

American policy apparatus has been less responsive and less involved in Africa than was warranted. I think that's a general problem.

But I think in the case of Rwanda, what I believe we have got to do is to establish a system, hopefully through the United Nations, which gives us an early warning system, that gives us the means to go in and try to stop these things from happening before they start, and then, if it looks like a lot of people are going to die in a hurry, that kicks in motion some sort of preventive mechanism before hundreds of thousands of people die.

I mean, if you look at the sheer—the military challenge presented by those who were engaging in the genocide, most of it was done with very elemental weapons. If there had been some sort of multinational response available, some sort of multinational force available, to go in pretty quickly, most of those lives probably could have been saved. And we're going to have to work this out through the U.N. and then figure out how to staff it and how to run it and whether it should be permanent or something you can call up in a hurry, how such people would be trained, what should be done. But my own view is, if we think that that sort of thing is going to happen, it would be better if the U.N. has a means to deal with it in a hurry. And I would be prepared to support the development of such a mechanism.

Q. That brings up the subject of the African Crisis Response Team, who is responsible, and

I wondered how your discussions, both of you, went on that?

President Mandela. We had a long program of very important matters to discuss, and unfortunately, we did not discuss that one. Our attitude toward this question is very clear; we support the initiative very fully. All that South Africa is saying is that a force which is intended to deal with problems in Africa must not be commanded by somebody outside this continent. I certainly would never put my troops under somebody who does not belong to Africa. That is the only reservation I've had. Otherwise, I fully accept the idea. It's a measure of the interest which the United States takes in the problems of Africa, and the only difference is this one about the command of that force.

NOTE: The President's 156th news conference began at 12:08 p.m. in the Garden of Tuynhuis. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Mike Huckabee of Arkansas; Mayor Hubert A. Brodell of Jonesboro, AR; Karen Curtner, principal, Westside Middle School, Jonesboro, AR; Gen. Sani Abacha of Nigeria; and President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni of Uganda. President Mandela referred to President Fidel Castro of Cuba; Hashemi Rafsanjani, former President of Iran; Col. Muammar Qadhafi of Libya; and Deputy President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, president, African National Congress (ANC).

Exchange With Reporters During a Visit to Robben Island With President Nelson Mandela of South Africa

March 27, 1998

Ahmed M. Kathrada. Ladies and gentlemen of the media, this is not a press conference. You've had your share in Cape Town, and we don't believe in double features. [*Laughter*] But what we want to do now is, our President is going to hand over to President Clinton a quarry rock, with his little finger, authenticated by our President that this is a genuine quarry rock from the quarry where he worked for 13 years.

President Mandela. It's a great honor and a pleasure because, as we have said on many occasions, our victory here is victory in part because

you helped us tremendously. Thank you very much.

President Clinton. Thank you.

Mr. Kathrada. May I just say that this is not a press conference. Any question must be confined to Robben Island and Robben Island only, please.

Q. We're just interested in your experience. We'd like to hear firsthand from you about your experiences in this cell.

President Mandela. Well, there were pleasant—[*laughter*]—and unpleasant experiences,

and it depends how you look at the situation. As you know, right down the centuries and in many parts of the world, there are men and women who are able to turn disaster—what would crush many people—to turn that disaster into victory. And that is what these men here, like Mr. Kathrada and others, did.

And so when I come here, I call back into memory that great saga in which the authorities, who were pitiless, insensitive, and cruel, nevertheless failed in their evil intentions. They were responsible for that.

Q. President Mandela, can we just ask you, is there—you've been back to the island many times—

President Mandela. Let's come closer, please.

Q. You've been back to the islands many times. Can you tell us what the special significance is of this particular visit with the American President?

President Mandela. There is no doubt that, as I said at the press conference, that the visit by President Clinton is a high watermark in relation to all the visits that we've held. And coming to Robben Island is something more important, with that significant achievement of coming to South Africa. And we appreciate that very much.

Q. President Clinton, what are you feeling?

President Clinton. Well, my first thought was to thank God that the person who occupied

this cell was able to live all those years in that way without having his heart turn to stone and without giving up on his dreams for South Africa.

The other thing that I would say is that I think this is a good object lesson in life for all young people. You know, 99.9999 percent of the people will never have a challenge in life like the one Mr. Mandela faced when he spent all these years in prison. But everyone has difficulties, everyone faces unfairness, and everyone faces cruelty. And the one thing that is beyond the control of anyone else is how you react to it, what happens to your own spirit, what happens to your own heart, what happens to your own outlook on life.

And he is the world's foremost living example of that. And every young child, I wish, could think about his or her life that way, and there would be a lot more happiness in the world and a lot more generosity, because then no one would feel compelled to react in a certain way because of what others said or others did. It's a very important thing about living.

NOTE: The exchange took place during a tour which began at 1:15 p.m., led by Robben Island Council Chair Ahmed M. Kathrada, a former prisoner at Robben Island.

Statement on Senate Action on Supplemental Budget Legislation

March 27, 1998

I am pleased that the Senate has approved important legislation to provide funding for victims of natural disasters, for support of our forces in Bosnia and the Persian Gulf, and to deal with the risk to financial stability around the world.

It is particularly important that the Senate, by a vote of 86–14, provided the International Monetary Fund with resources it needs to help stabilize Asian economies. The crisis in Asia poses a threat to American jobs and exports, and we already have seen evidence that weaknesses in economies there are having an impact here. To ensure that the American economy continues on the path of steady growth, Con-

gress must make sure that the IMF is strong enough to respond to any broadening of the current crisis. And because the IMF functions like an international credit union, paying our share won't cost American taxpayers a dime.

I am also pleased that the emergency funding in this bill will allow our military forces to continue their missions in Bosnia and the Persian Gulf without impairing the high readiness level of our forces worldwide.

At the same time, I remain concerned that the Senate bill does not address the matter of United Nations arrears. This continues to undercut our global leadership.