

ers to make our communities, our Nation, and our work in the world stronger. Let us pray for a stronger sense of humility in our own efforts and a much stronger sense of charity toward the efforts of others. Let us know always that the spirit of God is among us when we permit it to be.

When Hillary and I went to Ireland a few weeks ago and saw the yearning for peace there in the eyes of the Catholics and the Protestants, we had the honor to meet the Irish Nobel Prize-winning poet, Seamus Heaney, and I had the honor of quoting one of his wonderful lines, in hoping that I really was there at a time when, to use his words, "hope and history rhyme."

This can be such a time, I am convinced, only—only if we are charitable, if we are family, and if we act according to the spirit of God. This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice, and be glad in it.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:42 a.m. at the Washington Hilton Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to evangelist Billy Graham; and Mayor Selim Bslagic of Tuzla, Bosnia-Herzegovina.

### **Remarks Welcoming President Jacques Chirac of France**

*February 1, 1996*

President and Mrs. Chirac, members of the French delegation, to all the distinguished guests here, French and American alike, at the White House today, on behalf of the American people, it is my pleasure to welcome back to Washington the leader of a great nation and a great people, President Jacques Chirac.

Let me begin by saying that I know I speak for all Americans when I express our condolences to the people of France on the loss of our friend, President Mitterrand, a leader and statesman whose half-century of public service made a vast contribution to France and to the world.

The friendship we celebrate today, the friendship we strengthen today, was forged in the very infancy of the United States. Two hundred and eighteen years ago this very week, our nations signed a treaty of alliance.

Today, our partnership and the ideals at its core, life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness—*liberté, égalité, fraternité*—are making a difference to people all around the world. From the Persian Gulf to Haiti, from Burundi to Bosnia, France and America, side by side, standing for democracy, for progress, and for peace.

France was America's very first ally. Today, after all these years, France remains among our best allies and best friends. Now, at the dawn of a bright new century, we must build on our legacy of leadership. To expand opportunity for people within our borders, our vision and our strength must extend beyond our borders. We must unite our people around the promise of peace, as our predecessors joined against the peril of war, and that is what we mean to do.

Together, we are raising the flag of an undivided Europe, where the language of democracy is spoken in every land. We are supporting the spread of strong market economies across the entire continent. We are transforming NATO to meet new challenges and opening its door to new members. And I welcome France's historic decision to participate once again in NATO's defense councils.

Together, we are helping Bosnia find its way from war and devastation to peace and reconstruction. I salute France, its humanitarian organizations and especially its soldiers for the tremendous sacrifices they have made to help the Bosnian people. The United States is proud to work with you to help the peace take hold and endure.

Together, we are leading the fight against the forces of destruction—the terrorists, the organized criminals, the drug traffickers—the forces that threaten our children, our communities, and our future.

Together, we are bringing the great institutions of global cooperation into the 21st century, from renewing the United Nations to revitalizing the G-7, which France will host in Lyons later this year. France and America are partners for progress.

Mr. President, in your inaugural address, you declared: "France is an old country. But it is also a young and enthusiastic nation, ready to give its best as long as it has shown a horizon instead of walls." So let our two

nations and our two great peoples march toward the future together, shaping those new horizons of hope and opportunity for France, for America and for the world.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:47 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Bernadette Chirac, wife of President Chirac.

### **The President's News Conference With President Chirac of France**

*February 1, 1996*

**President Clinton.** Good afternoon. Please be seated.

President Chirac and I have just concluded a very good discussion. Let me begin by saying how much the United States appreciates the President's strong leadership and the vital role France is playing all around the world. This is a time for the world's great democracies to reach out, not retreat. Many of the problems we face, including terrorism, international organized crime and drugs, have no respect for borders. And the extraordinary opportunities we enjoy to shape a safer and more prosperous future for our people can be realized only if we stay engaged and if we work together.

France and the United States are doing that, building on our historic alliance to meet the challenges of this new era. NATO is a cornerstone of that alliance. The President and I spent a good deal of time discussing its present and its future. In Bosnia, all of us can see NATO's critical role in ending a terrible war and helping peace to take hold and restoring stability to the heart of Europe. President Chirac and I reviewed the impressive progress our troops are making. We agreed the mission in Bosnia is moving forward steadily, surely, and as safely as possible.

The Bosnia operation also demonstrates how well NATO can work with Europe's new democracies. Countries that were our Warsaw Pact adversaries less than a decade ago now are serving side by side with our troops for peace. This is a tribute to the decision that we made to reach out to them through the Partnership For Peace and by holding out the possibility of opening NATO's doors

to new partners. We agreed that NATO must and will continue its steady progress toward enlargement and will strengthen its relationship with Russia.

Let me say again, I told President Chirac how pleased we in the United States are with France's recent decision to move closer to the military side of NATO, a move that will strengthen our alliance and a move that is very, very important to the United States. I also welcomed the French efforts to build a stronger European defense identity within NATO. This will allow our European allies to deal more effectively with future security problems and spread the costs and risks of our leadership for peace, while preserving the basic structure of NATO.

The Franco-American partnership extends well beyond NATO and, indeed, well beyond Europe: We've seen it in Cambodia, where our cooperation was vital to the success of democratic elections; we see it in Haiti, where French gendarmes are taking part in the international police force and playing a critical role; and in Africa, both our countries today are working to help people realize their tremendous economic and political potential. Today President Chirac and I agreed to work together on preventive diplomacy in Africa to begin to head off conflicts before they start.

Finally we focused on a series of new threats to the safety of our citizens that demand a coordinated response: the spread of weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, international organized crime, drug trafficking, and of course, the threats to the global environment.

I welcome France's decision to end nuclear testing in the Pacific and its strong support for signing a zero-yield comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty this year. That is a project we can and we will work on together, and I believe we will succeed. As I said in the State of the Union, the comprehensive test ban treaty is one of my highest priorities as President. It will dramatically reduce the nuclear threat to every American and to people all over the world. Having France as a strong partner in this crusade significantly increases the prospects for success.

Let me add also that we greatly appreciate France's offer to join and contribute to the