

U.N. control are, and will remain, subject to air strikes. NATO's decision also applies to any heavy weapons attacks on Sarajevo from within or beyond the zone. NATO and the United Nations will continue to monitor compliance extremely carefully.

The NATO decision and its results provide new potential for progress toward an end to the tragic conflict in Bosnia. In the coming days, American diplomats will be working with the parties to the conflict and our allies and partners to transform this potential into reality.

The President's News Conference

February 21, 1994

Bosnia

The President. Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. It is now over 15 hours since NATO's ultimatum regarding Sarajevo went into effect. According to NATO and United Nations commanders, at this point the parties are in effective compliance with the ultimatum. There continues to be no shelling of Sarajevo. Over 250 heavy weapons have been placed under U.N. control. All known heavy weapons have now been removed or brought under U.N. control, except for a couple of sites that should be brought under control within hours as the U.N. operation continues. As a result, air strikes have not yet been necessary.

I spoke this morning with U.N. Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali and expressed my appreciation for his efforts. I again want to congratulate NATO, our NATO allies, and Secretary General Manfred Woerner for their resolve; the United Nations for its efforts and its cooperation with NATO; the Government of Russia for its important contributions to a peaceful resolution; and above all, the American military personnel and those from our NATO allies whose courage and skill provided the muscle that made this policy work. Let me review why we and our NATO allies took this action: to stem the destruction of Sarajevo and to reinvigorate the peace process.

Now that we have brought some breathing space to the people of Sarajevo, we are taking additional steps on both fronts. First, we in-

tend to remain vigilant. The U.N. and NATO will continue to conduct intensive reconnaissance and monitoring of the Sarajevo area. The NATO decision stands. We will continue to enforce the exclusion zone. Any shelling of Sarajevo or the appearance of heavy weapons in the exclusion zone will bring a certain and swift response from the U.N. and NATO. Second, we are working to renew progress toward a negotiated solution among the parties. A workable, enforceable solution acceptable to all parties is the only way to ensure a lasting solution for Sarajevo and for all of Bosnia.

Negotiations among the parties are set to resume in the near future. American negotiators have been and will remain active in helping to bridge the gap among the parties. Ambassador Redman has had a series of intensive conversations in Europe, and this week in Bonn our experts will meet with the representatives from European Union countries, Canada, and Russia to take stock of where we are.

The challenge for all who have been touched by the fighting in Bosnia, the parties to the conflict, our own nation, and the international community, is to build on this week's progress and create a lasting and workable peace for all the people of Bosnia.

Helen [Helen Thomas, United Press International].

Q. Mr. President, are you willing to extend the ultimatum to stop the killing in other parts of Bosnia and to persuade the allies and Russia to go along with the idea of enforcing it throughout the country?

The President. Well, that's one of the things that we've been discussing this morning and that our representatives will be discussing in Europe this week.

Let me say, first of all, we have to make sure that we continue to do what we can to protect Sarajevo. Second, we should remember that that option is, in effect, available now wherever there are U.N. forces, because if U.N. forces are brought under shelling, they can ask for close air support from NATO. Thirdly, if we decide to pursue this as a strategy, we think it is important, as we did in Sarajevo, that the United Nations not—excuse me, that NATO not undertake any mission it is not fully capable of performing. And

I think that's very important. So we're reviewing—

Q. Well, wouldn't it be an irony, though, to have killing go on in other parts and just protect—

The President. Oh, yes. Well, we're very concerned about the prospect that maybe the weapons could be moved out of the Sarajevo area and transferred to another area. We're quite concerned about that. I believe that the United Nations Commander on the ground, General Rose, has been pretty clear and forceful about that, too, as he has been about everything. I think he's making a real difference there.

Q. Mr. President, Bosnia's Ambassador to the United Nations has expressed fears that the weapons that are being moved out of Sarajevo are being taken to other battlefronts. Do you see any evidence of that? And if so, is there anything that can be done to prevent it?

The President. Well, we're doing what we can to discourage it, obviously, and we believe that others will, including the Russians. And keep in mind, I think General Rose on the ground will take an aggressive attitude about that. And remember, as I just said to Helen, we now have operative right now a resolution to NATO which we supported, which gives the U.N. commanders the option at the present time, if they're under shelling, to call in NATO close air support.

Q. Mr. President, given your apparent success in this, how do you answer those who will now say to you and to other NATO leaders who may perhaps have been not as enthusiastic as you have been about such an operation, "Why not sooner?"

The President. Well, I would say, first of all, when we got the first approval ever for NATO out-of-area operations last summer, that resulted in immediately a reduction in the shelling of Sarajevo and the casualties, and then they built back up. So we've been working on this for some time. Even before then, we received permission to enforce a no-fly zone. So we've been working on this for some time.

I think that we finally had a consensus among our allies—and I have to compliment them—and which included, as I have said many times, NATO members who had troops

on the ground there, unlike the United States. So I think that the main thing we need to do now is to build on this and figure out how we can use it to make a permanent peace.

Andrea [Andrea Mitchell, NBC News].

Q. Mr. President, how can you build on this diplomatically? What can the United States now bring to the peace talks? You've always said that it has to be determined among the parties, but once you have a bottom line from the Bosnian Muslims, is there some new initiative, some way to push it? And might the Russian involvement on the ground lead to more Russian involvement in the diplomacy, as well?

The President. Well, I would hope it will. President Yeltsin and I have been discussing this, as you know, intensely, both through our representatives and directly. And I talked to him again yesterday. I hope that they will be intensely involved in this. I think it is important that all of us who are prepared to stick with this and who have made the same commitment, that if there is an agreed-upon peace will help to implement it, really push for that kind of peace. On the other hand, I think it is equally important that we not pretend that we can impose a peace that the parties disagree with, that they do not freely accept. So that's the delicate line we'll be walking, and that's what our people will be discussing this week in Europe.

Wolf [Wolf Blitzer, Cable News Network].

Q. Mr. President, if the United States now is much more actively engaged in working with the Bosnian Government to achieve some sort of peaceful settlement, won't that bring additional responsibilities to the U.S. Government if the Bosnians do go forward and make major concessions? Specifically, how committed are you to dispatching some 25,000 U.S. military peacekeepers to try to enforce an agreement?

The President. Well, I have said since February of 1993, since shortly after becoming President, that if the parties themselves freely and clearly adopted a peace agreement which the United States felt was an enforceable one, that we would do what we could through the United Nations and through NATO to support the implementation of it as long as we had fewer than half of the

troops there and as long as we were convinced that we had a fair chance to implement it. We're not committed to any specific number of troops, but I think we should, and that's been my position all along.

Q. You first talked of air strikes some 13 months ago. Do you now feel personally vindicated by the events of the past couple of days and week?

The President. To be honest, I haven't given any thought to that. Let me just say generally, in a situation like this, first of all, it's a complicated, heartbreaking situation. I want the United States to play a role in stabilizing that part of the world, so the conflict doesn't spread, and in bringing an end to the humanitarian tragedy.

I believe that the policy that I have advocated is and has been the right one. But I also fully recognize that, unlike our allies that I had to convince to go along with the policy, we did not have troops on the ground there. We did not have people who could be easily outnumbered and killed quickly. So I have to say a strong word of appreciation to our allies in NATO for the work they have done, as well as a strong word of appreciation to General Rose and to, generally, the renewed vigor of the United Nations forces in Bosnia, because they knew they would be at some risk if this policy ultimatum had to be carried out.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President's 48th news conference began at 12:10 p.m. in the Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Ambassador Charles E. Redman, U.S. Special Envoy to the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, and Muhammed Sacirbey, Bosnian Ambassador to the United Nations.

Remarks to the American Council on Education

February 22, 1994

Thank you very much, Father Malloy, for that introduction. Now that we're in Washington, DC, I should tell you that the most important thing about him is not that he is the president of Notre Dame but that he was a legendary high school basketball player who played on the same team with the great

John Thompson, here in Washington, DC. This is one of our big struggles in life. Some people would question, is it better to be the president of Notre Dame or be a great high school basketball player? The answer is, it's better to do both, if possible. *[Laughter]*

I'd like to thank you all for inviting me here and to say that I've looked forward to this day. I want to recognize many of you in the audience, but I think if I start I don't know where I'll stop. I am glad to be joined here by the Secretary of Education, and I know that the Secretary of Health and Human Services and the Secretary of Labor also are on this program.

Many leaders in our administration have come from the ranks of higher education. Donna Shalala was the chancellor at the University of Wisconsin. The Director of USIA, Joseph Duffey, who came in with me, was the president of American University and formerly the president of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. Dr. David Satcher, the Director of the Center of Disease Control, was formerly the president of Maharry Medical Center in Tennessee. Shirley Chater, the Commissioner of Social Security, was the president of Texas Woman's University. Then there are the people in our administration like the Secretary of Labor Bob Reich, the First Lady, and me, who taught at institutions of higher education and complained about you all the time. *[Laughter]* So we're actually all exhausted after the last year and we're looking for a home to go back to—*[laughter]*—so I sort of came here for a job interview today. *[Laughter]*

For 75 years, the American Council on Education has represented colleges and universities with real distinction. And in large measure because of your common efforts, it is now generally agreed that we have the finest system of higher education anywhere in the world. No other nation gives such a high percentage of its high school graduates the opportunity to go on to college. None other offers such diverse choices among institutions. No other nation conducts as much basic research at its universities or produces as many Nobel laureates. No wonder tens of thousands of students come here from all over the world every year to study.