our Nation’s families. At a minimum, the program must raise the standard for sewage treatment to adequately protect public health and provide full information to communities about these water quality problems and associated health risks.

Fourth, I direct the Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture to enhance management of Federal lands to increase protection of waters on or near Federal lands, and to identify waters on or near Federal lands that require special protection. Specifically, a proposal for a unified Federal policy on watershed management, developed under the Clean Water Action Plan, should be circulated first for consultation with States and Indian Tribes, and then published in the Federal Register for public comment no later than July 15, 1999. Each of these measures should be implemented through a process that provides appropriate opportunities for participation and comment by States, Tribes, and the affected public.

This memorandum is not intended to create any right, benefit, or trust responsibility, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or equity by a party against the United States, its agencies or instrumentalities, or any other person.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: This memorandum was embargoed for release until 10:06 a.m.

Remarks at a Memorial Day Ceremony in Arlington, Virginia
May 31, 1999

Thank you very much, Secretary Cohen, for your remarks, your devotion to your country, and your outstanding leadership. Secretary West, thank you for your work on behalf of our Nation’s veterans. And to both of you, thank you for your support of the recent actions in Congress to raise the pay of our military personnel and to improve their quality of life, to improve the retirement systems of the veterans and their readiness.

General Ivany, thank you for your remarks, your example, and your leadership. Colonel Brogan, thank you for your prayers. Superintendent Metzler, thank you for doing such a magnificent job of maintaining Arlington National Cemetery, in honor of those who are buried here and as a tribute to all America stands for. I thank the members of the Cabinet, the Joint Chiefs, Congress, the diplomatic corps, the armed services who are here. I welcome the veterans and the families of veterans and members of the armed services, my fellow citizens.

I’d like to begin by asking that we all join in expressing our thanks to the Air Force Band and the Singing Sergeants for doing such a fine job here today. [Applause] They deserve it. Thank you.

Even though the day is bright and warm, I ask you to indulge me, to spend a few extra moments to think about what it means that we here today mark the final Memorial Day of this century. To be sure, it has been a century that saw too many white stones added to these gentle hills, marking America’s sacrifices for freedom for over 100 years, in two World Wars and many other conflicts. Again and again, America has been tested in the 20th century, coming through it all, down to the present day, with even greater blessings of liberty and prosperity, with our enduring optimism and steady faith in our common humanity.

Thanks to our brave men and women in uniform, our Nation has never been more secure. Thanks to them, the cold war is now another chapter in the history books. Thanks to them, nations that fought two World Wars in Europe and in Asia, some of which had battled each other for centuries, now cooperate with each other as never before.

On the eve of a new millennium, we can see clearly how closely the sacrifices of our men and women in uniform in the 20th century are linked to the yearning for freedom that gave birth to our Nation over 200 years ago, a yearning based on the then radical premise that we are all inherently equal, fully able to govern ourselves, and endowed with a God-given right to liberty. That is our history, a history that beckons us especially on this Memorial Day and especially here at Arlington, the most powerful
Justice Holmes lived through World War I and the Depression. He watched the United States assume the mantle of leadership. And he always remembered what he had done as a young man—that war reminds us, and I quote, that “our comfortable routine is no eternal necessity of things.” He understood that our freedom had been and always would be bought by men and women ready to protect it, sometimes at great cost and peril.

So we did not become a great nation just because the land was generous to those who settled it, though it was; just because the people who came here worked hard and were clever and resourceful, though surely our forebears were. We became a great nation also because every time our beliefs and ideals have been threatened, Americans have stepped forward to defend them. From our biggest cities to our smallest towns, citizens have done what had to be done to advance the dream that began on the Fourth of July in 1776—always following Justice Holmes’ famous admonition that we must be involved in the action and passion of our time, for fear of being judged not to have lived.

So my fellow Americans, if today is a day for history, it is also a day to honor those who lie here and in countless other places all across the world in marked and unmarked graves, to honor them by looking to the future; to rededicate ourselves to another 100 years of our liberty, our prosperity, our optimism, and our common humanity.

Today, there is a new challenge before us in Kosovo. It is a very small province in a small country, but it is a big test of what we believe in: our commitment to leave to our children a world where people are not uprooted and ravaged and slaughtered en masse because of their race, their ethnicity, or their religion; our fundamental interest in building a lasting peace in an undivided and free Europe, a place which saw two World Wars when that dream failed in the 20th century; and our interest in preserving our alliance for freedom and peace with our 18 NATO Allies.

All of us have seen the hundreds of thousands of innocent men and women and children driven from their homes, the thousands singled out for death along the way. We have heard their stories of rape and oppression, of robbery and looting and brutality. And we saw it all before, just a few years ago in Bosnia, for 4 long years,
until NATO acted, combining with the resistance of Bosnians and Croatians, to bring the Dayton peace agreement and to turn the tide of ethnic cleansing there.

How did this all happen? Well, 10 years ago the Berlin Wall fell, ending communism's cruel and arbitrary division of Europe, unleashing the energies of freedom-loving people there, after two World Wars and the cold war, to be united in peace and freedom and prosperity. But that same year in Serbia, Slobodan Milosevic became the last holdout against a Europe free, united, and at peace, when he stripped away the rights of the Kosovars to govern themselves. He then went to war against the Croatians and the Bosnians. And in the wake of that, after 4 years, a quarter of a million people were dead. Two and a half million people were refugees; many of them still have not gone home. There was a stunning record of destruction, told not only in lives but in religious, cultural, historical, and personal buildings and records destroyed in an attempt to erase the existence of a people on their land.

In Kosovo we see some parallels to World War II, for the Government of Serbia, like that of Nazi Germany, rose to power in part by getting people to look down on people of a given race and ethnicity, and to believe they had no place in their country and even no right to live. But even more troubling, we see some parallels to the rumblings all around the world where people continue to fall out with one another and think they simply cannot share common ground and a common future with people who worship God in a different way or have a slightly different heritage.

Think about the contrast of that to the military we celebrate today. Every morning on Memorial Day, I have a breakfast for leaders of the veterans community at the White House. And I stand there with eager anticipation as the veterans community at the White House.

It is important that you know that in Kosovo the world has said no. It's not just the United States or even just our 18 NATO Allies with us. People on every continent—Arabs and Israelis are sending assistance, Protestants and Catholics from Northern Ireland, Greeks and Turks, Africans, Asians, Latin Americans; even those whose own lives have been battered by hurricanes and other natural disasters and who have hardly anything to give are sending help, because their hearts have been broken and their consciences moved by the appalling abuses they have seen.

Our objectives in Kosovo are clear and consistent with both the moral imperative of reversing ethnic cleansing and killing, and our overwhelming national interest in a peaceful, undivided Europe which will ensure we will not have to send large numbers of young Americans to die there in the next century in a war. The objectives are that the Kosovars will go home; the Serb forces will withdraw; an international force, with NATO at its core, will deploy to protect all the people, including the Serb minority, in Kosovo. And afterward, to avoid future Bosnias and future Kosovos, we will learn the lesson of the Marshall plan and what we did for Eastern Europe after the Berlin Wall fell, by working with our European allies to build democracy and prosperity and cooperation in southeastern Europe so that there will be stronger forces pulling people together than those that are driving them apart.

I know that many Americans believe that this is not our fight. But remember why many of the people are lying in these graves out here—because of what happened in Europe and because of what was allowed to go on too long before people intervened. What we are doing today will save lives, including American lives, in the future. And it will give our children a better, safer world to live in.

In this military campaign the United States has borne a large share of the burden, as we
Radio Remarks on the Observance of Memorial Day  
May 31, 1999

Since the Civil War, Memorial Day has been a time for Americans to take a moment from our busy lives to remember the brave men and women who gave their lives in service to our Nation.

This has been a century of great progress for the United States, but we must never forget that it came with a heavy price. At home and abroad, our victories over adversity were made possible by those who were prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice, and those who did make that sacrifice.

Today most Americans will enjoy a well-deserved day off from the cares of work and school; we’ll relax at home and cherish the company of loved ones. But as we contemplate the comforts and blessings of our lives and the well-being of our Nation, I ask you to pause just for a moment to remember those who gave their lives to protect the values that give meaning to our lives. I ask you also to think of our men and women in uniform who are risking their lives in the skies over Serbia, so that our children may inhabit a world where people are not murdered and driven from their homes because of their faith or their heritage.

As our Armed Forces and our allies strive to build peace in the Balkans, and in other