

needs to be done, my budget includes a \$1.3 billion proposal to restore health care benefits to children and pregnant women, nutritional assistance to elderly individuals, and disability and health assistance to legal immigrants who become disabled after they arrive in the United States.

The proposal introduced today, which is similar to the one in my budget, would provide health care coverage for over 55,000 children, allowing States to use Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) for pregnant women and children who are legal immigrants, regardless of when they came to the U.S. I look forward to working with Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle to enact this legislation to help many children lead healthier and more productive lives.

The President's News Conference With President Jacques Chirac of France in Paris

June 17, 1999

President Chirac. We wanted to have the Sun shine for President Clinton's visit, and I would like to welcome him most warmly for the meeting this year, in the framework of frequent contact and very pleasant contacts—always very pleasant contacts—whether it's over the phone or whether it's a friendly meeting such as today's. And I'm very pleased that President and Mrs. Clinton were able to take some time to come through Paris on the occasion of the President's trip to Cologne for the G-7/G-8.

Yesterday evening we had a very pleasant dinner. I can't say that we worked a great deal yesterday evening, to tell you the truth. But however, we did spend time which personally I very much enjoyed. So a bit yesterday evening and much more this morning, we, first of all, drew the lessons from the crisis in Kosovo, and we noted that our victory in Kosovo will be a complete victory only once refugees have been able to come back to their homes and when all the communities living in Kosovo are able to live in safety, namely, thanks to the vigilance of the military security force which is at present deploying in the region.

We also discussed a number of other problems: the European defense system, in particular, concerning recent events which have occurred in the Balkans, but also following positions taken at the Washington summit; the relaunching of the peace process in the Middle East, such as we very much hope for following the forthcoming appointment of the Government of Israel, and the role which Europe and France might play and the help we might contribute to those efforts made to ensure an effective launching of the peace process.

We also considered various problems on the agenda of our Cologne meeting, summit; the very important initiatives that we're taking on the eve of the next century concerning the debt owed by poor countries; the reinforcement and adjustment of the international financial system; the social dimension, which you know I'm very deeply attached to, of globalization and the consequence to be drawn from this.

And I also suggested to President Clinton that the G-8 summit consider the possibility of taking initiative in an area which is of great concern, namely to Europeans at present, and which is that of food security, safety of foodstuffs. Our people are increasingly concerned, worried, and I would like to suggest that the setting up of a global higher scientific council for food safety. I shan't go into the details, but I have proposed this to the heads of state government of the G-8, and I shall have an opportunity to develop this point in Cologne. But my wish is to have this considered by heads of state and government of the G-8, and we see whether it might be possible to find a solution able to better guarantee the health of Europeans—of all of the inhabitants of the world, of course.

And before giving the floor to President Clinton, I should like to say in concluding how very much I welcome the very good quality of Franco-American relations. Everybody knows, and it's obvious, occasionally we have differences of views. But we know how to deal with them, and have done so for some time and to resolve these differences in a spirit of friendship between partners who respect each other. And it is probably a fact

which is based on a very long, very long, century-old friendship between our two peoples and our two countries.

Bill, you have the floor.

President Clinton. Thank you very much, Mr. President. I will be brief. President Chirac has given you a good summary of the things that we discussed today.

I would like to thank him again, publicly, for the wonderful dinner that he and Mrs. Chirac gave to Hillary and to me last night. We had a terrific time. We did not discuss a lot of business. We mostly discussed archaeology, and endangered species around the world. But we had a wonderful dinner.

Let me say a few words about Kosovo. As of today, 26,000 Serb soldiers have left Kosovo, 15,000 of our KFOR forces have arrived. The refugees are coming home, indeed, in many cases, faster than we think safe, because of the landmines, which we are working hard to remove. But they want to go home.

It has been very moving to me to see the troops of all of our nations cheered by the people there; also moving to see our soldiers uncovering evidence of what we stood against, evidence of mass graves, evidence in the form of the piles of documents stripped from the refugees to erase their identities.

I'd like to pay particular tribute to President Chirac for his leadership and his firmness in this crisis. This was the longest operation in which NATO had engaged in 50 years. We had 19 countries representing hundreds of millions of people with all manner of different domestic situations. But we stayed together, and we will stay together, and we will continue our mission there until we succeed.

But the French President was especially adamant that, having begun, we had to stay until we won, and we had to do it in the right way and to do whatever it took to do that. And I am very grateful to him for the relationship that we have enjoyed personally and for the relationship that our countries have enjoyed and the solidarity we've had within NATO.

Now we have to finish the job. We have to help the Kosovars to restore their homes and the basic conditions of living, the institutions of civil society necessary for them to

exercise autonomy. We also have to help the region. We have made a commitment at the NATO Summit, which I know will be reaffirmed at the G-7 and G-8 meeting, and which the EU has already articulated, to try to build a different future, a more prosperous, more democratic future for the entire region. And we are all committed to doing that.

If we don't want the Balkans and south-eastern Europe to be torn apart in the future by ancient religious and ethnic hatreds, we have to give them a better tomorrow to work for. And we are strongly committed to that.

Now, we also discussed any number of other subjects, but I think it would be better for me to open the floor to questions. I would close by saying I was particularly moved by the discussion we had about the Middle East peace process. Hopes are high now, but we all know that we have to give the Prime Minister-elect the opportunity to put his government together and get off to a good start. But the reports we have about a broad-based coalition are quite encouraging, and I think it's fair to say that France and all of Europe, the United States, hope that we can play a constructive role in what we hope will be a productive next step in that.

NATO-Russia Negotiations on Kosovo

Q. President Clinton, what is the latest from the Russians? There is a report—

President Clinton. Go ahead, Sam [Sam Donaldson, ABC News].

Q. President Clinton, what's the latest on the Russians, sir? There's a report that they may have agreed on the command structure acceptable to NATO but are still insisting on something like a zone. What can you tell us?

President Clinton. Well, I can tell you that just before I came over here for my meeting with President Chirac, I got an update. You know that Secretary Cohen has been meeting with the Russian Defense Minister, Sergeev. You know that Secretary Albright left here and flew to Helsinki to meet with Foreign Minister Ivanov. And the atmosphere is pretty positive and pretty hopeful. President Chirac and I talked about it for a long time.

We want the Russians to be involved in this mission in a comprehensive way. We

think it is important. But we also think it is important that we maintain clear unity of command, under KFOR, according to the U.N. resolution. And they're working through that, and I hope and believe they will reach a successful conclusion.

I don't have any specific details for you because they're in the middle of trying to work this out. But I know that—I'm aware that there are two or three options they're working on, all of which would be acceptable to us and to our partners, including the French. So we're working on it.

Reconstruction of the Balkans

Q. In the reconstruction of Yugoslavia do you take into consideration the only full member state of the NATO having a direct border with Yugoslavia, Hungary, that applied many times for being the center and headquarters of the reconstruction?

[At this point, another question was asked in French, and no translation was provided.]

President Chirac. The certainty of France is that it is necessary to organize as soon as possible in the region a system which is democratic. It is by enabling democracy to put down roots that it shall be possible to create the conditions for tolerance. And it is tolerance that will allow communities that have clashed for a long time to live together at peace. It will take time.

Naturally, there is an objective. The objective is the possibility, calling for these countries to become members of the European Union and their interest to do so. And therefore, the prospect for France is to do our utmost to help the region to overcome the difficulties that presents but also to do our utmost to convince them that their future is the European Union, and this entails peace at home. And this peace can only be found thanks to development and to the enrooting of democracy.

President Clinton. You asked me a question about whether Hungary might be the center of the reconstruction efforts. Actually, I have—as you know, the Hungarian President was just in Washington for a state visit, and it was a wonderful success. And then I called your Prime Minister to thank him for

his solidarity with NATO during this very difficult period for Hungary.

Both of them expressed a willingness for Hungary to play a role in the reconstruction of Kosovo and the entire Balkans region. Both expressed some interest in being the center of the reconstruction effort. That decision is a decision which would have to be made by all of our allies, and not just by the United States, especially given the leading role the European Union has played in making commitments to the long-term redevelopment of the area.

But I think that because of Hungary's ties to Serbia, because of the large number of Hungarians in northwest Serbia and Vojvodina, I think it is very important that the Hungarians be very much involved in this.

Terry [Terence Hunt, Associated Press].

War Crimes Trials/Reconstruction of Yugoslavia

Q. Mr. President, now that the conflict is over, do you and President Chirac think that a full-court press should be made to bring Slobodan Milosevic to trial to answer for the war crimes indictment? And President Chirac, do you agree with President Clinton that there should be no reconstruction aid for Belgrade as long as Mr. Milosevic is in power?

President Chirac. Great democracies, in particular, and the international community, in general, have, as a rule, to give development aid to a country only if the country meets the democratic criteria which are usually retained. And there are still some countries, unfortunately, which are subject to embargoes, do not receive aid, precisely because they are not democratic regimes. And this is the reason why. Personally, I absolutely share the feelings of President Clinton; that is, that there can be no economic development aid to a regime which is not democratic and whose present leader, furthermore, has been indicted with crimes against humanity by the International War Crimes court.

Development aid is one thing; humanitarian aid is a different thing. What we wish to sanction is a regime that does not apply

democratic rules, obviously; it is not unfortunate Serbs who are also victims. Hence, humanitarian aid, yes; development aid, economic aid, no—so long as democratic criteria are not met.

President Clinton. Let me say, first of all, I—as you know, I agree exactly with what President Chirac has said, also on the humanitarian issue. I think there's some humanitarian support we should make available to all the people of the region, including the Serbs in Serbia. But on redevelopment, I believe what he just said; we're all together on that.

Even though I strongly support the decision of the War Crimes Tribunal—or the prosecutor, Mrs. Arbour, too, to make the charges she did, I think it's important that we not in any way mislead people about what happens next. Our heaviest responsibility, the NATO Allies, is to get the Kosovars back home in safety and then to give them self-government, autonomy, and rebuilding assistance, and then work on the region.

Under the rules that we have followed, any of us, if we had jurisdiction over Mr. Milosevic, would turn him over, or anyone else who had been charged, just as we do in Bosnia. If he remains in Serbian—inside the confines of Serbia, presumably he's beyond the reach of the extradition powers of the other governments.

But sometimes these things take a good while to bear fruit. I think we'll just have to wait and see how that develops. But I think, given the evidence that was presented by Mrs. Arbour and what we know to be the evidence, I think she made the right decision. I think it's a very important thing. But I do not believe that the NATO Allies can invade Belgrade to try to deliver the indictment, if you will.

And I don't think we should be—that does not mean that this is not an important thing, or that there won't someday be a trial, but we need to focus on our obligations, our fundamental humanitarian obligations to get the Kosovars home and to continue to uncover whatever evidence of war crimes there is in Kosovo as well.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Mr. President, what are the steps that your administration intends to undertake to revive the Middle East peace process, and to what extent are you determined to achieve a major breakthrough before the end of your second term?

President Clinton. Well, as you know, I have spent an enormous amount of time on this, for 6½ years now. The major step I took to revive the peace process was 9½ days at Wye Plantation last year in the Wye peace talks. I don't believe that I will have to take any steps to revive the peace process. I believe when the new government takes office, if what we see in the press reports is right about the composition of this broad-based coalition government, I believe that there will be a vigorous pursuit of all channels of the peace process.

And the United States will do what it can, as I have for 6½ years, and as we have done as a nation before, to support the parties that are seeking peace and to provide whatever security and other—economic and other incentives we can to bring it to a successful conclusion. But I expect there to be a revival of the peace process generated by the parties themselves. And then I expect to support it very strongly, and I would expect that President Chirac and the European Union will do the same.

President Chirac. Allow me to add that Europe today unanimously—and Europe has shown this once again in Berlin—and France naturally, given the traditional ties France has with all countries of the region, are absolutely determined in this new context to give maximum support to the efforts made by the parties concerned and, obviously by the United States.

Serbian Withdrawal From Kosovo

Q. Mr. President, do you expect the Serbs to get the other 14,000 troops out by the Sunday deadline? And are you surprised that President Milosevic has kept his word so far?

President Clinton. The short answer I guess is, yes and no. Yes, I do expect them to meet the deadline, unless there is some practical reason they can't. And it's interesting, when the Serb military made the

agreement, we even got word from some of the Kosovars that they expected the agreement to be kept. They thought that if the Serbian military forces actually gave their word, they would keep it. And I thought that was a hopeful reaction in terms of our ability to see some work together in the future.

Now, as you know, General Jackson has already—our Commander in Kosovo—has already given permission at one phase of this withdrawal for a day's delay. So if General Jackson were to be asked and were to accede to some reasonable change because there were some fact that I'm unaware of, I wouldn't necessarily oppose that. I've got great confidence in him. But they are keeping to schedule.

And am I surprised that Mr. Milosevic is doing that? No, I'm not, not really, because—not only because of the impact of our military campaign but because we have forces going in on the ground.

Of the previous understandings that I have had over the last several years with Mr. Milosevic, the ones we had at Dayton, coming out of Bosnia have pretty much been honored. But the facts were the same; we had forces on the ground. And I believe that that has a way of reinforcing people's commitments, when we have our forces there.

Iraq

Q. Mr. President, is there still a strong disagreement with the United States as to how to get out of the crisis with Iraq—accept the principle of the French proposals on Iraq concerning the 100-day suspension of embargo on Iraq?

President Clinton. Well, as you know, there is some difference here. I think largely it's a difference over what is likely to be more effective. The United States supports the efforts of the British and the Dutch and the Security Council because we believe that without the strongest possible inspection mechanism, Saddam Hussein will attempt to rebuild weapons of mass destruction stocks, particularly in the chemical and biological areas and perhaps missile technology, as well.

President Chirac can speak for himself, but he believes that if the French-Dutch resolution were—I mean, the British-Dutch resolution were to pass, that it would simply be

not accepted by Saddam Hussein, and so we would still be at an impasse. So there is a difference of opinion there. We agreed that we would discuss it further at the G-8, and we would try to come to a conclusion on it.

This is not an easy issue, and I respect the efforts that the French are making, that the President is making. I can tell you generally what my concern is. It is not so much Saddam Hussein himself as my belief that 10 years from now the person who is standing here as President and the person who is standing there as the President of France will be—and all of you, those of you who will be here asking questions—one of the things that you will be really worried about is the spread of biological and chemical weapons, probably high-tech, small-scale weapons, into the hands of international terrorist groups and organized crime groups that have loose relationships with irresponsible countries that give them these things. And I think it will be a substantial problem for the first couple of decades of the next century. And I just think we ought to do everything we possibly can to minimize that problem.

But I think I have fairly stated the practical difference between our two positions, and I think the President should speak for himself.

President Chirac. Well, obviously, I have the same concerns as President Clinton. But I think that the most important is, today, to once again reestablish inspections on Iraq's weapons, international verification. And to do so, what we need, at the very least, is to reexamine the conditions of the embargo—what is necessary, in any case, it seems to me, for reasons that have to do with the very serious degradation of living conditions of the Iraqi people, who are the victims of the situation. So we shall discuss a way of synthesizing, bring together these concerns.

But let us not challenge the solidarity and the unity of the Security Council. If we are not convinced that we're going to reach a result and the present state of affairs, as President Clinton was saying a moment ago, that in any case Iraq will refuse the resolution which is, at present, being drafted, and therefore, it would be a somewhat pointless gesture which would not lead to any concrete results but might strain the solidarity of the Security Council. And you know how very

deeply France is attached to the U.N., in general, and the Security Council, in particular. Thank you very much.

President Clinton. Thank you.

Q. Mr. President, do you believe the Russians lied to you, sir?

Q. [Inaudible].

President Clinton. We're going to be out there some more tomorrow.

Gun Control Legislation

Q. [Inaudible]—NRA may win with the— [inaudible]—

President Clinton. I know. I got up at 5 a.m. and started making calls this morning. I'm doing my best.

Q. What's your view?

President Clinton. I don't know yet. I'm not close enough to have a good count.

Al Gore's Announcement of Candidacy

Q. How do you think Al Gore did yesterday?

President Clinton. Wonderful. I thought he was terrific.

NOTE: The President's 175th news conference began at 11:24 a.m. in the Garden at Elysee Palace. President Chirac spoke in French, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter. In his remarks, President Clinton referred to Bernadette Chirac, wife of President Chirac; Prime Minister-elect Ehud Barak of Israel; Defense Minister Igor Sergeev and Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov of Russia; President Arpad Goncz and Prime Minister Viktor Orban of Hungary; President Slobodan Milosevic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro); Louise Arbour, independent chief prosecutor, International War Crimes Tribunal; Lt. Gen. Mike Jackson, British Royal Army, Commander, Kosovo International Security Force; and President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this news conference.

Memorandum on Strengthening Our Commitment to Service Through Voluntary Opportunities

June 17, 1999

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: Strengthening Our Commitment to Service Through Voluntary Opportunities

Volunteer community service is a great American tradition and a profound expression of the civic values that bind us together as a Nation. Nowhere is the spirit of volunteerism more alive than among employees of the Federal Government, thousands of whom serve their country with dedication at work and as volunteers in their local communities. On April 22, 1998, I directed Federal departments and agencies to expand community service opportunities for Federal employees by making maximum use of existing flexibility in work scheduling policies. Today, I am encouraging all departments and agencies with operations in the District of Columbia to apply those policies so that their D.C.-based employees can take advantage of a vitally important community service opportunity: helping D.C. public school students become better readers this summer.

From June 28 through August 6, an estimated 30,000 D.C. school children with low test scores will be in mandatory and enrichment summer school programs run by the D.C. Public School system. Students whose scores do not markedly improve risk being held back a grade. This is part of the District's ambitious plan to end social promotion while also giving children the extra help they need to meet higher standards—the kind of positive reform I have called on all school districts to adopt. As the District's largest employer, the Federal Government has a unique opportunity to help children improve their scores and rejoin their classmates this fall.

That is why I am pleased that the Corporation for National and Community Service is assisting Federal departments and agencies