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Interview With the Voice of America

January 11, 1996

Q. Mr. President, you are regarded as a hero in Bosnia, you are the person who brought peace over there. Yet, we do have some renewed fighting between Muslims and Croats. Are you going to be meeting with any local leaders and addressing the issue?

The President. Well, I know I'm going to see President Izetbegovic, and I'm going to, hopefully, see President Tudjman. And we may be able to see some others, as well—I don't think that it's been finalized, all the people I will speak with. But I will do what I can while I'm there to help to encourage the parties to follow the letter and the spirit of the Dayton Agreement and the Paris Peace Accord.

Q. NATO bombed the Bosnian Serbs, we know that, and these people are terrified. What do we tell them now that NATO is back in Bosnia?

The President. You should tell them that NATO is back in Bosnia only because the leaders of all the groups asked NATO to come in, as a strictly neutral partner. If you look at the United States, we have agreed to work in an area of Bosnia where we will be working with the Russians who are more sympathetic with the Serbs. We and the Russians are working together in the hope that we can convince all the parties, the Serbs, the Croats, and the Muslims, that we have no ill-will toward anyone, we wish to hurt no one, we are there only to help them implement the peace agreement their own leaders have made.

Q. Thank you.

The President. Thank you.

Q. Good luck.

The President. Thank you.

NOTE: The interview began at approximately 10:15 a.m., following the videotape recording to the people of Bosnia in the Roosevelt Room at the White House, and it was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 12. In his remarks, the President referred to President Alija Izetbegovic of Bosnia-Herzegovina and President Franjo Tudjman of Croatia. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks to Employees at Peterbilt Truck Plant in Nashville, Tennessee

January 12, 1996

The President. Thank you. Boy, I'm glad to be here. I need this. Sort of a fix from home. [*Laughter*].

I want to thank the Vice President for his wonderful statement this morning, but more important, I want everyone of you to know that whether it's working on downsizing our Government in a way that gives the American people a Government that works better for less or working on finding ways to protect our environment in ways that grow jobs instead of undermining the economy or working on our relationships with Russia in a way that makes sure we are never, never, never again threatened with the specter of nuclear war, Al Gore, from Carthage, Tennessee, is the most influential and effective Vice President in the history of the United States of America.

I've got a lot of friends here today. I want to thank the Mayor for coming and Congressman Clement and Gordon and Tanner. And my dear friend, your former Governor, Ned Ray McWherter, who actually purchases your trucks. At least that's what he tells me. [*Laughter*] The first time I met Ned McWherter I talked to him for 30 seconds, and I wanted to reach in my back pocket and make sure my billfold was still there. [*Laughter*]

Audience Members. Ohhhh. [*Laughter*]

The President. But they're not making many like him anymore, and I'm glad to see him looking so thin and fit. Looks like a new morning. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank Joe Scattergood and Wayne Wooten for going through the plant with me. And thank you, Bobby Lee, for what you said and for being here. And thank you, Tom Plimpton, for the wonderful tour. And let me say also, I want to thank these retirees who are back here, and I want to mention I met two people today who work here, and this is their last day on the job. And I want to acknowledge them because I think Al Gore and I should have shown up for their retirement party.

The first person has been here 25 years, Mr. Bill Douglas. He's over there. And I met