Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on NATO Action in Bosnia

March 1, 1994

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

In my report to the Congress of February 17, 1994, I provided further information on the deployment of U.S. combat-equipped aircraft to support NATO's enforcement of the no-fly zone in Bosnia-Herzegovina, as authorized by the U.N. Security Council. The United States has conducted air operations along with other participating nations for these purposes since April 12, 1993. I am providing this supplementary report, consistent with the War Powers Resolution, on the NATO military action conducted by U.S. aircraft in the airspace over Bosnia-Herzegovina on February 28, 1994.

During enforcement operations in the early morning hours of February 28, U.S. F–16 aircraft on air patrol for NATO shot down four Galeb fixed-wing aircraft that were violating the no-fly zone near Banja Luka, Bosnia-Herzegovina. After NATO airborne early-warning aircraft detected the unauthorized aircraft, two U.S. F–16s proceeded to the area and reported visual contact with a total of six Galeb aircraft. In accordance with approved procedures, the NATO airborne early-warning aircraft issued warnings to the violators that they would be engaged if they did not land or leave the no-fly zone airspace immediately. After several minutes passed with no response from the Galebs, the U.S. fighter aircraft again warned them in accordance with approved procedures and, once again, noted no response from the violators to heed the warnings. Soon thereafter, the U.S. F–16s received permission from the NATO Combined Air Operations Center to engage the violators. Just prior to the engagement, the flight leader of the U.S. fighter aircraft saw the Galebs make a bombing maneuver, and then he saw explosions on the ground. We have since received reports confirming that facilities in this area were hit by bombs during this time frame.

Having received permission to engage the violators, the lead U.S. F–16 fired air-to-air missiles and destroyed three Galeb aircraft. One of two other U.S. F–16 aircraft, which had been sent to the area to provide support, fired a missile and downed the fourth Galeb. The two remaining violators left the area.

This action, part of the NATO effort to enforce the no-fly zone, was conducted under the authority of U.N. Security Council resolutions and in full compliance with NATO procedures. Responding to the bombing of villages and other violations of the ban on unauthorized flights established by the Security Council in late 1992, the Security Council acted in Resolution 816 (March 31, 1993) to authorize Member States, acting nationally or through regional organizations, to take all necessary measures to ensure compliance with the no-fly zone. NATO undertook to monitor the no-fly zone to ensure that the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina does not spread to the air.

Since the commencement of no-fly zone operations last April, nearly 12,000 fighter, tanker, and NATO airborne early-warning sorties have been flown. Military personnel from 12 NATO member nations have participated in this effort, which has been highly successful in preventing significant air threats by the parties to the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Although we have no reason to believe that there will be further violations requiring the use of force, U.S. aircraft will continue to serve as part of this important NATO enforcement effort. As always, our forces remain prepared to defend themselves if necessary. U.S. Armed Forces participate in these operations pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct U.S. foreign relations and as Commander in Chief.

I remain committed to ensuring that the Congress is fully informed about significant activities of U.S. Armed Forces in the region. I appreciate the continued support of the Congress for U.S. contributions to the important multilateral effort in the former Yugoslavia.

Sincerely,

Bill Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Thomas S. Foley, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Robert C. Byrd, President pro tempore of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 2.

Teleconference on Health Care With Family Caregivers

March 2, 1994

The President. I want to thank you all for joining me today and for setting aside some time so that we can speak together and that together we can speak to the country about the long-term care problems in America. As we just heard, we have people from California to New York on the line, people for whom long-term care is not just a health reform issue but a real job.

One of the most important things that our health care plan is attempting to do is to make your job easier by creating a new home- and community-based long-term care program that gives people in need of assistance new choices and gives more options for long-term care, doesn't automatically push people into nursing homes to get some public assistance, and encourages people who are trying to take care of their family members to do it by giving them some help to do it. If this portion of the plan passes, for the first time we'll have a nationwide program that will give Americans, regardless of their income, some long-term care services tailored to their needs and provided in the place that they want to be most, in their own homes.

But the main purpose of this conversation today is not for me to talk but to hear from you, the people who are real experts, to understand how the approach we're taking here in Washington will affect homes and communities like yours around the country. I think it's very important that people in the Congress and the decisionmakers understand just how many Americans there are who are in the situation that you're in.

And so, let's start with Eve Lefkowitz in Langhorne, Pennsylvania. Eve is a visiting nurse who provides care for both her parents. Eve, why don't you talk to us a little bit about——

[*At this point, Ms. Lefkowitz discussed her parents' health problems, her desire to keep them at home, and the cost for both in-home care and ongoing medical treatment.*]

The President. Thanks, Eve. Before I respond, let me say, can all of you still hear me?

Q. Yes.

The President. One of you has been talking to somebody else while Eve was talking. You may not be able to hear her talk, but we can hear you. So if you talk while someone else is talking, then we won't be able to hear the person who is talking. So please be careful about that.

Let me say, the situation that you have outlined is one that a lot of American families are struggling with. They want to keep their parents in the home. They want to keep them around the grandkids. But they have huge out-of-pocket costs. They know if the parents go to a nursing home, especially if they just spend their resources and go to a nursing home, they can get some help.

Now, under our plan, your parents would be able to stay in your home and get many of the services that they now have to pay for themselves, including adult daycare, some help with home health services, and medications. People would have to make a contribution, all right, based on their ability to pay. So it's not free for everybody regardless of their income, but there would be a support program. In almost every case, this would be cheaper for the Government than providing nursing home care. But it will give people who have certain health problems and disabilities much greater choices about how and where they get the care. And it would enable families like you, yours, that are really close-knit, where you've tried to keep your family together, to be able to do that and succeed.

So we are going to do our best to help you. And I must say, I really admire you for doing this.

Ms. Lefkowitz. Thanks.

The President. Beth and James Crampton, are you all there from Omaha?

Beth Crampton. Yes, we're here.

The President. Beth is a 23-year-old recent college graduate who, along with her father, takes care of her mother. Why don't you talk a little about your situation?

[*Ms. Crampton explained that her mother has Alzheimer's disease and discussed the family's efforts to care for her at home.*]

The President. Let me ask you something. You said your father was able to attend