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your colleagues file every day, often at great personal risk for those in the region.

As our prayers are with our military personnel and our allies tonight, they're with the Kosovars—indeed, with all innocent people who are caught up in this grievous affair. I again ask Mr. Milosevic to let the Kosovars come home, with the Serb forces out, and an international force in to protect all the people, including the Serb minority who live in Kosovo.

And I ask the American people to remember what it is we are fighting for: a world in which the dignity of humanity counts for more than the differences of humanity. For human differences, when celebrated but contained, can make life a lot more interesting, but when unleashed as weapons of war, soon make it unbearable.

The 20th century has seen altogether too much of this. If we and our allies, indeed, if you and I as citizens, and each in our official capacities, all do our job, the world of our children will be better. It will be not only more prosperous but more peaceful; not only more diverse but more unified; not only more human but more humane. Let that be our prayer tonight and our determination.

Thank you very much, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 10:20 p.m. in the International Ballroom at the Washington Hilton. In his remarks, he referred to Stewart Powell of Hearst Newspapers, outgoing president, Susan Page, USA Today, incoming president, White House Correspondents' Association; Brian Williams, NBC News, dinner emcee; Scott Pelley, CBS News; entertainer Aretha Franklin; Helen Thomas, United Press International; President Nelson Mandela of South Africa; movie director and producer Steven Spielberg; Staff Sgt. Andrew A. Ramirez, USA, Staff Sgt. Christopher J. Stone, USA, and Specialist Steven M. Gonzales, USA, American infantrymen in custody in Serbia; civil rights leader Jesse Jackson; and President Slobodan Milosevic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro).

Statement on the Release of American Infantrymen Held Prisoner by Serbian Authorities

May 2, 1999

I am pleased that our three American servicemen who have been held as prisoners by Serbian authorities have today been released and that they are now safely out of Serbia. I am grateful to Reverend Jackson and his delegation for helping to secure their freedom. All of America is anticipating their safe return.

As we welcome our soldiers home, our thoughts also turn to the over one million Kosovars who are unable to go home because of the policies of the regime in Belgrade. Today we reaffirm our resolve to persevere until they, too, can return with security and self-government.

NOTE: In this statement, the President referred to civil rights leader Jesse Jackson, whose personal appeal won the release of Staff Sgt. Andrew A. Ramirez, USA, Staff Sgt. Christopher J. Stone, USA, and Specialist Steven M. Gonzales, USA.

Remarks at a Welcoming Ceremony for Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi of Japan

May 3, 1999

Prime Minister Obuchi, Mrs. Obuchi, members of the Japanese delegation, my fellow Americans. Mr. Prime Minister, we welcome you to America and to the White House, and to greet you in the spring when the cherry blossoms every year remind us of the generosity and friendship of the Japanese people.

The cherry blossoms—or in Japanese, *sakura*—have made it through changing times, environmental challenges, and even most recently, the attention of our local population of beavers. [*Laughter*] They have endured, as our friendship has endured and will continue to endure forever.

For a half-century, our friendship has been a bedrock of security in Asia. It remains so. But now it is proving itself in the face of new challenges, as well—from protecting the environment to fighting AIDS, to stopping the spread of deadly weapons. We are allies today, because we share common values and a common vision of the future, rooted in democracy, human rights, and political pluralism.

Mr. Prime Minister, you have been in office less than a year, but already you have taken important steps in meeting the challenges that face you and reaching the goals that unite us. Our nations are proud to reaffirm our partnership for the new century. We value our security relationship, what it does to build peace in northeast Asia, our common efforts in Indonesia, and Japan's consistent contributions to relief efforts so far from your shores, from Central America to the Middle East and, now, to Kosovo.

The economic difficulties of recent years have been a challenge to many people in Japan and throughout Asia. But with the right choices, Japan—and Asia—will emerge stronger, more open, more democratic, better adapted to meet the 21st century.

In just a few years, we will mark the 150th anniversary of our relationship. The Japanese and the American people have come a great distance in that time together. We work together; our children study together; our Armed Forces have served together. We even share a national pastime. In fact, just last Saturday, at a time when American Major League Baseball teams all across the country are competing for Japanese pitching talent, a new pitcher from across the Pacific threw out the first ball at Wrigley Field. Mr. Prime Minister, you did a fine job. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Prime Minister, the Japanese-American friendship is testament to the basic truth that with trust and understanding and genuine partnership, we can meet the challenges of the new century and give our children a more peaceful and prosperous future.

Mr. Prime Minister, Mrs. Obuchi, you honor us with your visit and, again, we welcome you to the United States.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:55 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House, where Prime Minister Obuchi was accorded a formal welcome with full military honors. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Obuchi's wife, Chizuko. The transcript made available by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the Prime Minister.

The President's News Conference With Prime Minister Obuchi

May 3, 1999

President Clinton. Good afternoon. Please be seated. It is a great honor to welcome my friend and a friend of the American people, Prime Minister Obuchi, to Washington. I want to say a few words about our meeting today, but first let me say how very pleased I am that our three servicemen are coming home from Serbia, and to express my thanks to Reverend Jackson and his entire delegation for their hard work in securing their freedom.

While we are very thankful for their release, let me be clear why the military operations must continue. Three Americans are home. Their families, their friends, and the American people whom they have served faithfully must be grateful. But nearly 1½ million Kosovars are not home. In fact, 2 days ago, as our prayers for our soldiers were being answered, Serbian soldiers were entering the Kosovar town of Prizren, going door to door, ordering everyone to leave or be killed. In a few hours, all 10,000 who lived there were forced to flee. When will these people see their homes again, with the safety and rights Mr. Milosevic has often pledged, but never delivered?

Remember, what is going on in Kosovo is part of a decade-long policy of ethnic and religious subjugation and cleansing, involving expulsion, destruction of records and symbols of history and culture, and, ultimately, rape and murder.

Our conditions for ending the bombing are not complicated. The Kosovars must be able to go home with security and self-government. Serbian security forces must leave Kosovo. An international security force must deploy with the power not just to monitor