

I think it's better for us not to speculate about what happens after that. What I'm concerned about is that there is all this rather frenetic looking at what happens next June, to the exclusion of looking at what happens today and tomorrow. That is, we wouldn't even have to worry about this if every day between now and next year everyone involved gave a 100 percent effort to implementing the Dayton peace accords, to doing the economic reconstruction, to setting up the common institutions, to resolving the police and the local election issues, to dealing with the war crimes issues.

And what the United States has tried to do is to get our allies there to focus on implementing Dayton in an aggressive way. And one of the things that came out of the Summit of the Eight was that each of the countries expressed some interest in being given, in effect, almost primary responsibility for each separate element of the Dayton accords.

Then, as we get along toward the end of year, we could take another look and see whether—with the security situation going to be next June, and how can we best take care of it? But I don't think that this particular mission at this level should continue. We cannot occupy this country forever.

Q. Could we conceivably leave with the very prominent war crimes suspects still at large?

*The President.* Well, we had a good arrest last week. And I think that the problem, of course, with Dayton was—and this was an inevitable problem, but we were a part of it so we have to take responsibility—is that there was this agreement to set up a tribunal or to support the work of the tribunal with the explicit understanding that the work of then IFOR and its successor, SFOR, would not be used to go and do, in effect, police or military work to get these people, that they would only pick them up if they came in contact with them in the ordinary course of their business, which meant that Day-

ton left a gap. There was no, in effect, police group charged with the duty to go arrest the war criminals. And so we're trying to figure out how we can accelerate that process consistent with the other obligations the parties assumed at Dayton. That was a big hole in Dayton.

But even with that, that's still not an excuse for why the development aid is taking so long to get out. You know, are we supporting the local elections in every way we can? Have we all done everything we can to set up local police units that can maintain security? Are we doing everything we can to press disarmament instead of having an arms race of equality, which is not in anyone's interest?

We do have an agreement in the parties now to set up common institutions. Are they going to be set up quickly enough so that the benefits of them will be felt by the Serbs and the Croats and the Muslims in time to keep them moving together and going together? I mean, these people butchered each other for 4 years; you've got to work real hard to give them common interest to live together and work together.

And there is a difference in not going back to war, which I don't think any of them really want to do—the ordinary people, I mean—and having a vested interest in continuing to pursue the peace. We've done a good job, I think, of getting them to the point where they don't want to go back to the way it was. We have to do more to get them to try to build a better peace.

Q. Thanks again for your time, Mr. President.

*The President.* Thank you.

NOTE: The interview began at 12:23 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to President Jacques Chirac of France; Chancellor Helmut Kohl of Germany; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; and President Boris Yeltsin of Russia.

## Remarks at a NATO Summit Sendoff by American Veterans

July 3, 1997

Thank you very much. I know a good doctor. United States Navy. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Vice President, Commander Frank, Colonel Harmon, Secretary Albright, Secretary Cohen, Ambassador Richardson, Mr. Berger,

General Shalikashvili and General Ralston and members of the Joint Chiefs; to the distinguished veterans and community leaders here, especially to Judge Waters. You know, when he told that horse story, I nearly fell out of my chair. [Laughter] But you didn't know what I was thinking. [Laughter] I was thinking, there have been several days here in the last 4½ years when I would be grateful just to have been called what that doctor called him. [Laughter]

Before I begin, I would like to state what I hope is obvious now, but I've never said it formally, and that is that I intend to nominate Deputy Secretary Goyer to be the next Secretary of Veterans Affairs. We have been friends for many years. He did a superb job as the State director of veterans affairs in our home State. He was a good partner and support to Jesse Brown, who fulfilled his promise to me to be a Secretary for as well as a Secretary of Veterans Affairs. And I believe that Hershel will serve in that great tradition, and I thank him for agreeing to do so.

Tomorrow, as the Vice President said, we will commemorate Independence Day and the Declaration of Independence, which I recommend everyone read every Independence Day. The words still ring out of our abiding belief in the inalienable right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

And we have a lot to celebrate on this July 4th. We are at peace. We are more prosperous than we have been in a generation, our liberty more secure than ever. And for the first time throughout the world—for the first time in our time, there are more people living under governments of their own choosing than are living under dictatorships. That is an astonishing thing, that the dream of our Founding Fathers, articulated so powerfully 221 years ago tomorrow, has now come within the reach of more than half the people on the globe.

Next week we will take a historic step to secure that freedom for more people than ever before, at home and abroad, when we invite new democracies from Central Europe to join our alliance at the NATO Summit in Madrid. I thank those who have spoken before me for their support. Together with our efforts to build NATO's ties to Russia and to Ukraine, and through the Partnership For Peace with so many other of Europe's democracies, we're working to create a continent of Europe that is undi-

vided, democratic, and at peace for the first time since nation-states appeared on that continent.

Our Nation has labored and sacrificed for this goal for more than five decades now, and now it is within reach. So in Europe next week we'll have the chance to strengthen the values we all hold dear: freedom, democracy, security. Our work in Madrid will be a capstone of our Nation's leadership throughout the 20th century and a cornerstone for a new age of possibility in the 21st century.

I saw in one of the papers today a poll that said that only 6 percent of the American people felt that they followed events in NATO closely and thought they knew a lot about it. In a way, that is a stunning tribute to the success of NATO, for no NATO member has ever been attacked. If it had not been so, a lot more people would know about NATO.

Now the time has come for us to make sure more Americans understand the significance of NATO to our security, understand the role it can play in the future, and understand why it is profoundly in the interest of the American people to go forward with this expansion. And all the people on this stage today and all of you in this room today have helped to make a significant contribution to that work. But I hope when you leave here, you will continue to speak about it to your friends and neighbors, to the members of your organizations, to the people with whom you come in contact.

There are four reasons why NATO enlargement is consistent with our values and supports our interests. First, it will make our alliance stronger and better able to address the challenges to Europe's security. As has already been said, if we haven't learned a single, solitary other lesson from the 20th century, surely we have learned that our future and Europe's are inevitably intertwined.

A NATO that embraces Europe's new democracies will be more capable of carrying out its missions, defending the territory of its members, addressing conflicts that threaten our common peace. The Czechs and Poles served beside American soldiers in the Gulf war. Already, the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, Romania, the Baltic States, and many other Central European countries that seek to join NATO are contributing troops to our NATO peacekeeping mission in Bosnia.

Indeed, we could not have deployed our troops to Bosnia as smoothly and swiftly as we did without the critical help of Hungary and our staging ground at Tazsar, which I had the privilege to visit shortly after it was established. By bringing new and capable democracies into NATO and deepening our cooperation with others who are not members at this time but are part of our Partnership For Peace, we build a stronger alliance for all future challenges to transatlantic security.

Second, enlarging NATO will plainly help to secure the gains of democracy in Europe. NATO can do for Europe's east what it did for Europe's west after World War II, provide the kind of climate necessary for freedom and prosperity to survive and to grow and flourish.

Third, enlarging NATO clearly will encourage prospective members to resolve their differences peacefully, and that will reduce the chances of further conflicts in Europe. Already, the very prospect of NATO membership has helped to convince countries in Central Europe to improve ties with their neighbors, to settle border and ethnic disputes, any one of which could have led to a conflict in a different time and under different circumstances.

Finally, enlarging NATO will erase the artificial line in Europe drawn by Stalin at the end of World War II. And NATO will now help Europe to come together in security, not be kept apart in instability. NATO's doors will remain open to all those willing to shoulder the responsibilities of membership so that we do not replace an old division in Europe with a new one. And this is also critically important. The decision the NATO allies will make in Madrid must not be a one-time decision.

Today let me again say I thank the American Legion for its support. As the largest American veterans organization, many of your members fought to liberate Europe or to defend freedom there during the cold war. And you know that this makes it less likely that future generations will be called to fight and die in Europe.

I thank the Reserve Officer Association. Your endorsement speaks clearly to the American people because it is you who could be called out of your civilian lives to make good on our commitments. And you have recognized that enlargement will make us safer and stronger.

There are those who say the Central European nations who will be invited to join NATO are not ready to stand shoulder to shoulder with

us. But with all respect, they are wrong. The nations we are considering for membership share our values and our aspirations. They have shown that time and again. They also have the capacity to do what is required of NATO members.

As you have heard today, in 1944, in the weeks after D-Day, American and allied troops in Normandy sought to encircle 20 of Hitler's finest divisions, and some of the fiercest fighting of the war resulted. Our forces raced to seal the final gap between them and to prevent the enemy from escaping into the French countryside. Two units got the job done, one an American infantry division, the other a Polish armored division, survivors of the invasion of their land who joined forces with the Allies.

That gap was closed when the Poles finally linked up with the U.S. 90th Infantry at Chambois. The first American they encountered was the man who introduced me today, Captain Laughlin Waters. Now, once the pocket was shut there was another furious battle as the Panzers tried to break out. The Polish First Armored Division held a critical hilltop against a wave of counterattacks. When the Poles ran out of antitank rounds, they moved forward and repelled the enemy with only their rifles and their courage. After the battle of Falaise Gap, 325 Polish soldiers were buried near where they fell. By these graves in the heart of Western Europe, Allied soldiers raised a simple sign of tribute which said in English, "A Polish Battlefield."

Judge Waters, your presence here today, 53 years later, reminds us of the character of those we are about to add to NATO, of the values and interests I talked about before. They remind us of our own freedom, democracy, and security. They, too, have fought and died for freedom and democracy, for ours as well as their own. They have fought and died for the freedom and democracy we celebrate tomorrow. Our ties, therefore, have been forged in blood. And just as they were strong allies in World War II, they will be again.

So, Judge Waters, just as you and your men closed the Falaise Gap at Chambois, we must now close another gap, the gap of hope that has divided Europe since the end of World War II. We must give Europe a chance to live free and undivided for the first time ever. That is what we will do next week and in the months and years ahead, as we continue to work with

Europe's democracies, strengthen NATO, and adapt it to the missions of the 21st century.

Your presence here today has made our success much more likely, and therefore, you will have something else to celebrate tomorrow on our Independence Day.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:29 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Joseph J. Frank, national commander, American Legion; Herb Harmon, president, Reserve Officers Association of the United States; and Laughlin Edward Waters, Senior Judge, U.S. District Court for the Central District of California.

## Statement on the Resignation of Ambassador Molly Raiser as Chief of Protocol

July 3, 1997

It is with great sadness that I accepted today Ambassador Molly Raiser's resignation as Chief of Protocol, effective July 24. But it is with even greater thanks and pride that I look back upon her years of service and the extraordinary job she has done to ensure effective American engagement in the world.

No one knows better than Ambassador Raiser the amount of planning and the attention to detail that goes into our Nation's foreign policy. And no one has done more to make the conduct of that policy professional, precise, and smooth.

From the war-torn streets of Sarajevo to Denver's gleaming city center, Ambassador Raiser brought elegance and energy to the business of foreign affairs and set a standard for all who worked with her. She made foreign guests feel welcome when they visited the United States and helped me feel at home whenever I traveled abroad. She represented me and the interests of our Nation with insight, judgment, and grace.

I extend Ambassador Raiser my warmest thanks for a job well done, and wish her every possible success in all her future endeavors.

## Statement on the Landing of the *Mars Pathfinder* Spacecraft

July 4, 1997

On this important day, the American people celebrate another exciting milestone in our Nation's long heritage of progress, discovery, and exploration: the first landing on the surface of Mars in over 20 years.

Our return to Mars today marks the beginning of a new era in the Nation's space exploration program. The *Mars Pathfinder* is the first of a series of probes we are sending to Mars over the next decade. The information we gather on our neighbor planet will help us better understand our own world and perhaps provide further clues on the origins of our solar system. This mission also underscores our new way of

doing business at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). We were able to accomplish this mission in one-third the time and at a fraction of the cost of the first *Viking* mission to Mars.

I congratulate the *Mars Pathfinder* team at NASA and the Jet Propulsion Laboratory for their pioneering vision and spirit in accomplishing this remarkable feat. Their success in developing the *Pathfinder* mission is a testament to the ingenuity and can-do attitude of the American people.