical malfunction as human props in his effort to terrorize the Bill of Rights," said Browne.

After TWA Flight 800 exploded in a fireball off Long Island on June 17, Clinton suggested that terrorists were to blame and proposed new laws to fight what he called "the modern equivalent of the Soviet threat during the Cold War."

Congress responded, passing legislation giving the government the power to conduct secret hearings to deport foreigners, to arbitrarily designate groups as "terrorist," and to study expanded wiretapping technologies. Congress also appropriated \$1 billion to "fight terrorism."

However, air safety investigators yesterday said the evidence that terrorists destroyed the plane is "very, very small," and the tragedy was almost certainly caused by a mechanical malfunction and an explosion in the fuel tank.

"Despite all Clinton's demagoguery, this incident wasn't the work of terrorists. Instead, it was a tragic fluke accident," said Browne. "But Bill Clinton's irresponsible actions have turned Flight 800 from a personal tragedy into a political tragedy for America.

"The aftermath of any personal tragedy is that we mourn for our lost friends, neighbors, and fellow citizens. But the aftermath of a politically exploited tragedy is that we must mourn for our lost liberties, and mourn the Bill of Rights, which has become a punching bag for power-hungry politicians. Bill Clinton shouldn't be allowed to get away with it this time. He was wrong — and he owes America an apology," said Browne.

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