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Statement on the Death of Jimmy Stewart

July 2, 1997

America lost a national treasure today. Jimmy Stewart was a great actor, a gentleman, and a patriot. We will always remember his rich career of great performances that spanned several decades and entertained generations of Americans.

Like all Americans, Hillary and I will miss him greatly, but his works live on, and for that we can all be grateful.

Interview With European Television Journalists

July 3, 1997

NATO Expansion

Q. Mr. President, thank you for having us and granting this interview with this group of European television stations. The Summit of Madrid marks the first expansion of the NATO to the Eastern European countries. Mr. President, it is perceived by the public opinion in Europe that the United States limits this expansion. It is perhaps a misperception from Europe?

The President. First of all, let me say that the expansion itself is historic, and we should not minimize it. Of course, Spain was the last new member of NATO, and that was an historic thing as well. But to expand NATO in a way that enables us to move closer to our goal of a united, democratic Europe for the first time in history is very important.

I don't want to limit NATO expansion; I want to leave the door open to all democracies that would like to be a part of it. But keep in mind, NATO is not simply a political alliance. It is primarily a military alliance, and we've done a lot of work to try to adapt NATO to the security challenges of the 21st century, to the Bosnias, if you will, rather than to the cold war.

So it seems to us, after having consulted with all of our allies and after having looked at the capacity of those that would like to become members, that the three members from Central Europe, Poland and Hungary and the Czech Republic, are clearly ready to assume the responsibilities of NATO membership and ready to integrate militarily with NATO. That does not mean that the door should not remain wide open to others and that we shouldn't make every effort over the next couple of years to do what it takes to help others qualify for NATO membership.

I don't want to exclude anyone, but I think it quite important on principle that we not admit anyone until we're absolutely sure that their democracy is stable and that they are militarily capable. And this is just a difference of opinion. Some of the NATO members agree with us; some would prefer four; some would prefer five.

Q. But, Mr. President, does that mean that when you go to Madrid, in effect your mind is made up, and those who disagree in the alliance will have to join your view?

The President. NATO has always made decisions by consensus. For example, suppose we were for five and the British were for three—alone. In order to achieve a consensus, since that's the only way we can proceed, three would still prevail. In other words, it's not because it's America; it's because we have to reach a consensus.

But we have spent a lot of time with this. I've personally visited with President Chirac about it. I've personally talked with Chancellor Kohl about it. I've personally talked with President Aznar and with Tony Blair about it and many other European leaders. I had a long talk with Prime Minister Prodi about it. Then Madeleine Albright went to Sintra in Portugal and talked to all of the people about it before we announced a public position, and I have spent a long time with our military leaders talking about it. And others had announced their position before ours, so I don't foresee any circumstances under which I would change my position that today we ought to have three.

But keep in mind, my position also is—and some of the members don't agree with this—that we should leave the door open, that we should have a review, we should take another look at it in 1999, and even at 1999 we should keep the door open. That is, I see NATO as a way of continuing the process of European integration, which I have supported. I have supported the European Union; I have supported the independent se-

curity unit, the ESDI within NATO, which is something that's been important to France and others. I want to see Europe integrated and strong and secure. So I'm looking forward to other meetings like Madrid. I don't think this will be the last one by a long shot.

France

Q. Mr. President, NATO is a bone of contention between you, President Chirac, and his Socialist Prime Minister Jospin. Concretely, why do you refuse the French, but any other European countries to have the command of the South NATO flank, and I would like to add, is the communist presence inside the French Government a problem in the NATO context?

The President. Oh, no. First of all, I hope that France will become integrated into the military structure of NATO, and I hope that Spain will be as well, and I think we're quite close with Spain. And I hope that both will be.

Secondly, I believe that more command positions should be open to Europeans, and I have supported that. That is—so, in the adaptation of NATO internally, the United States has favored the integration of France and Spain into the military command structure, has favored an independent European security defense initiative within NATO, and has favored more command positions going to French and to European officers.

The particular command, the AFSOUTH Command, is—the real problem there for us right now is that right now, the AFSOUTH Command is essentially command of the 6th Fleet of the United States Navy. And except for, and maybe even including—I'd have to check the numbers—our presence in South Korea, it's the biggest single deployment of United States military assets anywhere.

So if we were to divide the AFSOUTH Command, it wouldn't, from our point of view, be a sensible thing to do militarily because that's essentially the central asset of AFSOUTH. We have offered to revisit this—even that position with the French in a few years, because it may be that we decide to change the composition of what makes up AFSOUTH. But in terms of the command structure, we believe the Europeans should have more command positions. We believe the French should if they come in. And we hope that we can resume these discussions and work this out.

Q. And the communists, no problem?

The President. No. Look, France is a democracy, and they elected a new leadership for the Parliament, and that's up to the government. As long as the Government of France is a great democracy, standing for freedom and participating, I don't have a problem. The French people should make their own decisions over that; the United States shouldn't make a judgment about that.

Germany

Q. Mr. President, one could say that the main beneficiary of the new security structure in Europe is Germany. Our country is not a Front Line state anymore, the Bundeswehr, which has been trained and equipped to fight a war on its own territory, defining the Eastern flank of NATO, won't have to do that anymore. So when the new, the next Gulf crisis, Somalia crisis, Bosnia crisis come about, what would America expect from Germany to take over in terms of burden from the Americans?

The President. I don't know that I would expect them to take over anything from the Americans, but I would make two points. One and most importantly is that the Germans are in a position to be partners with us now because of decisions which have been made by your supreme judicial body, and because of the vision of Chancellor Kohl—we are in a position to be partners in Bosnia, for example—that the Germans can participate and are not only trusted but relied upon to participate in cooperative security challenges beyond the German borders. That's the first thing.

The second thing I would say is that the Germans have supported the French and others in being for a European security defense capacity where Europe can act alone without the United States and Canada in appropriate circumstances within NATO as part of our adaptation.

So that's what I would expect, if you will. I think that there will be continuing partnership, and now we'll be able to worry not about the eastern border of Germany but

about the stability of all of Europe, and we'll be able to do that together now.

Q. But it will also mean an increased military role, probably.

The President. It could, but it may not require an increased military budget. That is, all of our militaries are doing different things. On the budget, let me say—this is one other point I should make—there are costs for Europeans and costs for Americans in expanding NATO, and it's important, therefore, to make a good military decision because you have to justify the costs to the public. That's why it can't simply be about politics, because we have to—we're all obliged to do certain things to keep the military able to work with one another, the term of art is interoperability. So that's another thing we have to consider.

Russia

Q. Mr. President, I think it would be interesting to know how you did convince President Yeltsin three instead of five. Is it the price that you paid to get yes from Mr. Yeltsin?

The President. I wouldn't say that, but I think that it's important to note that we made an agreement with President Yeltsin to have an agreement between NATO and Russia that would make it crystal clear that NATO is no longer an organization designed to contain Russia; NATO is an organization designed to work with all free countries to respect the territorial integrity of its members, to protect the security of its members, and to work with its members and their allies, Russia, soon to be Ukraine, and those in the Partnership For Peace, on common security problems like the problem in Bosnia.

I think the great contribution Boris Yeltsin has made to the integration of Europe is his willingness to say, Russia is not going to define its greatness in terms of territorial domination, Russia will define its greatness in terms of the achievements of its people and its partnerships with other countries. That was the contribution, that's what he did, and he deserves a lot of credit for that.

Now, should we expand NATO in a way that is at least aware of the nationalist elements in Russia, the people that don't feel the same way? Of course we should. Should we sensitive to that? Of course we should. But I think as NATO and Russia continue to work in partnership as we have in Bosnia, the continued expansion of NATO will not be seen as a threat to the Russian people but will be seen as something that reinforces our partnership and therefore makes the Russian people more secure.

Q. You decided for a slow start?

The President. No. The main reason I decided this is I really believe that these three countries are the only three countries right now that can start tomorrow and within a reasonable time meet the same standard of membership militarily that the other NATO countries met.

We have to remember, this alliance is the most successful alliance in history because it's had military as well as political integrity. But these other nations, I believe that are either developing their economies and their military capacity, are stabilizing their democracies, should all be considered for future NATO membership. And the irony of this is, right now a lot of the European countries say five, and I say three, but over the long run we may find the United States in favor of considering more countries than a majority of Europeans would be. If that happens, the Europeans will prevail.

Spain

Q. Mr. President, the government of Madrid wants to remain in the chain of command of NATO. Is Spain's petition to maintain under its control of the Canary Island territory acceptable for the United States?

The President. I think the Spanish position is certainly understandable, and it's my understanding that Spain is at least close to being satisfied with the discussions that have been held. The position the United States has taken on this is that the military experts should resolve this, that only Spain can decide whether its concerns about sovereignty and leadership have been satisfied. But for all of the rest of the countries, what we should do is to make this a military decision and see if we can resolve the issue with Spain in a way that is consistent with the way NATO should operate. And they're working very hard on it, and I hope and believe they will resolve it soon.

Northern Ireland Peace Process

Q. On another security matter, Mr. President, you've nurtured the peace process in Northern Ireland personally, but things are looking very ominous, coming up to this weekend with the scheduled Loyalist march in Drumcree. Are you pessimistic that a collision cannot be avoided?

The President. No, I'm not pessimistic, but frankly, the ball is in the IRA's court right now in terms of declaring a cease-fire, and then there is also a ball in the court of the Protestant Loyalists and whether they will continue to exercise restraint.

But let me say, to me the most hopeful thing is that we've got this meeting, I believe, today between Prime Minister Blair and Mr. Ahern, the new Irish Prime Minister. There has been sort of a reaffirmation of the position of the British and Irish Governments about how decommissioning should operate in a fashion parallel with the peace talks, and so I think that the British and Irish Governments are right on track and doing what should be done, and the Irish people should be heartened by the new leadership in both countries, reaffirming the peace process and trying to invigorate it.

But the truth is that in order to get all the parties involved and do it without bloodshed, the IRA will have to renounce violence and reinstitute the cease-fire. The United States had been very forward-leaning. We've tried to involve Sinn Fein. We've tried to reach out, as you know, but two young men were brutally murdered in what is clearly an assassination recently in Ireland. That is unacceptable. You know, we can't do that. The Irish people want the peace process. The British and the Irish Governments want the peace process, and the IRA ought to give it a chance to work.

Q. But would you favor the Loyalists call off their march——

The President. I think that is a matter best left to the people of Northern Ireland and to the British and Irish Governments. I have tried to be very disciplined in the role the United States has played in this, and I just don't think that's a matter on which I should express a view at this moment. Let's see what Prime Minister Blair and Prime Minister Ahern say after their meeting today.

What I would favor is that they do nothing to try to provoke violence. I think these marches are a regular thing. If it happens, there are marches and there are marches; we all know that. So I hope that we can—whatever happens, it won't be an occasion for further violence.

France

Q. Mr. President, going back to the French, President Chirac and the Socialist government are often quoted, and it's true—as criticizing the—what I call, a quote, ''the arrogance of the U.S. superpower which wants to rule the world politically and economically,'' and they criticize the United States for wanting to oust France of Africa. What do you answer to this double accusation from the French authorities when they talk to the French press or they got quoted in the American media, too.

The President. The one on Africa is a new one on me, but the other two—I've heard people say things like that. I've read it in the press with regard to economic issues and with regard to NATO. First of all, let me restate what I said. I don't know whether we would be where we are in Bosnia today if it hadn't been for the leadership of President Chirac and the French. The United States and the French—there have been words in the press for decades now, but the truth is that when the chips are down, we're almost always allies.

Jacques Chirac supported NATO expansion when some European leaders didn't. He was instrumental in getting the agreement with Russia. He was instrumental in forging our common position in Bosnia. All I can say is, I don't want America to dictate to Europe; I want—I have supported European integration. When other Americans were afraid of it, I said—because Europe would be bigger than the United States then—I said, ''No, we want a democratic, free, strong, united Europe, and the next 100 years will be different than the last 100. Let it go. We have to work together.'' So that's the first thing.

On economics, we have been very fortunate in the United States in being able to discipline our spending, invest in our people, and create a lot of jobs. But we have problems here, too. We have—a lot higher per-

centage of our children are poor than in France or Germany and other countries. We don't have the kind of health care and child care supports that you provide to your working families.

So the challenge that we all face, I think, is more a common challenge: How are we going to create jobs, raise incomes, and hold the social compact together in a global economy? We just happen to be in different places in meeting the challenges.

In Africa, let me say I'm very grateful for what the French and we have done together to help each other's citizens get out of harm's way in African countries in trouble. We have offered an initiative on Africa because we've been repeatedly challenged to do more, and we think there should be aid, and I don't think we've given enough aid to Africa. The French have said that we haven't, and they're right. But we think we can do more to expand trade as well. So I hope we'll be working with France on that.

I do not want to push France out of Africa. I want to lift Africa up. And if we would lift Africa up, the fact that the French were there, caring about Africa all along, will only redound to France's benefit.

European-American Relations

Q. Mr. President, in line with what the French colleague just said, there is—especially I feel it after Denver—a growing feeling in Europe that America leans toward something like grandstanding or patronizing toward Europe. And then when it comes time to make sacrifices, like in firm commitments to reduce greenhouse gases or to make compromises like in extending NATO and not risking a rift within NATO over the question of these two countries who will join in addition to the three who are not, America says, this is what our interest is and pushes through. Do you feel that there is a little imbalance in the transatlantic relationship?

The President. First of all—let's deal with the two things separately. I do not think that's a fair characterization of what happened when we had the Summit of the Eight in Denver. Before the other leaders arrived, I gave one speech in Colorado in which I said, 7 years ago when the other countries met in the United States, Europe criticized America, 7 years ago, for dragging down economic growth in the world because our budget deficit was so high, for taking money away from worthy investments in Europe and in other places in the world by having high interest rates in America to finance our deficit. And we have changed that; so now we can't be criticized by our friends in the Summit of the Eight because we have changed that, and we're better off than we were then.

But I said in the same speech we still have a lot of problems at home, and we have no cause for arrogance, and I outlined what those problems were. When I met with the other leaders, I said clearly we've been fortunate; we've created a lot of new jobs. The British also have now created a lot of new jobs, but what happens in this global economy is, as you create more new jobs, the more open the economies are, you have more difficulty in avoiding greater inequality among your people.

So the trick is how to preserve the social compact and create jobs. This is a problem we share together; that's what I said. And anybody who was there in those private meetings will say that. So I simply don't think that's fair.

Now, in NATO, let me say again—I want to say two things. Number one, a lot of the members of NATO have told me they do not favor five, that they understand that politically it's good to say——

Q. Though quietly——

The President. That there are five, but quietly they say we know that you're right, that this is the right thing to do. Not all of them—I don't want to be—the Italians and the French and others clearly want five; some would favor four. I think Chancellor Kohl is genuinely open to that. But there is more difference of opinion within Europe than you might think.

But the most important thing is not that. The most important thing is, if we were for five and France was for three, if that were the case, then the French position would prevail because three is a smaller number than five, and we have to do that. This is not an American win, this has nothing to do with me. I am trying to keep NATO's integrity intact from the military point of view, and that's what I want to do.

Do I believe that we should consider expanding to the south when next we meet in '99? I certainly do. I certainly do. Do I think that Romania and Slovenia could be strong candidates? Yes. Do I think that we should exclude the Baltics? No. Would it be a good thing if Austria were interested in coming in? Might Bulgaria be ready in the future? Yes.

So I think that—this is not—this doesn't have to be done in a day. Keep in mind, 3½ years ago when I proposed this, it was a revolutionary idea. Now, we're talking about how many and when. So I'm not trying to impose this. I'm just trying to do what I think is best for the military alliance, and it just happened that we strongly believe that if you look at the conditions of membership, that these three clearly meet those conditions, and no one else does now.

But I am for—I am very sympathetic with the French and the Italian position that we have to consider moving to the south, and I'm sympathetic and interested in the new interest in Bulgaria and in Austria, and the Baltics are moving very—forward. We shouldn't tell anyone they can't be part of it. But if you look at it, everyone agrees that at least three should be in, and that's what we ought to do. We always go to what everybody agrees on.

Baltic States

Q. May I ask about the Baltic States because you mentioned them three times? Nobody is as desperate to get in psychologically as the Baltics, and nowhere are the Russians as adamant as in the Baltics not to let them in. Will they come away from Madrid with something more than a vague promise we will consider you in the future?

The President. Well, that's not just a vague promise. Keep in mind, the Baltics are in the Partnership For Peace. Let's not overlook that. That has been—I think one reason we have so many people wanting to be in NATO now is that the Partnership For Peace has been so successful. It is not an insignificant thing. The Euro-Atlantic alliance that we have with these Partnership For Peace countries will continue to be strengthened.

And I think what we plan to do is to offer to work with the other European countries to try to—to set the stage for what we will do 2 years from now, and also to keep going into the future, to keep integrating these Partnership For Peace countries more and more into the military and other operations of NATO. So I think the Baltics should feel reassured by that.

I worked very hard, you know, to work with President Yeltsin to get the Russian troops out of the Baltics, to keep them on the path of reform and democracy, and they've done very well. So I think they should be considered in the future like everyone else, and we should make that clear.

Q. Mr. President, you said that the Italians definitely want five. Don't you think——

The President. Well, they certainly want Slovenia. I think they would favor five; they would take four.

The Balkans

Q. Romania—isn't the reason of this, isn't that the real threats are there coming from the south, no more from the east?

The President. Absolutely. Well, we certainly hope that, yes.

Q. And, sir, don't you think that Romania and Slovenia will guarantee more stability in the crucial area of the Balkans?

The President. Yes, I do think that. My problem with Romania and Slovenia is I believe, compared to the other three countries, we can't say that they are clearly ready now to assume NATO membership. Let's take Romania. There's a terrific case you can make for Romania—it's the second biggest country in Central Europe. I mean it has—it's very large, and it has a lot of people, strategically located, and the people want to be in NATO. But they've been on this path now for a little less than a year. The countries that are getting in have already been through ups and downs in their economy, in their political systems. They've had elections. They've really been through all the tensions that happen when you move from communism to freedom.

The Romanians have done an amazing job in a few months. They have resolved their differences with Hungary on the border. They've got two Hungarians in the Cabinet. It is an amazing thing. But it has still been less than a year. So my position is, give them

a couple of years to stabilize their democracy, to develop their economy, and then let's take a look at it.

Would it be better if, going into the 21st century, we had a NATO that had more membership in the southern flank to deal with those problem areas that are just beyond our borders? Of course, it would. Do we have a good chance to get there? Yes, we do. That doesn't mean that we should do it now because people might feel bad if they don't get in, because I think what we have to do is have a mature relationship with all these countries and keep working with them to get them ready—to get them ready.

I hope that eventually we will have many more countries in NATO and a much closer relationship with the countries beyond our borders that choose not to seek membership, like Russia.

Palma de Mallorca

Q. Mr. President, you will have a brief stay in Palma de Mallorca, together with——

The President. Yes. I'm very excited.

Q. ——the royal family of Spain. What do you expect to discover in the Mediterranean Sea?

The President. Beauty, mystery. [*Laughter*] Rest. [*Laughter*] I'm very much looking forward to it. The King and the Queen have been very kind and gracious to Hillary and to me and to Chelsea for as long as we've been here, and they were kind enough to come down and be there when we're there. And we're looking forward to it. I've never been there, and I'm very excited.

Q. Mr. President, thank you very much. Enjoy Spain.

The President. Thank you.

NOTE: The interview began at 11:23 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to President Jacques Chirac of France; Chancellor Helmut Kohl of Germany; President Jose Maria Aznar of Spain; and Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom. A portion of this interview could not be vertified because the tape was incomplete.

Remarks at a Madrid Summit Sendoff by American Veterans

July 3, 1997

Thank you very much. I know a good doctor. United States Navy. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Vice President, Commander Frank, Colonel Harmon, Secretary Albright, Secretary Cohen, Ambassador Richardson, Mr. Berger, General Shalikashvili and General Ralston and members of the Joint Chiefs; to the distinguished veterans and community leaders here, especially to Judge Waters. You know, when he told that horse story, I nearly fell out of my chair. [*Laughter*] But you didn't know what I was thinking. [*Laughter*] I was thinking, there have been several days here in the last 4½ years when I would be grateful just to have been called what that doctor called him. [*Laughter*]

Before I begin, I would like to state what I hope is obvious now, but I've never said it formally, and that is that I intend to nominate Deputy Secretary Goldberg to be the next Secretary of Veterans Affairs. We have been friends for many years. He did a superb job as the State director of veterans affairs in our home State. He was a good partner and support to Jesse Brown, who fulfilled his promise to me to be a Secretary for as well as a Secretary of Veterans Affairs. And I believe that Hershel will serve in that great tradition, and I thank him for agreeing to do so.

Tomorrow, as the Vice President said, we will commemorate Independence Day and the Declaration of Independence, which I recommend everyone read every Independence Day. The words still ring out of our abiding belief in the inalienable right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

And we have a lot to celebrate on this July 4th. We are at peace. We are more prosperous than we have been in a generation, our liberty more secure than ever. And for the first time throughout the world—for the first time in our time, there are more people living under governments of their own choosing than are living under dictatorships. That is an astonishing thing, that the dream of our Founding Fathers, articulated so powerfully