which had no lights or navigational equipment
when they got there, is up and running 24 hours
a day.

Some of the men and women I’m seeing
today designed, built, and now operate the pon-
toon bridge over the Sava River, the key
landlink to Bosnia for our troops. The biggest
Army bridging operation since World War II
demanded the kind of strength and ingenuity
that only American soldiers have. The river
swelled to a record high for this century, wash-
ing away our encampments. Its banks became
muddy bogs, but the Sava didn’t drown Amer-
ica’s spirit. As one of our Army engineers put
it, “We’ve been crossing rivers for 218 years;
we’re going to cross this river.” And they did.

Now that most of the preliminary work is
done, our soldiers and their partners from more
than two dozen other nations, including NATO
allies and former adversaries like Hungary, Po-
land, and Russia, are set to carry out their mis-
sion, step by step, steadily, surely, and safely.
They’ll make sure the former warring parties
in Bosnia live up to the letter of the peace
agreement they signed, and they’ll create a se-
cure environment to give the people of Bosnia
a chance to rebuild their lives and their land.

Only the people of Bosnia can seize that
chance and come together as equal citizens of
a shared land with a common destiny. After
so many lives lost and futures destroyed, finding
the strength to live and work side by side, as
they have done for so much of their history,
will now be very hard. But I am convinced
that the overwhelming majority of Bosnia’s peo-
gle agree that the alternative of return to the
sorrow and suffering of the past 4 years must
not be allowed to happen. And they’re looking
to our soldiers to help them make a new begin-
ning.

So often when people abroad look to America
for help and hope, America looks to the men
and women of our Armed Forces. Of course,
we can’t be everywhere, and even they can’t
do everything. But where we can make a dif-
crence and where our interests and our values
are clearly at stake, we must step forward. In
Bosnia, where those interests and values are very
clearly at stake, our soldiers are making a dif-
currence, the difference between a war that re-
sumes and a peace that can take hold.

We’ve asked the men and women of our mili-
tary to bear the burden of America’s leadership,
and they’re rising to the challenge with strength,
skill, and determination. The soldiers I’ve talked
with are proud of their accomplishments and
ready for the hard work ahead. I know all the
American people are very proud of them, and
that all Americans join me in saying Godspeed
to the men and women of the world’s finest
military as they carry out their mission of peace
in Bosnia.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 11:19 a.m.,
local time, at IFOR Headquarters, Taszar, Hun-
gary, for domestic broadcast at 10:06 a.m.
ful. And I have just met with our commanders and our troops; they're doing very well here, thanks to you. And we're enjoying it, and we appreciate it.

President Goncz. I can even say that it is symbolic. Four or five years ago, I think it would have been unthinkable to meet here with the President of the United States of America either in Washington or in Budapest, the least unthinkable to be able to meet in a small Hungarian village. In addition to the fact that on such an important occasion, your presence here as well as your personal presence, Mr. President, shows the commitment of the United States to ensure the people in the region.

It is a moral obligation to ask because this—we defend the same values, and we have common interests. It is a great pleasure for me that we have this meeting and that we are part of this great operation. This is a Partnership For Peace in the genuine sense of the word. And—it's a lot more than what we have done—and this is also an opportunity for us to get accustomed to each other the way—[inaudible].

Thank you, Mr. President.

NATO Expansion

Q. Mr. President, do you think this kind of cooperation with Hungary will accelerate Hungary's admittance into NATO as a full-scale member?

President Clinton. Well, as you know, we believe that NATO should be expanded and inevitably will be. And this is the sort of cooperation that I think shows you what can happen in a very positive way with this sort of partnership. I'm very pleased with it, and I think all of our American—and especially our military commanders have been very impressed by what's happened so far.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:40 a.m. in the Headquarters of the Air Base. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.