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United States of America the two hundred and twentieth.

William J. Clinton

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NOTE: This proclamation and the attached annexes were published in the *Federal Register* on December 15.

Letter to Senate Democratic Leader Thomas Daschle on Implementation of the Balkan Peace Process

December 11, 1995

Dear Mr. Leader:

Just four weeks ago, the leaders of Bosnia, Croatia and Serbia came to Dayton, Ohio, in America's heartland, to negotiate and initial a peace agreement to end the war in Bosnia. There, they made a commitment to peace. They agreed to put down their guns; to preserve Bosnia as a single state; to cooperate with the War Crimes Tribunal and to try to build a peaceful, democratic future for all the people of Bosnia. They asked for NATO and America's help to implement this peace agreement.

On Friday, December 1, the North Atlantic Council approved NATO's operational plan, OPLAN 10405, the Implementation of a Peace Agreement in the Former Yugoslavia. On Saturday, General George Joulwan, Supreme Allied Commander Europe, who will be commanding the NATO operation, briefed me in Germany on the final OPLAN.

Having reviewed the OPLAN, I find the mission is clearly defined with realistic goals that can be achieved in a definite period of time. The risks to our troops have been minimized to the maximum extent possible. American troops will take their orders from the American general who commands NATO. They will be heavily armed and thoroughly trained. In making an overwhelming show of force, they will lessen the need to use force. They will have the authority, as well as the training and the equipment, to respond with decisive force to any threat to their own safety or any violations of the military provisions of the peace agreement. U.S. and NATO commanders believe the military mission can be accomplished in about a year.

A summary of the OPLAN is attached. Of course, members of my staff and the Administration are available to answer your questions and further brief you on the OPLAN as you require.

I consider the Dayton peace agreement to be a serious commitment by the parties to settle this conflict. In light of that agreement and my approval of the final NATO OPLAN, I would welcome a Congressional expression of support for U.S. participation in a NATO-led Implementation Force in Bosnia. I believe Congressional support for U.S. participation is immensely important to the unity of our purpose and the morale of our troops.

I believe there has been a timely opportunity for the Congress to consider and act upon my request for support since the initialing in Dayton on November 21. As you know, the formal signing of the Peace Agreement will take place in Paris on December 14.

As I informed you earlier, I have authorized the participation of a small number of American troops in a NATO advance mission that will lay the groundwork for IFOR, starting this week. They will establish headquarters and set up the sophisticated communications systems that must be in place before NATO can send in its troops, tanks and trucks to Bosnia.

America has a responsibility to help to turn this moment of hope into an enduring reality. As the leader of NATO—the only institution capable of implementing this peace agreement—the United States has a profound interest in participating in this mission, which will give the people of Bosnia the confidence and support they need to preserve the peace and prevent this dangerous war in the heart of Europe from resuming and spreading. Since taking office, I have refused to send American troops to fight a war in Bosnia, but I believe we must help now to secure this Bosnian peace.

Sincerely,

Bill Clinton

NOTE: A summary of the operation plan for the implementation of the peace agreement in the former Yugoslavia was attached to the President's letter.

Remarks to Citizens Involved in Humanitarian Relief Efforts for Bosnia and an Exchange With Reporters

December 12, 1995

The President. Well, first of all, let me say that I know I speak for everyone here in thanking the people who have spoken and thanking them, more importantly, for their remarkable efforts. I want to express my appreciation to two of their Representatives who joined us: Congressman Ehlers from Michigan and Congressman Moran from Virginia. To Franklin Graham, thank you, sir, for the remarkable work that you are doing and for giving people like Mary the chance to be remarkable in their own right.

What you have just heard is a series of astonishing human testaments. I don't know that I've ever felt more proud to be an American than I did in the last few minutes just listening to these people talk. And I know all of you feel that way as well.

The purpose of our mission is to take advantage of this remarkable opportunity we have when all of the parties have agreed to make peace, when they have agreed that the madness you have just heard recounted ought to stop.

We saw further evidence of their good-faith intention to do their part this morning, when the French pilots were released. And I just, by pure coincidence, had the French Ambassador in this morning, and I told him to convey to President Chirac the joy of all Americans that these pilots are free because the mission that we all undertook together through NATO had a lot to do with bringing about this peace agreement.

Since I became President, I have said that I thought the United States had an obligation to participate in the enforcement of a peace agreement. Because we have a peace agreement, which is enforceable, which can be protected, which can be enhanced by the NATO force, the work that you have just heard about will be able to be multiplied hundreds of times over. And that's the thing I want to emphasize to all of you.

The NATO mission in which the United States will play a leading role by separating the forces, by making sure the territory is the way the peace agreement agreed, by maintaining a secure environment, will permit more of these things to be done, will permit the reconstruction effort to proceed, not only the physical reconstruction effort but the human reconstruction effort.

And I have just told all of the folks whom you heard speak that it is very important that these efforts continue in Bosnia and, in fact, be intensified because there are a lot of lives that have to be put together; there are a lot of communities that have to be rebuilt. But this kind of energy by the American people and by others throughout the world who will join now in helping them can help to turn the worst nightmare in Europe since the end of the Second World War into a story of reconciliation and peace and progress.

And again, let me say, there is nothing I can say to add to what these fine people have said. But when Americans like these folks are willing to do what they have done, I think it is incumbent on the United States, the other NATO powers, the others who are joining with us, to make sure that this peace takes hold and is preserved so that they can do it in an atmosphere free of fear for themselves and help that country come back and help all these little children regain their childhood.

I hope we all live to see the day when the only bombs in the world are peace bombs.

Thank you very much.

Q. Mr. President, are you going to be able to get this through Congress, win approval?

The President. Well, let me say I'm quite encouraged by two things. Number one, a very large number of Members of Congress, especially House Members, have actually gone to the region in the last few days, and I applaud them for doing it. And some of those with deep reservations about the missions have gone. I have no exact vote count for you, but I can tell you that it's clear to me that there's been a real shift among those who have gone. Those who have gone have come back more favorable than they left America. And so I can't believe that when the time for the counting comes that Congress won't support our troops in this mission. I believe they will.

Thank you.