

Remarks to the Troops at Wheeler Army Airfield in Honolulu September 1, 1995

Audience member. Go Razorbacks!

The President. That's good. Promote that man.
[Laughter]

Let me say, first of all, I thank you for the magnificent job that you did today. It was thrilling to all the veterans who are here and all their family members, and thrilling to the people in the United States who saw it on television. I thank you for your service and your devotion to your country. I hope you realize just how historic these few days are. I hope every one of you has the opportunity to get out and meet some of these World War II veterans who were

here 50 years before you and whose legacy you have carried on so greatly.

I just want you to know that I, as the President and Commander in Chief and as an American citizen, am profoundly grateful to you for your service to this country, proud of what you represent, and I'm determined to do everything I can to support you, to see that we can, together, do our job to preserve our freedom and expand democracy. You are terrific.

Thank you. God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:43 a.m. on the lanai of the consolidated mess.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on the Deployment of United States Aircraft to Bosnia-Herzegovina September 1, 1995

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

I last reported to the Congress on May 24, 1995, concerning U.S. support for the United Nations and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) efforts in the former Yugoslavia. I am today reporting on the use of U.S. combat and support aircraft commencing on August 29, 1995 (EDT), in a series of NATO air strikes against Bosnian Serb Army (BSA) forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina that were threatening the U.N.-declared safe areas of Sarajevo, Tuzla, and Gorazde. The NATO air strikes were launched following an August 28, 1995, BSA mortar attack on Sarajevo that killed 37 people and injured over 80. This tragic and inexcusable act was the latest in a series of BSA attacks on unarmed civilians in the safe areas.

By way of background, and as I am sure you are aware, the situation in eastern Bosnia-Herzegovina, and in particular the safe areas in the so-called "eastern enclaves," changed dramatically in the month of July. On July 11, 1995, the safe area of Srebrenica fell to the BSA following repeated BSA attacks. As a result of the fall of Srebrenica, over 40,000 persons were forced from their homes. Similarly, on July 26, 1995, the safe area of Zepa fell to attacking

BSA forces with over 8,000 persons displaced. As a result of these actions by the BSA, intensive discussions took place between U.N. and NATO authorities to address what could be done to enhance protection of the remaining safe areas of Sarajevo, Tuzla, Bihac, and Gorazde.

Under United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 824 of May 6, 1993, certain portions of Bosnia-Herzegovina, including the city of Sarajevo, were established as safe areas that should be "free from armed attacks and from any other hostile act." Additionally, under UNSCR 836 of June 4, 1993, member states and regional organizations are authorized, in close coordination with the United Nations, to take all necessary measures, through the use of air power, to support the United Nations Protection Forces (UNPROFOR) in the performance of its mandate related to the safe areas. This mandate includes deterring attacks and replying to bombardments on the safe areas. Consistent with these and other resolutions, and in light of the recent events described above, the United Nations requested and NATO initiated air strikes on August 29, 1995. The air strikes were fully coordinated with the simulta-

neous artillery attacks by the Rapid Reaction Force.

On July 25, 1995, and August 1, 1995, the North Atlantic Council (NAC) approved a number of measures designed to meet further BSA attacks on the remaining safe areas with a "firm, rapid and decisive response." Specifically, the NAC agreed that a "direct attack (e.g., ground, shelling, or aircraft)" against any of the remaining safe areas would initiate air operations as determined by the common judgment of NATO and U.N. military commanders. The NATO air strikes commencing on August 29, 1995, are pursuant to the NAC's decision of August 1, 1995, and are an appropriate and necessary response to BSA actions. The NATO and U.N. operations are intended to reduce the threat to the Sarajevo safe area and to deter further attacks there or in any other safe area. These operations will continue until NATO and U.N. commanders determine that they have achieved their aims.

During the first day of operations, some 300 sorties were flown against 23 targets in the vicinity of Sarajevo, Tuzla, Gorazde, and Mostar. The aircraft struck a variety of BSA targets, including heavy weapons emplacements, command and control facilities, communications sites, air defense sites, and ammunition facilities. Initial reports suggest that the strikes were successful in damaging or destroying a number of BSA targets. No U.S. aircraft were destroyed during the strikes nor were any U.S. personnel killed,

wounded, or captured. At the same time that the air strikes were being conducted, the U.N.'s Rapid Reaction Force fired over 600 artillery and mortar rounds at BSA heavy weapons systems and ammunition storage sites around Sarajevo.

I authorized these actions in conjunction with our NATO allies to implement the relevant U.N. Security Council resolutions and NATO decisions. As I have reported in the past and as our current diplomatic actions clearly indicate, our efforts in the former Yugoslavia are intended to assist the parties to reach a negotiated settlement to the conflict. I have directed the participation of U.S. forces in this effort pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct the foreign relations of the United States and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive.

I am providing this report as part of my efforts to keep the Congress fully informed about developments in the former Yugoslavia, consistent with the War Powers Resolution. I am grateful for the continuing support that the Congress has provided, and I look forward to continued cooperation in this endeavor.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Strom Thurmond, President pro tempore of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 2.

Remarks at the National Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu *September 2, 1995*

Thank you very much, General Wilson, for your outstanding remarks, and even more for your service to our country. Reverend Perkins, Rabbi Goldfarb, Reverend Fujitani, Secretary Brown, General Shalikhvili, Secretary Perry, Members of Congress, Governor, Mayor, representatives of the Allied Nations who are here, and most of all, to the honored veterans of World War II: Today we commemorate this day 50 years ago, when the most destructive conflict in all human history came to an end. On this island, where America's peace was first shattered and then restored, we commemorate the tri-

umph of freedom over tyranny. We remember the extraordinary sacrifice that victory required. We honor the extraordinary generation of Americans who came together to meet the challenge of war and then, as General Wilson has said, worked together to seize the promise of peace.

World War II lasted 2,194 days. It stretched from Pearl Harbor to St. Petersburg, from the beaches of Normandy to the shores of Iwo Jima. It destroyed whole cities. It ravaged countryside. It cost in total the lives of 55 million people: soldiers killed in battle, civilians and prisoners felled by disease and starvation, chil-