AUTHENTICATED
U.S. GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
GPO

The President. Well, first of all, I believe it's important for the Congress to have a chance to review this peace agreement and to receive the assurances from the leaders of Bosnia, Croatia, and Serbia that they intend to do everything in their power to make sure the agreement is implemented in good faith and with peaceful intent and absolutely minimal violence. I think that will be an imperative part of this endeavor.

I will work with the leaders of Congress to establish a schedule for implementing that. I have placed calls to the Speaker, the majority leader of the Senate, and the minority leaders of the Senate and the House shortly before I came out here. I was only able to reach the Speaker. The others were in transit, but I will speak to them all today. And I will work with them to establish a schedule for consultation with Congress that will begin as soon as I approve the final NATO plan.

I have had extensive briefings on this plan. And as I said, I am satisfied that based on what we knew at the time I was briefed, we had a clear, limited, achievable mission that minimized the risks to not only the uniformed forces of the United States but others who would participate as well. When I see the final plan, if I remain of that opinion, I will immediately consult with Congress and we will have an agreed-upon schedule for consultations, which I think will begin immediately in terms of the detail of the peace agreement itself. And that is the responsibility that I have to bear, and I intend to assume it.

Now, we have assured Congress that there will be no complete deployment until they have a chance to be heard on this issue. The only things that will be done in the preliminary period, assuming that things go forward as we anticipate today and you hear what I think you will hear shortly from the three Presidents, is that there will be some preliminary planning done in the Bosnia area, which is absolutely essential and which we have already fully disclosed to the Congress. But beyond that, the Congress will have a period of weeks before the final formal signing ceremony, which would trigger the involvement of NATO's forces. So that's what I expect will happen.

Let me say that I know you will have other questions about the details of this peace agreement, how it was reached, the number of eleventh hours that came and passed. And even last night at midnight, when I had my last conversation with Secretary Christopher, we were not sure whether there would be peace this morning. When I got up and we began to work on this, we were not sure there would be peace. As often happens in a process like this, as I think happened in the Middle East, something stirred among the leaders themselves and they decided that they should not let this moment pass for the benefit of their people.

So I believe we'll be able to answer all the other questions in the days ahead, and the people in Dayton will be able to answer more of your questions when they have their press conference. The main thing is, I ask all Americans to remember what we have seen and heard and read about for the last 4 years and remember what the implications were not only for our consciences but for the prospect that that conflict could spread.

The fact that these leaders have voted to bring an end to this and to give the people of Bosnia a peaceful Christmas and a peaceful future is something for which we should be very, very thankful.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:40 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Alija Izetbegovic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, President Franjo Tudjman of Croatia, and President Slobodan Milosevic of Serbia.

Remarks at the Blair Homeless Shelter

November 22, 1995

I'd like to just say one word, if I might. I want to say that Hillary and I came here to be with you at Thanksgiving and to celebrate Thanksgiving with our country because we wanted to thank the people who run this wonderful service here for their commitment, for their service.

I also want to say a word of thanks to my friend Henry Cisneros, the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, because

he put together a homeless initiative for the District of Columbia that helps this project and many others, because after I became President, I said I was just tired of seeing people on the street. I want us to do something to give people some hope, to give people a place to be.

And on this Thanksgiving Day, Mr. Mayor, I say again, we are honored to be citizens of the District of Columbia. We are honored to have the chance to be with you and to work with people in DC to try to deal with the problems here. We know we have a lot of challenges in dealing with homelessness, not the least of which is that the fastest growing group of homeless people are women and their children. And we've got to stay after this.

I'd like to say one other thing, too, on this Thanksgiving. Yesterday I made an announcement that an agreement for peace has been made in Bosnia. A lot of people today are asking questions about how it will all be implemented. I'd just like to ask you to think of one human fact. In that little country so much smaller than ours, in that little bitty country, there are one million homeless families because of that war. So I hope on this Thanksgiving we can help more of our own people to find homes and we can help them to go home.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:49 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Marion Barry of the District of Columbia. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at the Thanksgiving Turkey Presentation Ceremony

November 22, 1995

The President. Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the Rose Garden, and Happy Thanksgiving. I want to acknowledge, especially, Kenneth Rutledge, the chairman of the National Turkey Federation, his wife, Brenda, his son, John; Stuart Proctor—Kenneth is the chairman; Stuart Proctor is the president of the Turkey Federation, his wife, Sherry. I also want to recognize the presence here of Congressman Cal Dooley. And I want to on this cold day warmly welcome the young people and the volunteers who are here from the Boys Club, the Girls Club of America, the Big Brothers and Big Sisters program, and the members of the AmeriCorps program from Baltimore. [*Applause*] Thank you.

I also want to say that's the most multicolored, best looking turkey we've had here since I've been President.

You know, we're here today to have a little fun and to begin the official Thanksgiving in our country that we give every year at this time for the blessings that God has given us, for the personal gifts he's given us, the gifts of our families and communities and to our great country.

Thanksgiving is a uniquely American holiday, as all of you know. It goes back to our foundings. But I think it's important to note that the first official proclamation of Thanksgiving, issued by a United States President, was issued by Abraham Lincoln during the Civil War, when our people were overwhelmingly preoccupied with their problems and indeed with whether our country would even continue to exist. Nevertheless, Mr. Lincoln reminded us that we had things to be thankful for.

On this Thanksgiving, here in America, we've got a lot to be thankful for. The combined rates of unemployment and inflation in our country are at their lowest in 27 years. Homeownership and new business formation and the stock market now are at an all-time high, all three of them. Maybe even more important, the crime rate, the welfare rates, the poverty rates, they're all down this year, and we're grateful for that. I'm grateful that the United States has been a force for peace, from the Middle East to Northern Ireland and to Haiti and now of course, we hope, in Bosnia.

But we should never forget that there are still people in our country that need our concern and our caring. The young people who are here today are interested in making the most of their own lives and serving those in their community. And that's an important part of Thanksgiving as well. We have obligations to our parents and to our children, to people who are disabled or otherwise, through no fault of their own, need a helping hand.