

Q. Mr. President, Mr. Yeltsin is also asking for a summit of all of the major powers to try to find some sort of solution. How do you feel about that?

The President. Well, he and I have discussed that on the telephone at least once, maybe twice, and I think it has some merit. We both agreed the last time we talked, before this development in Gorazde, that we were making progress doing what each of us was doing and that it might be a little premature, and that that sort of thing, in effect, can only be done once, and it might be better to save it for a time when, hopefully, the negotiations between the Serbs on the one hand and the Croatsians and the Muslims on the other were coming down to an end point.

I presume from his statement today that he's sufficiently concerned about what's happened in the last couple of days, that he thinks maybe we ought to go ahead and do it now. I think it deserves serious consideration, and I want to discuss it with him and with the other nations that would be involved. But I think in the context of the statement President Yeltsin made today, it has to be considered seriously because it was a very important, positive statement that he made.

Q. What about Boutros-Ghali's proposal to expand air strikes to the other five safe areas in Bosnia? Would the U.S. and NATO be willing to go along with that?

The President. That's what we're discussing today. And we're discussing exactly how that would be done and, of course, whether the other NATO allies would be willing to do it and what the ups and downs of it would be and what else we could do to get this thing going. But again, I want to have my meeting at 3:30 p.m. You should know we're discussing all these options, but I reserve the right to announce a clear policy on where we go on the specifics until after the next meeting, because I did have some questions after our meeting this morning that the security team will answer for me later today.

Q. How concerned are you about empty threats—

The President. I think that there must not be any. When we had the NATO meeting in January, the one thing I implored our allies to do was not to reaffirm our position unless we were willing to see it through. I still feel that way. The possibility of misunderstanding in this area is so great anyway, because of the shared responsibility and the contingent responsibility of NATO—contingent on what the U.N. does—and the difficulty in getting all the parties together, that we simply must not be on record in favor of any policy we are not prepared to follow through on.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:45 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House.

Statement on the Agreement on Elections in South Africa

April 19, 1994

I warmly welcome today's agreement among the South African Government, the African National Congress and the Inkatha Freedom Party to renounce violence and to bring Inkatha into the nation's first non-racial elections next week. Throughout the historic process of change in South Africa, the leaders of that country have shown great courage and a capacity for compromise. Today's bold action by Chief Buthelezi, Nelson Mandela, and F.W. de Klerk is one more act of collective statesmanship that bodes well for the prospect of free and fair elections in

South Africa and for the success of the future Government of National Unity.

What happens in South Africa is of vital importance to us all. South Africa has the potential to alter the world trend toward greater ethnic division and establish a powerful model for democratic reform and national reconciliation. We will remain steadfast in our support for South Africa as it makes this difficult and historic transition to nonracial democracy.