

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:25 a.m. at the Newport News Williamsburg International Airport. In his remarks, he referred to Yasushi Akashi, highest ranking U.N. official in the Former Yugoslavia; Ambassador Charles E. Redman, U.S. Special Envoy for the Former Yugoslavia; and Vitaly Churkin, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks on Bosnia and an Exchange With Reporters Prior to Departure for Milwaukee, Wisconsin

April 18, 1994

The President. Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I'd like to say a word or two about the situation in Bosnia. First of all, as all of you know, the situation in and around Gorazde remains grim and uncertain. I think it is important to point out why this happened. It happened because the Serbs violated the understandings of a cease-fire that they—agreement they made with both the United Nations and with the Russians. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first time that the Russians, working through Mr. Churkin's able leadership, have reached an agreement with the Serbs which they have not honored.

The United Nations commander on the ground, General Rose, made the judgment at several points over the last couple of days that NATO close-air support was either not practically feasible or would not be helpful under the circumstances. In Gorazde, we have—we, the United States working through NATO—basically are empowered only to provide close-air support to U.N. troops when they are under siege or under threat of attack on request of the U.N. commander.

I have monitored this situation very closely all weekend; I have spent a good deal of time on it on Saturday. I had lots of conversations yesterday about it and have met this morning with Mr. Lake. Our national security principals will be meeting today to consider what else we can and should do in this circumstance.

The main thing I want to point out is that we have to find a way to get the momentum back. The big successes in the last couple

of months in Bosnia have been, obviously, preserving Sarajevo and achieving the agreement between the Croatians and the Government—the Bosnian Government. They are very important; those things still hold, and I'm convinced we can find a way to build on them and go forward.

But this has not been a great weekend for the peace effort in Bosnia. I do think that the big things are still working in the long-term favor of peace. And we'll just have to see where we are, and we'll be reporting more as the day goes on and through the rest of the week.

Q. Mr. President, you wanted to lift the arms embargo a year ago, would you still like to do it? You would lead an effort to do that? It would take American leadership, many in Congress say, to do this.

The President. The Americans tried to lead it before. We will be discussing now what our other options are. As you know, at the time there was a clear specific reason we couldn't succeed in lifting the arms embargo, which was that not just the Russians but the French and British did not want to do it because they had soldiers on the ground. Now their soldiers on the ground are in danger. The real question we would have to work through there is how many countries would go along, and could we get it through the U.N.? But I've always favored doing it.

I just want to say, though—I want to ask you all to think about—those who say, there are many who say, "Well, we can do it unilaterally, and we ought to do it unilaterally." But remember, if we do that, first of all, there are substantial questions about whether under international law we can do it, but secondly, if you resolved all those—what about the embargo that we have led against Iraq that others would like to back off of but they don't because they gave their agreement that they wouldn't? What if we needed embargoes in the future? What about the trade sanctions on Serbia themselves? What about any possible future economic action in other countries where we have difficulties today that we'd want other countries to honor?

So we have to think long and hard about whether we can do this unilaterally. But certainly, as you know, I have always thought that the arms embargo operated in an en-

tirely one-sided fashion, and it still does. That's the reason we're in this fix today because of the accumulated losses of the Bosnian Government as a direct result of the overwhelming superiority of heavy artillery by the Serbs.

But again, I would say we have been making good progress at the negotiating table. I don't want to have a wider war. I think even if you lifted the arms embargo and you had a lot of other people fighting and killing, in the end there would not be a decisive victory for either side in a war. There's going to have to be a negotiated settlement. And the real problem now is that the Serbs agreed to a cease-fire with both the U.N. and the Russians, and they didn't keep their end of the deal. We're going to have to see where we are today, and we'll have more to say.

Q. Why do you say you're making progress, and couldn't you have moved a little faster? This has been coming on for a couple weeks.

The President. I disagree with that. What do you mean? Keep in mind, the role of the United States and NATO is to respond when the United Nations asks for close-air support when its troops are in danger. This is not Sarajevo; Sarajevo was a special case. And the no-fly zone—if planes violate the no-fly zone they can be shot down. That was done by NATO and the United States. This is a different case. We can only do what we have the authority to do.

And frankly, I think it is a little too easy to Monday-morning-quarterback General Rose who has been very aggressive, very strong, and very much supported in this country and throughout the world for his aggressive actions. It's easy to say now he should have been more aggressive in Gorazde. I think he did the best he could with the resources he had under the facts as they existed. And so I don't know that General Rose had any other options. I just know that we have a disappointing and difficult situation there today, and we'll be working on it.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:12 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks to Ameritech Employees in Milwaukee

April 18, 1994

The President. Thank you very much. Thank you, Senator Kohl. And thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for that warm welcome. I started to stand on this thing so you would think I might be the Mayor of Milwaukee, but on reflection, I decided, like all public officials I'd rather be closer to the microphone. [Laughter] I want to thank Senator Feingold for his support and his leadership and his fine remarks. Congressman Barrett and Congressman Barca, we're glad to see you here. Thank you for being here with us. Congressman Gerry Kleczka, thank you so much; I'm glad to be here with you in your district and in your hometown. I want to say a special word of thanks to the Ameritech team for the welcoming here today. Dick Notebaert came out with me, along with Morty Bahr on the airplane, so the three of us had a chance to visit a little bit about what we would be doing today. And between the two of them, they convinced me that this may be the best company in the history of the world. They were talking about—[applause] I want to thank Gary Keating and Rick Compost in Detroit and Deborah Echols in Chicago and all the employees who are there. I also want to say, in addition to the fine work done by the CWA, I know that many of you are part of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers; I thank you for your support in this health care effort. There are a lot of people here in the audience—I won't recognize all of them, but I would like to say a special word of thanks to the speaker of the Wisconsin House, Walter Kunicki, an old friend of mine, for being here. Thank you very much, sir, for coming. And I'd like to thank the Wisconsin Ameritech team, Bronson Haase and Bob Johnson and others. Thank you so much. We're glad to be here.

Ladies and gentlemen, when I came to Wisconsin first as a candidate for President, I did so not simply because I wanted to have the honor of the job, although it is a very great honor indeed, the highest any American citizen can receive, but because I thought the President's job was to bring the