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But I think other nations could do more to help Jordan, and I know His Majesty has been working on that. And I would like to see more action on that, and I will do what I can to support that.

### *Apache Helicopters in Kosovo*

***Q.*** Why is the United States, sir, stalling the use of Apache helicopters in Kosovo?

***President Clinton.*** Well, first of all, I think that's a mischaracterization. This is a military campaign with clear objectives. And military leaders will make their decisions about when and under what circumstances to use the Apaches. As General Clark and others have made clear, when the weather is good, as it generally is at this time of year, most of what the Apaches could do can be done with the A–10s at less risk.

But those are judgments there being made; I don't really understand this implication that the United States is stalling. They're a military asset that's there; they're there to be used under appropriate circumstances when the military commanders decide that it should be done. It's not a political decision in any way, and it should not be.

### *Ground Troops*

***Q.*** With the air war now in its second month, are you giving more consideration to ground troops?

***President Clinton.*** Well, first of all, I think the air war has accomplished quite a bit, and there's a lot more that it can accomplish. I, and everyone else, has always said that we intend to see our objectives achieved and that we have not, and will not, take any option off the table.

But we are making progress, and I am convinced that we will achieve our objectives one way or the other. And I'm very hopeful, obviously, that the diplomatic efforts that are being made in the State Department and with the Russians will bear some fruit. But if they do not, we will continue to press ahead. But I do believe that they've done an excellent job and—now over 20,000 sorties—a great deal of what we have been trying to accomplish has been done. I don't think that we or our Allies should take any options off the table and that has been my position from the beginning, but we ought to stay with the strategy we have and work it through to the end.

### *Jordan-U.S. Relations/Middle East Peace Process*

***Q.*** Your Majesty, what do you hope your talks with the President will result in? And do you think the climate in Israel now is more conducive to making progress in the peace process?

***King Abdullah.*** Well, I think we have many issues to discuss with the President, and one of the main things is to thank the overwhelming support that the President has shown Jordan over the many years, but especially with the passing away of His Majesty. And again, the President went out of his way, and the American administration and government, to support us through this very difficult time.

Vis-a-vis, obviously, the elections in Israel were very, very optimistic. I just had the opportunity to speak to Prime Minister-elect Barak and wish him well. And we had the opportunity of seeing him in Jordan only several days ago, and we see eye-to-eye on many issues and we're very optimistic of taking the peace process forward.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:57 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister-elect Ehud Barak of Israel; and Gen. Wesley K. Clark, USA, Supreme Allied Commander Europe. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

## Statement on Withdrawal of the Nomination of Brian Atwood To Be Ambassador to Brazil

*May 18, 1999*

Today Brian Atwood asked me to withdraw his nomination to be the United States Ambassador to Brazil. I have accepted his request with reluctance and regret.

Few people in pubic life have better combined the qualities of professional competence and moral purpose. Brian Atwood has served with distinction as Administrator

of the Agency for International Development, making it more effective while tenaciously defending its mission and its independence. He has helped put the fight against poverty, civil strife, and disease in the developing world at the heart of our foreign policy, where it belongs, and where I am confident it will stay. When I asked him last month to lead America's effort to bring aid to the refugees escaping Kosovo, I knew we would be getting the very best. That is what America gets every time Brian Atwood goes to work.

In his statement today, he said that Washington owes us nothing but the ''opportunity to serve.'' I believe we owe Brian Atwood something more: our gratitude for continually making a difference in the lives of millions of people around the world.

I thank him for his many contributions and for his willingness to stay on as our AID Administrator, where he is doing an outstanding job as our Kosovo humanitarian coordinator. And I am confident he will have many opportunities to serve our Nation again.

## Statement on Senate Action on Legislation Requiring Child Safety Locks for Guns

*May 18, 1999*

I want to commend the Senate for reversing its position of last year and voting overwhelmingly today to require that child safety locks be provided with every gun sold. This was a courageous, commonsense vote that will help prevent tragic shootings and gun-related accidents in the future.

I also want to thank Speaker Hastert for agreeing that we should close the gun show loophole and raise the age of handgun ownership from 18 to 21. The Senate should likewise put progress over politics and give its strong backing to these reasonable measures to keep guns out of the hands of children and criminals. I urge Senator Lott to let the Senate keep working on the juvenile crime bill and give every Senator the chance to vote on these commonsense provisions.

## Statement on the Cease-Fire Agreement in Sierra Leone

*May 18, 1999*

I welcome the signing of a cease-fire agreement today in Lome, Togo, by President Kabbah of Sierra Leone and the leader of the Revolutionary United Front rebels, Foday Sankoh. I want to express my appreciation to my Special Envoy for the Promotion of Democracy in Africa, the Rev. Jesse Jackson, the Economic Community of West African States, and to the U.N. for helping to bring about this agreement which marks an important first step towards peace.

The conflict in Sierra Leone has killed tens of thousands of people—6,000 in the first month of this year alone. Half a million men, women, and children have become refugees, and one-fifth of Sierra Leone's population has been uprooted.

With the continued commitment and engagement of both parties, the cease-fire and the confidence-building measures outlined in the agreement today can pave the way for the negotiation of a durable peace agreement. I welcome the agreement as a step toward providing for guaranteed safe and unhindered access by humanitarian agencies to all people in need, and hope that the world might soon witness an end to the needless suffering of Sierra Leone's people.

I urge all parties to implement the agreement in good faith.

## Memorandum on Assistance for Kosovar Refugees

*May 18, 1999*

Presidential Determination No. 99–23

*Memorandum for the Secretary of State*

*Subject:* Determination Pursuant to Section 2(c)(1) of the Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1962, as Amended

Pursuant to section 2(c)(1) of the Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1962, as amended, 22 U.S.C. 2601(c)(1), I hereby determine that it is important to the national interest that up to $15 million be made available from the U.S. Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance Fund to meet urgent