

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:06 a.m. at the Conrad Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Jim Prouty, president of the American Chamber of Commerce. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

### **The President's News Conference in Brussels**

*January 11, 1994*

**The President.** Good morning. As all of you know, this historic summit meeting of the North Atlantic Council was my first NATO meeting. I'm glad we were able to accomplish as much as we did here. I'm convinced that history will record this meeting as a major step in building a new security for the transatlantic community.

I'm very pleased that our NATO allies approved our proposal for the Partnership For Peace. I believe it will help our alliance to meet Europe's new challenges, and I'm pleased by the response the Partnership has already generated from nations who have contacted us and said they are interested in being a part of it.

Ultimately, the Partnership will lead to the enlargement of NATO and help us to build a security based not on Europe's divisions but on the potential of its integration. I look forward to working with NATO leaders in the coming months to prepare for exercises with the states that join the Partnership and to work on the next steps towards NATO's enlargement.

Today NATO also took dramatic steps to prepare for its new post-cold-war missions by calling for the creation of combined joint task forces. These task forces will make NATO's military structures more flexible and will prepare the alliance for nontraditional missions. They will also help us to put the Partnership For Peace into action by serving as the vehicle for Eastern militaries to operate with NATO forces, something that General Joulwan will begin to prepare for immediately.

I'm pleased that during this summit NATO began to address the threat posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

The agreement that the United States will sign with Ukraine and Russia this Friday will also make a major contribution to reducing that threat. With the end of the cold war we no longer face the threat of confrontation between nuclear powers, but we do face continuing conflicts, including the reality of the murderous conflict in Bosnia. At this meeting we discussed candidly and at some length NATO's policy towards Bosnia. We reaffirmed our commitment to respond to the strangulation of Sarajevo and to help to implement an enforceable peace agreement if one is reached by all the parties.

I want to discuss this with some precision, if I might. The United States last evening in our discussions took a very strong position that we ought to reaffirm our air warning, that is, the possibility of the use of air power, to relieve the strangulation or in retaliation for the strangulation of Sarajevo, but that the language ought to be left in our policy if, and only if, we were prepared to follow through. And I made it clear that for our part, we were prepared to follow through, and therefore, we supported leaving the language in. But along with the Secretary General, I urged our allies not to leave it in unless we were prepared to follow through, on the theory that we should not say things that we do not intend to do.

In addition to that, I supported the United Kingdom and France and their call for plans to ensure that we can complete the bloc rotation of troops to Srebrenica, so that that can take place, the exchange of the Canadians for the Dutch forces, and to explore how Tuzla airstrip might be opened. Now, either of these activities could require the use of NATO, including United States air power. We also had a continuing commitment to and the opportunity to use air power to protect the United Nations troops there if that is needed for close air support.

Now, these are the actions which have been taken. In other words, we have reaffirmed our position of last August, which is an important thing to have done in light of the recent shelling of Sarajevo. We have instructed our military command to come up with plans to see what can be done to ensure the rotation of the troops in Srebrenica and the opening of the Tuzla airstrip. And those

plans, as has been said by the Secretary General, can include the use of air power.

Let me just mention one or two other things. While the WEU and other European international bodies would play an important role in meeting the security challenges in Europe in the coming years, I still believe that NATO remains the linchpin of our mutual security. And so, as we finish this summit, I want to say a special word of thanks to Secretary General Woerner for his remarkable leadership. I have had the opportunity now to meet and work with many leaders around the world. He is a genuine statesman. He understands what is at stake here. He has a vision of the future, and he leads this alliance with great vision and discipline. And I thank him for that.

I also want to thank the other NATO leaders for their hospitality, and especially the Prime Minister of Belgium and the people of Belgium and Brussels for their hospitality to us. I believe this was a very successful meeting. They had accomplished everything that I hoped, and I think as the years go by we will be glad that it occurred.

### **Bosnia**

**Q.** Could you please tell us whether or not there was unanimous belief by the NATO allies that these air strikes could go forward, or is there something that still needs to be done before you can actually commit to movement?

**The President.** There was unanimous—and I want to be very clear on this—there was unanimous support for the policy as it is written. Everybody voted for it. In order to trigger the air strikes, what must happen? I want to emphasize two things. One is, whether they occur or not depends upon the behavior of the Bosnian Serbs from this moment forward. Secondly, based on that behavior, our military personnel will take this issue back to the NAC in our absence, and we will deal with it. And of course, we will consult with the U.N. if it is something that involves the use of air power other than to give support to the U.N. forces as already approved.

So that is what I think—at that point, we'll deal with the facts. Some of us, I think it's clear, were stronger than others about the

appropriateness of it under the circumstances that we now know about or could imagine. But I think the accurate thing is there was unanimous support for the policy, which means everybody who voted for it recognized that air power might well be used. What happens now depends upon the behavior of the combatants, principally the Bosnian Serbs, and what the military commanders come back and recommend.

### **The Visegrad States**

**Q.** When you get to Prague, in light of this meeting and in light of your own feelings, will you be in a position to tell at least some of the Visegrad leaders that they are in fact on a fast track toward membership in NATO?

**The President.** I think I'll be in a position to tell them, number one, the purpose of the Partnership For Peace is to open the possibility of NATO's enlargement as well as to give all the former Warsaw Pact countries and other non-NATO nations in Europe the chance to cooperate with us militarily, that NATO is an alliance with mutual responsibilities as well as the security guarantee. And we are clearly serious about pursuing this, including ultimate membership, as evidenced by the fact that the Secretary General said in his closing remarks—I don't know what he said here in the press conference because I didn't hear it—he said in his closing remarks that General Joulwan would immediately contact the military leaders of these countries, including the Visegrad countries, to talk about how we could begin planning for mutual operations in training and exercise.

So I think that they will clearly understand that this is a very serious proposal that opens the possibility of membership, not one that limits it.

### **Bosnia**

**Q.** Mr. President, the Secretary General said in his remarks that the instrument is there regarding Bosnia and other threats, but he's not sure that the will is there. Now, you just mentioned unanimity. It was a unanimous vote, as we understand it, last August for the same policy, yet many attacks have taken place in Sarajevo and have been unan-

swered by NATO. So first, do you think that there is a greater will now; do you sense a greater determination despite the misgivings of those peacekeepers on the ground? And secondly, is there a lower threshold, do you think, given this language that the British and the French, we understand, proposed on Tuzla and Srebrenica? Is there a lower threshold to use air power in those instances than for the wider air attacks regarding Sarajevo?

**The President.** I would make two points in response to your question. One is, I don't know that the threshold is lower, but there are more instances in which air power can be used now under the NATO policy. That is, clearly, the policy asks our military command to explain how we can guarantee the troop rotation in Srebrenica and how we can open the airstrip at Tuzla, including the use of air power. So there are clearly more opportunities for it.

Secondly, is there still a difference of opinion about whether and how quickly we should use air power especially to relieve a shelling of Sarajevo? I think on today's facts there are clearly some differences among the allies. And let me just mention one consideration. Those countries that have troops there are understandably concerned about the danger to their troops. If we use air power, are they more likely to be retaliated against? On the other hand, I think they're closer to being willing to use it than they were in August because a lot of them are very sensitive to the fact that their troops seem to be in more danger now than they were in August and that their casualties are increasing.

So do I think we are closer to real unanimity than we were in August? I do. Would they all vote the same in a given-fact situation? I don't know. That's why I think it depends largely on what the Bosnian Serbs do.

**Q.** Given the fact that there is still some difference of opinion, doesn't this come close to failing your own test from your intervention, that why threaten if you're not going to have the will to——

**The President.** But I believe, based on what several of them said to me privately, they are more prepared to deal with this than they were in August. That is, Secretary General Woerner and I both said, "Let us not

put this language back in unless we mean it. Let us clearly understand that we must mean it if we put it in this time." And they voted unanimously to put it in. And afterward several of them came to me privately and said, "Of course, we have reservations about what happens to our troops, but we have reservations about what happens to our troops under the status quo, and we are prepared to go forward with this."

**Q.** Concerning Bosnia, can we say today that you and President Mitterrand are on the same wavelength; do you agree, no more bones of contention?

**The President.** Yes. I've been a little surprised by the press reports that indicate to the contrary. I strongly supported President Mitterrand and Prime Minister Major's amendment adding Tuzla and Srebrenica to the resolution. I did not support substituting Tuzla and Srebrenica for the general commitment to use air power to relieve the siege of Sarajevo, for a very important reason. I think that it will be very hard for the U.N. mission to succeed. That is, keep in mind what the U.N. mission is doing, by the way, folks. We have the longest airlift in history there. We are trying to enforce the embargo. We are trying to enforce the no-fly zone. In other words, we are trying to contain the combat and the loss and trying to keep open humanitarian aid, hoping that we can all do something to convince all three sides that they have a real interest in stopping killing each other and taking whatever agreement they can get now.

Now, I believe if Sarajevo is destroyed and cannot function as a center for all kinds of activities, it will be very difficult for the U.N. mission to succeed. The French and the British have troops on the ground there. They naturally have more reservation about the use of air power in response to the shelling of Sarajevo than nations that may not have troops on the ground there. I understand that. They agreed with my position, and I strongly agreed with theirs. I do not believe there is a difference of opinion between us on this policy now.

### **Ukraine**

**Q.** The Ukrainian opposition is now saying that President Kravchuk does not have the

authority to go ahead and sign an agreement, and there's also some sign from some Ukrainian officials who are saying that the terms of a final agreement are yet to be determined. How sure are you at this point that this deal will not fall apart?

**The President.** Well, I believe President Kravchuk will honor the deal. They've already started to dismantle the missiles. And I think that the other thing that's very important to emphasize here is that this agreement guarantees compensation for Ukraine for their highly enriched uranium, something they have wanted and demanded. And so I think, as the details of it become known in the Rada, there will be more support for it.

Let me just try to give you an American analogy here, if I might. It's not an exact analogy, but when President Bush signed the original NAFTA treaty—or when we approved the side agreements with NAFTA, we didn't know at the time whether everybody in Congress would think it was a wonderful idea or ratify it or try to derail it. But we went through with it and, eventually, the United States stood firm behind it. Executives often have to sell to their legislative branches what they know is in the national interest of their country.

This agreement, reached by President Kravchuk, I think, was reached with the full understanding in his mind that he would have to sell it, but that it contained advantages for Ukraine far more than had previously been recognized. And I think as they know more about the details and the facts, that he will prevail there. And I expect the agreement to stand up, because it's clearly in the interest of the country. They get far more than they give up on this.

### **Russia**

**Q.** Have you spoken with President Yeltsin about Bosnia and does he agree with what you describe as a new resolve to deal with it?

**The President.** No, we have not had this discussion. But last August when all this came up, the Russians knew that what we were doing was taking a position with regard to the use of air power that was clearly tied to behavior by the Bosnian Serbs. And at the time, and I think still, no one considered that

the United Nations mission could proceed and could function if Sarajevo were completely destroyed. No one believed that. So I don't believe that anything that happened today, once fully understood—I'm sure we'll have the chance to talk about it in some detail—I don't believe that anything that happened today will undermine the understandings that we have with the Russians.

Thank you very much.

### **Ukraine**

**Q.** [Inaudible]

**The President.** I don't want to say that. What I'm trying to tell you is, that that's why I said it was not an exact analogy. What I'm saying is that any time an executive makes a deal in any country in the world with a legislative branch, there are going to be people in the legislative branch who don't agree with it or who just don't know if they can agree with it until they know what the facts of it are. That's the only point I'm trying to make. I am not making any judgment about how the Ukrainian Government works but simply that this always happens. This shouldn't surprise anybody. This always happens. Every decision every executive makes is going to be second-guessed by people of the legislature. It's almost the way the system's set up.

NOTE: The President's 40th news conference began at 10:50 a.m. in the Joseph Luns Theatre at NATO Headquarters. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. George A. Joulwan, Supreme Allied Commander, Europe. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this news conference.

### **The President's News Conference With European Union Leaders in Brussels**

*January 11, 1994*

**President Clinton.** Thank you very much. We have just had a very productive meeting, President Delors and Prime Minister Papandreou and I. As I have said many times in the last few days, I came to Brussels in the hope of working with the leaders of Europe to build a broader and more integrated Europe. At the heart of this new concept of