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As soon as I return, I will be consulting closely with Congress on the details of the NATO plan. I welcome the statement of those leaders who said they will work with me in the national interest. And I hope and expect that after careful debate, others will join in supporting the plan and our troops.

The mission is clear and so are the stakes, for the Bosnian people, for the security of Europe, and for America's leadership around the world.

This morning in Dublin, I met with Zlata Filpovic, the young Bosnian girl who became famous the world over when she published her diary of life in war-torn Sarajevo. This morning she asked me to thank our American soldiers for giving her and other children the chance to live in peace in their homeland. In a letter she gave me, she spoke in the name of children. She said, "Thank you for helping civilization not to die over there, because ordinary people and children truly don't deserve it. Thank you for opening the door of future to our children."

My fellow Americans, we should be proud we have opened that door for the children of Bosnia, for the people of Bosnia. They have chosen the road of peace. Their road is our road, and we must stand with them. We must be leaders for peace.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:06 p.m. from the Rose Room at the Rheinlander Club, U.S. Army Base/Smith Barracks, Baumholder, Germany.

Interview With Joe Garvey of the Armed Forces Network in Baumholder
December 2, 1995

Mr. Garvey. The first question, Mr. President. You have spent the entire day talking to soldiers, shaking soldiers' hands. You've been briefed by the Task Force Eagle commanders. You've talked to spouses. What is the one thing that you'll walk away with here today?

The President. An immense feeling of gratitude that our country has people who are this well-trained, this highly motivated, this patriotic, and this good working for us. You know, these people have volunteered to serve their country, to go anywhere and do anything that their country needs. And they are an exceptional group of people, and their families are exceptional people.

Now, because of the training they've had in Germany, they believe that the training probably will be harder than the mission, and of course, we all hope it will be. So I think every American should feel an immense sense of pride and gratitude that people like the men and women of the 1st Armored Division are out there serving our country.

Mr. Garvey. Changing gears just a little bit, has having a U.S. forward-deployed force in Europe been an advantage for the planning and potential and ultimate execution of this Bosnia mission?

The President. Absolutely. It's been a huge advantage. For one thing, we are here, obviously part of the unified NATO Command, but we can do our planning not just through General Joulwan and the NATO Command Headquarters but right down through the Americans that are expected to do it and have it here in close proximity. It's made a big difference, and the training has made a huge difference.

We've been able, as you know, to recreate the conditions that our people will face in Bosnia here in Germany. We're fairly close by; we can get the same sort of topography, the same kind of weather conditions, and I think that that has made a huge difference.

I'm not sure we have ever sent a group of our men and women in uniform into a situation where they were better prepared in advance in almost on-site training. Neither of those things would have been nearly as good had we not had a forward deployment in Germany.

Mr. Garvey. I know you're a busy man. I have nothing else to ask you, Mr. President, unless you have something yourself you would like to add.

The President. Well, the only other thing I would like to add is that I think it's important for the American people to understand that with our volunteer Army now, it's more and more

of a family place. It's more and more a place full of exceptional people with good values and deep ties, either to their spouses and children who are with them while they're in the service or to their parents back home.

And so when we make a decision, when I make a decision, like the decision to deploy our troops to carry out the peace mission in Bosnia, it's a family decision, it affects families, and I am very mindful of that. And one of the things that I really appreciate is the extent to which caring for the families, thinking about their needs, making sure that they're treated in the proper way is a big part of the mission now. And I think that's something that we have gotten better at and something I hope we will continue to get better at, because if we're going to have a volunteer Army, we want the very best people in it and we want people to be able to succeed in uniform but also in their family roles. And that is very, very important to me—especially at Christmastime I guess I'm thinking a lot about it, but all year long we have to be better and better and better at that, because this is a family commitment as well as an American commitment.

Mr. Garvey. Thank you. I appreciate your time.

The President. Thank you.

NOTE: The interview began at 4:40 p.m. at the Rheinlander Club.

Statement on the Death of General Maxwell R. Thurman

December 2, 1995

We mourn the passing yesterday of Gen. Maxwell R. Thurman, USA, Ret., whose dedicated and exceptional service is cherished by everyone who knew of his extraordinary courage, enduring vision, and selfless service. During a distinguished career which culminated in his service as commander in chief of the U.S. Southern Command, General Thurman achieved prominence as a disciplined thinker, organizer, and leader. His foresight and leadership in a succession of key recruiting, personnel, military doctrinal development, and training assignments during the 1970's and eighties helped shape the post-Vietnam Army and transform it into the high-quality, ready-to-fight force of today.

To General Thurman's family and friends and to the Army community, I extend my heartfelt condolences. We will remember him as one of America's finest soldiers and most capable military leaders.

The President's News Conference With European Union Leaders in Madrid, Spain

December 3, 1995

Prime Minister Gonzalez. Thank you very much. It is our pleasure to welcome to Madrid President Clinton as well as the President of the Commission. And as you have seen, we have just finished signing the new transatlantic agenda, along with an action plan. Thanks to this document and this summit between the European Union and the United States, we hope to be taking a new step forward, a quantitative leap forward, and to undertake new common action. This is enshrined in the documents we have just signed.

For the Spanish Presidency, I would like to state that this was one of our priorities. We had a meeting in Cannes in June, and we decided to prepare an agenda for the next years until the end of the century. Since then we have been working very hard, and the United States high-level group as well as the Commission and Spain have worked very efficiently. And as you will see clearly from these documents, we have a clear-cut vocation to work together from the political point of view in promoting democracy and human rights as well as from