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thorny, complex problem—you and I, we talked about it around the table tonight. All I can—I can't answer every question, maybe, but I can tell you one thing: I'd a lot rather be answering the questions I'm answering tonight and sitting here having dinner with you, looking at those people being run out of their country and being killed and all that stuff, than with America and Europe sitting on its hands and not doing anything to help them. I prefer to answer the questions I'm answering tonight than the questions we would be answering had we done nothing.

And I'll just close with this little story I've been telling the last few days. Last week, when I got back from Europe, and then I got back from Oklahoma, seeing the folks after the hurricane—I mean, the tornado. We had a fascinating meeting at the White House with 19 tribal leaders from the northern high plains. I've spent a lot of time with the Native Americans since I've been in office, trying to work through a lot of their challenges.

And Senator Daschle, our leader, Democratic leader, and Senator Johnson and the two Democrats in North Dakota and Senator Baucus from Montana, they said, ''Well, would you please meet with these 19 tribal leaders from these three States, because they're the poorest Indian tribes in America; because it's very hard to get any investment up there, and it's cold and there's a lot of problems?'' If you don't have—not all Native American tribes have casinos and make fortunes; that's a big myth. So they said, ''You've got to meet with these people.''

So we had our—a lot of our Cabinet people came. Then the tribal leaders said, ''Now, can we sit in a circle; that is our custom.'' So we're in the Roosevelt Room at the White House, which has Teddy Roosevelt's Nobel Peace Prize in it, and a wonderful bust of Eleanor Roosevelt. It's a great little room. So we get rid of the table and we all sit around in a circle.

And they talked, you know, each in their turn about their—you know, it's the education issue or the jobs issue or the housing issue or the health care issue or whatever. And then at the end their spokesperson stands up—and his name was Tex Hall, which I thought was an interesting name for an Indian chief. But anyway, he said, ''Mr. President,'' he said, ''I have this proclamation here that our tribal leaders have signed, endorsing what you are trying to do in Kosovo.'' And he said, ''You see, we know something about ethnic cleansing.'' And he said, ''We'd like—and here we are in the White House today, and we can't turn away from this.''

And then this young man crossed the room in the circle, stood up, and he said—he had this beautiful Indian jewelry around his neck. And I mean, when this guy started talking, it just took all the oxygen out of the room. He was very dignified, and he said—''Mr. President,'' he said, ''My two uncles—I had two uncles. One was on the beach at Normandy. The other was the first Native American fighter pilot in our history.'' He said, ''My great-great-grandfather was slaughtered by the American 7th Cavalry at Wounded Knee.'' He said, ''We've come a long way from Wounded Knee, to my uncles, to me, standing here in the Roosevelt Room, talking to the President.'' He said, ''I just have one child. He means more to me than anything. But I would be honored to have him go to fight against the destruction of the people of Kosovo, so they don't have to go through all that we have been through.''

And I thought to myself, I just wish every American could see this. This is what I ran for President to lift up.

So remember that. If we can learn to get along together and work together and stand for our common humanity, then you and talented people like you all over this country, you'll figure out how to solve the rest of this stuff. It's the most important thing.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:45 p.m. in a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to dinner hosts Brian L. and Myra Greenspun, and their daughter, Amy; Nevada State Athletic Commission Chairman Elias Ghanem and his wife, Jody; Timothy McVeigh, who was convicted of bombing the Oklahoma City Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building; Tex Hall, chairman of the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nation (the Three Affiliated Tribes); and Gregg Bourland, chairman, Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe.

Statement on the Election of Ehud Barak as Prime Minister of Israel

May 17, 1999

On behalf of the American people, I want to extend my warmest congratulations to Ehud Barak upon his election as Israel's new Prime Minister. The people of Israel have given the new Prime Minister a strong mandate.

I have just spoken with Prime Minister Netanyahu to thank him for his dedicated service to Israel. I also spoke with Prime Minister-elect Barak to congratulate him and reaffirm our Nation's steadfast support for Israel and its people. I will continue to work energetically for a just, lasting, and comprehensive peace that strengthens Israel's security. I look forward to working closely with Ehud Barak and his new government as they strive to reach that goal with their Palestinian and Arab partners.

Proclamation 7196—World Trade Week, 1999

May 17, 1999

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

World Trade Week provides a valuable opportunity to recognize the enormous importance of exports to the United States economy and our way of life. In recent years, exports have contributed to almost one-third of our economic growth, helping to make today's economy the strongest in a generation. Unemployment is at a 30-year low, business investment is booming, and private sector growth is on the rise. Every day, an increasing number of U.S. companies and farmers realize how crucial exports are to their bottom lines. Every day, more and more American workers benefit from the fact that exporting firms pay higher salaries, experience fewer closings, and generate jobs at a faster rate than do firms that do not export. That is why we must continue to open markets and expand trade opportunities. At the same time, we must work to ensure that increased international trade benefits the world's people, promotes the dignity of work, and protects the environment and the rights of workers.

As important as world trade is to our economy today, we are only beginning to utilize the commercial potential of the newest international marketplace: the World Wide Web. Today the Internet connects nearly 150 million people around the world. Each day 52,000 additional Americans join that number, and users are making as many as 27 million purchases on the Web each day. Forecasts predict that, in just a few years, global electronic commerce—e-commerce—will grow to more than $300 billion annually. By 2005 Internet usage in countries around the world may account for more than $1 trillion worth of global commerce.

Recognizing the enormous power and promise that e-commerce holds for American businesses and consumers, my Administration is working to build a framework for global electronic commerce that will keep competition free and vigorous, protect consumers, guarantee privacy, and give users—not governments—the responsibility of supervising Internet trade. Working with the Congress, industry, and State and local officials, we have enacted legislation that places a 3-year moratorium on new and discriminatory taxes on electronic commerce. We also ratified an international treaty to protect intellectual property online. Last year, representatives of 132 countries followed our lead and signed a WTO Ministerial Declaration to refrain from imposing customs duties on electronic commerce.

Working with our trading partners, industry, and consumer advocates, we are extending traditional consumer protections to the arena of electronic commerce. Without imposing burdensome regulations that might stifle growth and innovation, we have offered incentives to online companies to give consumers the protections they need to conduct business on the Internet with security and confidence. Finally, we are working to speed the completion of the global information infrastructure, a series of networks that sends messages and images at the speed of light.

Appropriately, the theme of this year's World Trade Day observance is "Trade, a Worldwide Web of Opportunity." Linking