

Nomination for an Under Secretary of the Treasury

April 14, 1994

The President today announced the nomination of Assistant Treasury Secretary Ronald K. Noble as Treasury Under Secretary for Enforcement.

"I am pleased to nominate Ron to this newly created and critically important position," the President said. "I am confident that his proven

leadership and skilled service in the area of law enforcement will continue to contribute greatly to our fight against crime."

NOTE: A biography of the nominee was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary.

Statement by the Press Secretary on the President's Meeting With Prime Minister Tansu Ciller of Turkey

April 14, 1994

President Clinton offered his condolences to the Turkish Prime Minister and to the families and loved ones of those Turkish citizens who lost their lives today in the accident in northern Iraq. Prime Minister Ciller expressed her own sorrow at the loss of life.

The President and Prime Minister Ciller discussed her economic reform package. He urged

her to move forward quickly with her reform program and to work closely with the International Monetary Fund. The two leaders also discussed the situation in Cyprus. President Clinton and Prime Minister Ciller agreed to continue to do what they can to make progress soon in the talks on the confidence building measures package.

Remarks on the American Helicopter Tragedy in Iraq and an Exchange With Reporters

April 15, 1994

The President. Hello. The people here from Louisiana and Texas are here primarily for health care, and I apologize for the delay. But I met for an hour and a half this morning with my national security team about a variety of issues, but I wanted to say in particular a word of update about the terrible tragedy in Iraq yesterday.

After I met yesterday with my national security advisers, I spoke with Prime Minister Major and with President Mitterrand, expressed my condolences for the losses of French and British citizens, and assured them of what I can now reassure you about, which is that we've put together an investigative team which is now on the site and is working. We will move as quickly as possible to do a thorough and complete investigation and then to put out all the facts.

In a couple of hours, an hour or so, the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff will be having a briefing at the Pentagon to discuss this further and to answer further questions. But we are going to stay on top of this, work through it, and make a full report to the American people.

If there are any other questions—perhaps we could take some questions on foreign policy or any other national issues for a while, and then we'll come back to the health care questioning.

Iraq

Q. Sir, in light of that shooting down, should the peacekeeping mission in Iraq continue?

The President. Oh, I think so. I very definitely think so. Keep in mind these people—the tragedy of this is that both sets of planes, the two helicopters and the two planes were there trying to save the lives of the Kurds. And I think it has performed a very valuable function, not only in saving the lives of the Kurds but in permitting them to continue to live in northern Iraq and relieving Turkey of a very serious potential refugee problem.

There is no question in my mind that it has been a very successful and a very important mission. The Secretary of Defense implied yesterday and said again today that we would obviously, in the course of this investigation, be reviewing all the tactical issues involved. But our policy is sound, and I believe it should continue.

Bosnia

Q. In Bosnia, sir, there's another issue of peacekeeping. You have recent events by the Bosnian Serbs' actions that have been taken against U.N. peacekeepers and military observers. You yesterday made a statement you've been sending a message to them. But apparently, that message has not been getting across. Why is that, would you say? And is there a chance that there could be a stalemate emerging?

The President. Well, I think that some friction was predictable when the policy began. But let me remind you that since the United Nations has taken a more vigorous approach and asked NATO to be available, in fact, to provide close air support and created a safe zone around Sarajevo, substantial progress has been made. After a long time when virtually no progress was made, we've had relative peace in the Sarajevo area; we've had the agreement between the Croats and the Muslims which is holding.

We had some friction as a result of the last round of very modest air strikes as a result of the shelling of Gorazde which put United Nations personnel at risk. I think that what I have to do again is to clarify, if there is any real doubt, that the United States has no interest in having NATO become involved in this war and trying to gain some advantage for one side over the other.

But I think we must maintain an absolutely firm support of the U.N. policy. We can't have our U.N. personnel there vulnerable to shelling and to attack with no one there to defend them.

The United Nations does not wish to become involved in changing the military balance.

Finally, I would say the most important thing is for the parties to get back to the negotiations. And I, again, want to say that Mr. Churkin from Russia is working hard on this. Our Ambassador, Mr. Redman, is there working. The United Nations is working. So I'd say our position is to be firm but not provocative and not trying to change the military balance. We need to get the negotiations back on track.

But remember, this policy has produced a lot of progress, after a prolonged period in which there was a lot of bloodshed and no progress. And I think if the Serbs will consider what the reality is, they will see that they have a lot more to gain from negotiations than from provocation. We should just be firm and work through this.

Iraq

Q. Mr. President, you say the investigation is continuing in Iraq. Do you have, however, any preliminary estimates of what caused this incident?

The President. No, sir, I don't, really. Like every other interested American—and I think almost all our people are interested in this, I suppose—I have asked a lot of questions, and I've been able to ask a lot of those questions. But I think it would be a real disservice to the process for us to jump the gun. I don't want to mislead the American people. I don't want to say something that might later be proved wrong. We will conduct a thorough and vigorous investigation, and we will do our best to get all of the evidence out to you. But I don't want to make a preliminary judgment.

Peacekeeping Operations

Q. Mr. President, right now on your desk you have the Presidential directive dealing with peacekeeping. We understand that it's very close to completion, if not virtually completed. And it raises—a lot of the things that have been happening this week are touching on the issue of peacekeeping. Our understanding is, there are going to be tougher criteria for getting involved in peacekeeping activities. Is that the case? And could that mean that there would be fewer peacekeeping ventures?

The President. Well, keep in the mind, the United Nations decides which peacekeeping ventures it will get involved in. And then we

have to decide which ones in which we will become involved.

There are several issues here. And if I might, let me just outline some of them. Some of them relate to the management of the peacekeeping operations rather than particular decisions. The United States has long favored tighter financial controls and oversight. And we have urged the appointment of an inspector general at the United Nations publicly. We have also felt that our overall contribution to the peacekeeping cost was higher than it should have been and considerably higher than our world's share of annual income. So we have asked for some—we will seek some change of that. We also want to be very clear about the standards for our involvement in peacekeeping operations.

Now, having said that, I met with a bipartisan committee of congressional leaders yesterday morning and urged them to support our peacekeeping budget this year because we have a sensible way of avoiding dropping behind again in our obligations, dividing the responsibilities between the Defense and State Department. And I asked Congress to help me pay the arrears that we owe to the United Nations in peacekeeping. Even our own forces who went to Somalia can't be fully reimbursed in large measure because the United States owes more debt to the peacekeeping fund than any other country.

So I believe being involved with other nations in peacekeeping is a good way of burden shar-

ing. After all, we only have—I think fewer than one percent of the forces involved in peacekeeping in the world now are American forces. We have about 5 percent of the world's population. We have less than one percent of the world's forces involved in peacekeeping.

So while we pay a little more than I think we should, our commitment in terms of manpower is less than our population would appear to warrant and certainly than our military capacity would. So we have been advantaged by multinational peacekeeping, and I will support it. I do think we need to have higher standards, and that will be in my directive when it comes out.

Thank you.

Q. Sir, when do you sign the—

The President. If you all have any other questions that are unrelated to health care, I'll answer them, too.

Q. Sir, when do you sign it?

The President. I'm not sure. We're working—we're very close. We've been working on it for a long time, as you noted.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:51 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House, prior to a question-and-answer session with the Louisiana and Texas media. In his remarks, he referred to Ambassador Charles Redman, U.S. Special Envoy for the Former Yugoslavia.

Statement on Disaster Assistance for California

April 15, 1994

Our administration is doing everything we can to respond to the continuing needs of individuals, families, businesses, and communities arising from the January earthquake. California's economic future depends in part on a strong recovery from the earthquake, and the loans and other assistance included in this package will help considerably. Our departments and agen-

cies will continue to monitor events in California and take whatever actions are needed to meet Federal responsibilities there.

NOTE: This statement was included in a White House statement on disaster assistance for California.