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Africa to South Korea to South America, societies are redefining themselves, removing barriers to the imagination, struggling to find a new balance in a new world, cultivating the limitless resources of their people.

This is a universal phenomenon, neither American nor European but instead, universal. Nonetheless, it owes a very great deal in our time to the inspiration provided by a single man, Václav Havel, who for years spoke when it mattered and often at enormous personal cost.

Now we are poised to build a world of the new century. More people than ever are free to pursue their own destiny. And we are grateful for the unprecedented achievement of this century we are about to leave. We are also aware, however, that far too much of the 20th century saw division and dislocation and destruction, and nowhere more so than in the heart of Europe.

In the last decade, Europeans have gone far toward repairing the damage wrought by a century of war—rebuilding old relationships, unifying the hopes and dreams of people who were arbitrarily separated for far too long. No President, no person, has done better work toward this end than President Havel.

Since assuming office, Mr. President, you have provided a voice of dazzling eloquence to the debate over Europe's future and the future of the world, a voice of both humility and great power. You have addressed issues large and small, regional and global, material and spiritual, but always in the most human way. You have articulated a politics of hope, reminding us that all nations form a community on our small planet. You have spoken forcefully about our collective obligation to the future. And for our children's sake, we must do all we can to back up your vision with real deeds.

Since 1989 the Czech people have taken enormous strides to build that better world. You have made concrete contributions to the search for peace in Bosnia and Kosovo. In Bosnia, your soldiers stand shoulder-to-shoulder with ours. You have strengthened cooperation with your neighbors. You have taken steps to heal past wounds with Germany and Russia. You are providing humanitarian assistance to Chernobyl victims in Ukraine, and sharing with other states the lessons you have learned in building a vibrant free-market democracy. You have stood with the community of nations against military aggression in the Gulf, sent peacekeepers to Africa and the former Soviet Union, and promoted efforts to control the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Soon you will be members of the most successful military alliance in history, NATO. Of course, many challenges remain—economic and political reform is a bumpy road; it does not happen overnight, and there are many new challenges to this new century we are about to enter. But together, we are building a stronger foundation for peace and prosperity.

I want to especially commend you now for looking toward the new millennium, for taking some time in each of these years leading up to the millennium to think about the future and plan for it in your Forum 2000 program, which you have invited the First Lady to participate in in the next couple of weeks.

Mr. President, at the end of your historic speech to Congress in 1990, you remembered that the people who founded America were bold in word and deed. Today there is not a leader on Earth whose words and deeds have meant more to the cause of freedom than your own. They will live forever in the hearts and minds of people who care about human dignity and the power of the imagination to shape the soul and the future.

On behalf of all Americans, I am deeply honored to welcome you back to the White House. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:52 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Havel's wife, Dagmar Havlova.

The President's News Conference With President Havel

September 16, 1998

President Clinton. Thank you very much. Please be seated.

Ladies and gentlemen, last June in Washington, I had the opportunity to speak of a remarkable trio of leaders, each a champion of freedom, each imprisoned by authoritarian

rulers, each now, after decades of struggle, the President of his nation. Last June, I was hosting President Kim Dae-jung of Korea. Next week, President Nelson Mandela of South Africa will be here. And of course, today, I am very proud to stand with President Václav Havel of the Czech Republic.

In the Prague spring of 1968, a celebrated young playwright boldly called for an end to one-party rule before Soviet tanks crushed the people's hopes. Václav Havel's plays were banned. He lost his job, but he carried on.

In 1977, he spearheaded the Charter 77 human rights movement, and for his activism then he faced more than a decade of harassment, interrogation, and incarceration. Still he carried on. And in 1989, he was at the forefront of the Velvet Revolution that, at last, brought freedom to the Czech and to the Slovak peoples. There was exhilaration all around the world when he spoke as President on the first day of January 1990 and declared, ''People, your Government has returned to you.''

I was proud to visit President Havel in Prague in 1994, to see the great energy, creativity, joy of the Czech people unleashed. When we celebrate freedom today, we know that many challenges still lie ahead. President Havel recently put it very well. ''Something is being born,'' he said. ''One age is succeeding another. We live in a world where everything is possible and almost nothing is certain.''

Today our meetings focused on seizing those possibilities and minimizing those uncertainties. I'm delighted that Foreign Minister Kavan and Defense Minister Vetchy, representatives of the new government headed by Prime Minister Zeman, as well as Mr. Tosovsky, the governor of the Czech National Bank, were able to participate in our discussions.

We talked about the true partnership for security our nations have forged, our desire to build a world with greater tolerance, greater respect for human rights, to build a united, democratic, peaceful Europe. We talked about next year's NATO Summit here and the Czech Republic's preparations for integration into the NATO alliance. I thanked President Havel for beginning to talk with me a long time ago, even before I became President, about the importance of the expansion of NATO and the Czech Republic's role in it.

Already, Czech troops are working side by side with us in Bosnia, where we've just seen further evidence that the Bosnian people are on the path to lasting peace: a free election with a strong turnout. Czech soldiers served as peacekeepers and military observers in Macedonia, in Georgia, in Angola, in Mozambique and Liberia.

Today we spoke about the urgent need to bring stability to Kosovo to prevent suffering there and the current tensions in Albania. We discussed ways to strengthen our cooperation against the terrible scourge of terrorism, and I had the chance to thank the President for the support we got from the Czech Republic for our actions against terrorism in the wake of the bombings of the American Embassies in Africa.

We talked about the situation in Russia, the economic crisis there, the new government. I underscored America's continuing support for Czech reforms, greater openness in economic institutions, and greater investment in their increasingly competitive economy. And I expressed our strong support for the Czech Republic's accession to the European Union and for the fair treatment of American businesses that would be affected.

We are making progress as friends and partners. That is possible only because of the courage President Havel and the Czech people have shown and continue to show today. We will continue to do the hard work together so that our children can reap the full benefits of it in the new century.

Thank you for coming, Mr. President. The floor is yours.

President Havel. Mr. President, I thank you for the floor and for these nice words. Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for coming. With your permission, I'll try to speak in your nice language.

The situation of the contemporary world is very complicated. We feel it especially in Europe, especially in Central Europe, especially in Czech Republic. And I think that in this situation it's extremely important the responsibility of the United States, as the biggest, most powerful country all around the world, and I'm extremely grateful or thankful

to Mr. President and his leadership because it was in his time when we received the chance to build a new Europe and to build a new Europe—it means to build the new world, peaceful world, because in modern time, as you know, Europe was the main exporter of world wars, and now it has a completely different chance. And it was during his leadership when these chances were open, with support of your big country.

I would like to thank for all this to your President and to thank to all your Nation.

Thank you.

Kosovo/President's Moral Authority

Q. Mr. President, what can the U.S. and NATO do to stop the killing in Kosovo? And what do you say to people who have said that you have lost all the moral authority to lead this Nation or to conduct foreign affairs?

President Clinton. Let me answer the second question first, and then I will talk about Kosovo, because it's very important.

I have never stopped leading this country in foreign affairs in this entire year, and I never will. The issues are too important and they affect the way Americans live at home.

Just in the last several days, of course, we have taken action against those who killed our people and killed the Kenyans and Tanzanians. We have—I and my administration have been working for peace in Northern Ireland, for stability in Russia. I have been personally involved in the peace process in the Middle East again, as it reaches another critical phase. I gave a speech Monday, which I think is about the most important subject now facing the world community, how to limit this financial crisis, keep it from spreading, how to develop long-term institutions that will help to promote growth and opportunity for ordinary people around the world in a way that permits America's economic recovery to go on.

After that, my objectives were embraced by the leaders, the financial leaders of the largest industrial countries in the world. Yesterday, as it happens, I got calls from the Presidents of Mexico, Brazil, and the Prime Minister of Canada, all thanking me for what I said on Monday and saying they wanted to be a part of it.

So I feel very good about where I am—in relations—to the rest of the world. I had a good talk with President Chirac of France, who called me a couple of days ago to talk about some of our common concerns and the U.N. inspection system in Iraq and other things. So I feel good about that.

Now, on Kosovo, the American people should know that we have looming there, right next door to Bosnia, a significant humanitarian problem. There are many, many tens of thousands of people who have been dislocated from their homes. But somewhere between 50,000 and 100,000—it's hard for us to know for sure—are above—not, I want to say, above the tree line—at least at very high levels in the mountains, which means it will get colder there much more quickly than in the rest of the country. Winter is coming on; you could have a major humanitarian disaster.

What are we doing about it? We're doing three things. First of all, we're doing everything we can to avert the humanitarian disaster. Secondly, we're pursuing negotiated settlement options through Ambassador Chris Hill. Thirdly, we're doing NATO planning and consulting with our allies because I still believe the big problem here is Mr. Milosevic is determined to get a military solution if he can, instead of pursuing a diplomatic solution which would give the Kosovars the autonomy they're supposed to have under the Serbian system that they once had.

Now, I discussed this with President Havel; he may want to comment on it since it's in his neighborhood. But while the political and legal situation is not identical to what we had in Bosnia, the humanitarian issue is similar. And we don't want a repeat of Bosnia. We don't want another round of instability there. And I think it is imperative that we move forthrightly, with our allies, as firmly as possible, to avert the humanitarian tragedy, and then to get a political solution.

Q. So you think you do have the moral authority to lead this Nation?

President Clinton. Well, you might—in my view, that is something that you have to demonstrate every day. My opinion is not as important as the opinion of others. What is important is that I do my job.

I said last Friday, and I'd like to say again: I am seized on two things; I'm trying to do the still quite painful work that I need to do with my family in our own life; and I'm determined to lead this country and to focus on the issues that are before us. It is not an option. There is no option. We have got to deal with these things. And I'm very, very heartened by what world leaders have said to me in the last 2 weeks about what they want us to do. And there was an enormous positive reaction here in America and around the world to the steps that I outlined on Monday. It was very, very heartening to me.

Czech-U.S. Shared Values

Q. I'm sorry, I will ask the question in Czech because I need a Czech answer.

[*The question was asked in Czech, and no translation was provided.*]

President Havel. I have never said that we believe in different values. We believe in the same values like the United States. And the United States and especially the American Nation is fantastic, big body with many very different faces. I love most of these faces. There are some which I don't understand. I don't like to speak about things which I don't understand. [*Laughter*]

President's View of Events

Q. Mr. President, from your understanding of events, is Monica Lewinsky's account of your relationship accurate and truthful? And do you still maintain that you did not lie under oath in your testimony?

President Clinton. Mr. Hunt [Terrence Hunt, Associated Press], I have said for a month now that I did something that was wrong. On last Friday at the prayer breakfast, I laid out as carefully and as brutally honestly as I could what I believe the essential truth to be. I also said then, and I will say again, that I think that the right thing for our country and the right thing for all people concerned is not to get mired in all the details here but to focus—for me to focus on what I did, to acknowledge it, to atone for it, and then to work on my family, where I still have a lot of work to do, difficult work, and to lead this country, to deal with the agenda before us, these huge issues that I was just talking about internationally, plus, with only 2 weeks left to go in this budget year, a very, very large range of items before the American people here at home—doing our part to deal with this financial crisis, with funding the International Monetary Fund, saving the Social Security system before we spend the surplus, doing the important work that we can do to help educate our children, dealing with the Patients' Bill of Rights for these people, 160 million of them, in HMO's.

These are the things, to me, that I should be talking about as President, without in any way ever trying to obscure my own personal acknowledgement and chagrin about what I did wrong and my determination to put it right.

Mark McGwire and Sammy Sosa

Q. Mr. President Havel, you said today that President Clinton is your great friend. I wonder if the discovered misdeeds of President Clinton have anyhow influenced your approach to him, your relations with him.

President Havel. I didn't recognize any change. I was speaking some minutes ago about these faces of America which I don't understand. There are some faces which we understand very well. In this connection, permit me to congratulate Mr. Mark McGwire and to wish the success to Mr. Sammy Sosa. [*Laughter*]

Press Secretary Mike McCurry. Larry McQuillan from Reuters.

Videotaped Testimony/Russia

Q. Mr. President, as the Lewinsky matter continues to unfold, can you foresee any circumstance where you might consider resignation, either because of the personal toll on you or the toll on the country? And do you think it's fair if the House should release these videotapes?

And sir, if I could ask President Havel a question. With the current developments going on in Russia, are you concerned that there's a return to some degree of some former Soviet officials who are running the country? And do you have a fear that perhaps an old threat may return?

President Havel. I don't think that contemporary or current development in Russia is such a danger like old Soviet Union. It is a country in a very complicated situation,

and it will be a country in complicated situation I think 50 or 100 years. But we understand this complication because we have the same. But for us, it is question of years; for them, it is question of decades. I don't see anything very dangerous in it. It's a natural process, and I think it is much more better to have ill Russia than healthy Soviet Union. [*Laughter*]

President Clinton. Let me, first of all, say that the personal toll on me is of no concern except insofar as it affects my personal life. I think the—and I feel the pain better now because I'm working on what I should be working on. I believe the right thing for the country—and what I believe the people of the country want is, now that they know what happened, they want to put it behind them, and they want to go on. And they want me to go on and do my job, and that's what I intend to do. That is the right thing to do.

In terms of the question you asked about the House, they have to decide that. That's not for me to decide. They have to do their job, and I have to do mine. There are some things, though, we need to do together. And again I would say, it's been quite a long time during this session, and there's still only one appropriation bill passed and a lot of other things still out there. So I hope we can work together to do some things for the American people. I think that the time has come to think about the American people and their interests and their future. And that's what I'm going to focus on, and that's what I would hope the Congress would focus on.

Q. When you gave the deposition, sir, were you fully aware that it might be released, the videotape?

President Clinton. Mr. McQuillan, I'm trying to remember. I think that—I knew that the rules were against it, but I thought it would happen. I think that's where I was on that. But it's not of so much concern to me. I mean, you know that I acknowledged an improper relationship and that I declined to discuss the details, and that's what happened. So I'll leave it for others to judge and evaluate. That's not for me to say.

I want to work on my family and lead this country, and others will have to make all those judgments. They're not within my range of authority anyway, so it's pointless for me to comment on it.

Czech-U.S. Relations

Q. Mr. President, you have mentioned in your speech that you appreciate the personal contribution of President Clinton to the NATO enlargement, and you see him also as a personal friend. I'd like to know, how do you think that an eventual resignation or impeachment of President Clinton would influence the American foreign policy and the Czech-American relations?

President Havel. Excuse me, I am a little bit tired. I prefer to speak in my language.

I believe that this is a matter for the United States and for the American people, who will be their President. When I have made a friendship with someone, I remain that person's friend, no matter which office he or she holds or doesn't hold.

Mr.McCurry. Thank you, ladies and gentlemen.

President Clinton. Do you want to take one more? April [April Ryan, American Urban Radio Networks], go ahead.

Race Initiative

Q. Mr. President, your initiative on race finishes this month, and your Press Secretary yesterday agreed that the race initiative isn't flying because of your current problems and it was bogged down in the muck and mire. Do you regret that your personal problems affected your potential legacy on race and that it may just, at best, be a band-aid approach to racism in America?

President Clinton. First of all——

Mr. McCurry. That's not exactly what I said.

President Clinton. I don't know if he said that, but if he did, I strongly disagree with him. I don't think it's affected it at all. As a matter of fact, I think in the response you've seen from some sectors of the American community have reinforced and acknowledged the centrality of this issue to the work of the last 6 years, not just the work of the last year.

And let me also say that what is coming to an end here is this phase of it. And there will be a report—the board will give me a set of recommendations. Then we expect to produce a document. But the main thing is

we have to keep making progress for the American people. I would remind you that we have before the Congress right now—just two things that I'd like to emphasize: number one, legislation, fully funded, within the balanced budget bill, to get rid of the backlog in the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and otherwise enforce the anti-discrimination laws of the country. I think that is very important; number two, we have an empowerment agenda put together by the Vice President and Secretary Cuomo, and an education component put together by Secretary Riley to create affirmative economic and educational opportunities in distressed inner-city and isolated rural areas that are predominantly minority.

Both those are not particularly costly. Both those could be passed by this Congress in the next 2 weeks. Both those would actually do something for the American people that live beyond the borders of the Federal establishment here, and I very much hope they will pass.

But I expect this to be a central part of the work I do in the next 2 years. I expect this to be a central part of the work I do for the rest of my life. I think in the 21st century—when you go back to World War II, and you think about the part of the Nazi experience that was directed against the Jews, and you look all the way through the ensuing years, all the way to the end of this century, down to what we've seen in Rwanda, the Middle East, Northern Ireland, Bosnia, Kosovo, you name it, it will be incumbent upon the United States to be a force for tolerance and racial reconciliation for the foreseeable future.

So this is just simply a phase of this work that is coming to an end, and I think you should see it as a springboard, both in the recommendations the advisory commission will make and in the document that I will put out after that.

Q. So could there be a council on race?

President Clinton. I understand they may recommend that, and if they do, of course, I will take it very seriously.

President Havel. One of my whole life personal ideals is ideal of a civic society. I must tell you that America—and America especially in time of President Clinton, because this is the America I know the best—is for my work, for my support of civic society, a big inspiration.

Thank you.

President Clinton. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President's 164th news conference began at 3:13 p.m. in the Dean Acheson Auditorium at the State Department. During the later portion of the news conference, President Havel spoke in Czech, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter. In his remarks, President Clinton referred to Minister of Foreign Affairs Jan Kavan, Minister of Defense Vladimir Vetchy, and Prime Minister Milos Zeman of the Czech Republic; Josef Tosovsky, Chairman, Czech National Bank; President Ernesto Zedillo of Mexico; President Fernando Henrique Cardoso of Brazil; Prime Minister Jean Chretien of Canada; President Jacques Chirac of France; Christopher R. Hill, U.S. Ambassador to the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; and President Slobodan Milosevic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). President Havel referred to St. Louis Cardinals first baseman Mark McGwire and Chicago Cubs outfielder Sammy Sosa, who broke Major League Baseball's single-season home run record.

Proclamation 7123—Citizenship Day and Constitution Week, 1998

September 16, 1998

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Two hundred eleven years ago, on September 17, 1787, our Nation's Founders signed the Constitution that established our system of government. This extraordinary document, the product of passionate debate and grudging compromise, was crafted by a handful of individuals in the late 18th century; yet it has safely charted America's course through more than two centuries of enormous change and growth and has served as the model for democratic governments around the globe.

The United States Constitution has endured in large part because of its remarkable fairness and flexibility. It created an inspired balance of powers and responsibilities among the executive, legislative, and judicial