

Europe we would still be fighting over religious and ethnic bigotry, being used to dehumanize people to the point of justifying killing them, burning them, looting their homes, running them out, burning their villages, eradicating every last vestige of historical, cultural records, burning their houses of worship. And that's not the world I want your children to live in.

And if your children are wearing the uniform of our Armed Services, I don't want them to have to fight a war because we didn't nip in the bud a cancer that can never sweep across Europe again.

So this is profoundly important. And the humanitarian aid you're taking to those desperate people is profoundly important. They are good people. They have their dignity. You are enabling them to keep what they can when most of them are running out of their country with nothing but the clothes on their back.

I just want you to know that back home people do know what you're going through; they do know what a sacrifice it is. We will do everything we can to make it better. In the Congress this year, I do believe there was overwhelming bipartisan support to respond to the problems you face and the challenges you face and the private market you face.

But nothing can ever compensate or take the place of the profound sense of satisfaction you must get when you go to bed at night knowing that you did something that was good and decent, not because your country wanted to dominate another people or control land but because we want our children and their children to live in a decent world.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:10 p.m. in Hangar 3. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. John P. Jumper, USAF, Commander, U.S. Air Forces in Europe and Allied Air Forces Central Europe; Brig. Gen. Michael W. Wooley, USAF, Commander, 86th Airlift Wing and Kaiserslautern Military Community. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Remarks Following Discussions With Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder of Germany and an Exchange With Reporters in Bonn, Germany

May 6, 1999

Situation in Kosovo

Chancellor Schroeder. Ladies and gentlemen, we had a very intensive discussion together, the main emphasis, of course, having been on the crisis on Kosovo. We basically agreed regarding all of the questions that were discussed, and when I say "we agreed," then I'm talking about the two of us but also about Germany and the United States of America.

There is no reason whatsoever to go in and change our jointly adopted strategy. We very much welcome the initiative taken by the foreign ministers today, the G-8 conference. We have noticed from looking at the results that some strong movement has happened there. We have also conjointly decided that it is very necessary to support the frontline states of the region and particular Macedonia and Albania, the two countries that at present are shouldering the vast burden regarding the refugee problem.

We very much have to go in and make sure that the earmarked 250 million euro as support have to be channeled into those frontline states and really get there. You might know that Germany has earmarked 60 million German marks as support there. We have to make sure that those supports and that money speedily flows into the region.

I personally had the opportunity of talking to the Prime Minister of Macedonia today, and we also agreed that we were trying to spur matters in this very way.

The President of the United States of America has emphasized the fact that the United States will take on a large number of refugees. You know that we here in Germany have already taken on quite a few, and we hope that in taking these actions both America and Germany will set an example also for other European countries to follow up and to take on refugees themselves. We hope that as a consequence that they will follow suit.

Germany itself is continuing to think about whether they could potentially take on even more, and if you hear the most recent news today, yet again, another 10,000 refugees have flooded into Macedonia yet again, and in addition. And if you then bear in mind that soon the border might be closed off, sealed off, in fact, altogether, then really urgent action and consideration is needed here.

We have also discussed the possibilities of having some influence on the discussions taking place at the Club of Paris, where thoughts are ventilated about a potential suspension or a relief of debt for the frontline states involved, and we have decided that we conjointly support a debt relief or at least a suspension of debts for Macedonia and Albania.

And I think all of that—and I think that goes without saying—should be independent of the necessity of continuing our actions, continuing the NATO actions and the measures taken so far. But one point that was strongly emphasized was the necessity of giving a more comprehensive economic and political perspective for the Balkans.

President Clinton. If I could just say very briefly—Chancellor Schroeder has faithfully summarized the items we discussed and the conclusions that we drew, and I would just like to say on behalf of the United States how much I appreciate the leadership of the German Chancellor and the German people in dealing with the refugee crisis, in trying to relieve the pressure on Macedonia and provide for the economic needs of both Macedonia and Albania, and in looking to the long-term development of the Balkans and southeastern Europe, which is critical if you're going to avoid future incidents of this kind.

And on all those scores, both as the German Chancellor and as the present leader of the EU, I think he has done an outstanding job, and I am personally very grateful for it.

Cooperation of Russia and China

Q. Mr. President, how important is it in your view to get the U.N. behind the principles on Kosovo, and what do you intend in order to get not only Russia but also China into the part?

President Clinton. Well, I believe it would be very, very helpful if the United Na-

tions would endorse a peace process if it is a peace process that will work. Meaning that the refugees would have to be able to come back with security and autonomy, and the Serb forces would have to be withdrawn, and there must be a multinational security force there that NATO is a core part of.

Now, the U.N. did so in Bosnia. We were there as—under the umbrella of the U.N. NATO was there; Russia was there; Ukraine was there. It worked. And it will work again and, obviously, would be much better.

With regard to the Chinese, of course, the Chancellor is going to China in a couple of days, and he will have fresh news when he comes back. But I believe if the Russians support this, the Chinese will support this. And I think they believe that this is something the U.N. should do.

Q. Mr. President, what's the significance of the agreement or statement that Russia—[inaudible]—initially today?

President Clinton. I think the Chancellor might want to comment on that as well. The significance is that as far as I know, this is the first time that the Russians have publicly said they would support an international security as well as a civilian force in Kosovo. This is a significant step forward, and I was personally very pleased by it.

Balkan Peace Process

Q. Mr. President, what is your personal impression? Do you think there is a message you can convey to the German people that there is a longer period of blood, sweat, and tears that you have to look forward to or to look at in the near future, or do you think that there is a real peace process underway?

President Clinton. I think there is a real peace process underway, but it has no chance of reaching a satisfactory conclusion unless we maintain Allied unity and firmness. I don't think the process is long, but I don't think we can afford to be discouraged or be impatient. We need to stay with the strategy we have and continue to aggressively support our air campaign and to aggressively support any diplomatic initiative that will secure the conditions necessary for a lasting peace in Kosovo.

Group of Eight Statement on Kosovo

Q. Mr. President, and Chancellor, do you think that the agreement, the statement that was issued today by the G-8 and Russia, will do anything to hasten the end to the conflict?

Chancellor Schroeder. I can only repeat and emphasize what the President of the United States of America has just said. I consider it as truly substantial progress which has been made there. There has been open talk about the presence and the necessity for the presence of international troops there, and I think things will continue along that way.

I would also very much like to emphasize the fact that I agree that there is no reason whatsoever to now think about a change in the NATO strategy now that the strategy does seem to work, and I'm talking about military as well as political initiatives undertaken therein.

President Clinton. Let me just say very briefly, I agree with what the Chancellor has said. I do believe it's an advance because you have to see the G-8 resolution here, the statement, in the context of Mr. Chernomyrdin's efforts. I mean, here is a man that served as Premier of Russia twice; very highly regarded, I think, by all of us who have ever dealt with him on all sides of this issue. And this statement, plus his ongoing effort, I think you have to read this as a move forward and increasing the likelihood that there will ultimately be a resolution of this that will actually work.

Thank you.

NOTE: Chancellor Schroeder spoke at 5:45 p.m. in the Office of the Chancellor at the Chancellery. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Ljubco Georgievski of Macedonia. In President Clinton's remarks, he referred to Special Envoy and former Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin of Russia. The President also referred to the European Union (EU). A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Luncheon in Houston, Texas

May 7, 1999

Thank you very much, Ken. I want to thank you for so many things, but particularly today for the work you have done on this. And I thank Joe Andrew for being willing to leave Indiana, a State no one thought could become a Democratic State, that just elected a new Democratic Governor and elected Senator Evan Bayh overwhelmingly, thanks in no small measure to his leadership there. And I look forward to many years of his leadership for the DNC.

I'd like to thank Molly Beth Malcolm for being here and Steve Zimmerman for providing us this modest little room to have lunch in. [Laughter] Someone told me that Napoleon was once in this room, but not in Texas—[laughter]—and Frederick the Great, and all kinds of other people. I don't know if any of them were Democrats, but we are. We may have tripled the number of Democrats who have ever been in this room in the last 300 years, just today at lunch. [Laughter] But I am delighted to be here, and I thank all of you for coming.

I want to talk a little today—I know several of you said that I looked tired, and I don't know whether it's just because I'm not young anymore or because I just got back from 2 days meeting with our troops and with refugees from Kosovo in Germany. But this is a rather unusual moment for our country, I think, because things are in some ways the best of times. We just saw today, again last month unemployment rate was 4.3 percent. We had another 234,000 jobs; we're up to 18,400,000 now in the life of this administration. The welfare rolls have been cut nearly in half. We've got a 30-year low in the crime rate. The teen pregnancy rate is going down. Basically, the social indicators are good. Many of the indicators relating to drug use are moving in the right direction.

And I want to say a special word of thanks, by the way—I think he—no, he didn't