

Gerry Adams in here, in retrospect, a mistake because the IRA have still failed to endorse the Downing Street declaration on the peace process?

The President. I don't think we can know yet. The decision to let him come was plainly taking a risk for peace. I think that Sinn Fein ought to renounce violence and ought to join the peace process. I'm very frankly pleased that at long last they issued their questions and the British Government provided answers and all that's been published. And I'm hoping that after the June 12 elections, that we'll see some real progress there. But I don't think we can know yet whether the decision was or was not a mistake in terms of what will happen over the long run. I think plainly it was designed to further the debate, and I hope it did that.

Media Criticism

Mr. Esler. Finally, Mr. President, you go to Europe at a time when you're facing the kind of criticism, sleazy criticism, at home and in the British papers that no President has ever had to face before. How distracting is it for you that people are raking up financial dealings and personal affairs going back years?

The President. Well, unfortunately that's become part of the daily fare of American public life now because of certain extremist groups and because now it's part of our media life, like unfortunately it's a part of your media life. But I know that the charges are bogus and that they'll ultimately be disproved or they'll die of their own weight. And they don't take up a lot of our time and attention here.

My job is to lead this country in its own path of internal revival and engaging with our friends and allies. And I can't really afford to be distracted by it. I just get up here every day and think about what an incredible historic opportunity and what an obligation it is, and I do my best to fulfill the obligation.

I will say this, I'm ecstatic about going back to Britain again after some years of absence and having a chance to go back to Oxford again after the D-Day ceremonies are complete. The United States has no closer ally than Great Britain. And even though we may have some differences from time to time, we

mustn't let those differences get in our way. We have too much at stake. We have too much work to do in building this new world. As you point out, there are still a lot of problems out there, but we're going to deal with them, and we're going to do fine.

Mr. Esler. Mr. President, thank you very much for talking to me. And I hope you enjoy your visit to Britain.

The President. Thank you.

NOTE: The interview began at 2:40 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to Gerry Adams, leader of Sinn Fein. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Interview With the Italian Media

May 27, 1994

Giuseppe Lugato. Mr. President, I want to thank you, first of all, for this great opportunity. I want to remember that this is the first time that a President of the United States gives an interview to two Italian journalists only. So thank you, and our first question, sir.

Italian Government

Silvia Kramar. My first question to you, Mr. President, is about Italy. There has been great many political changes in the last few months. We have a brand new government, and we actually call it the beginning of the second republic. My question to you is what do you think about this new government? What is your impression? And also, what do you think will be the future of the relationships between the United States and Italy?

The President. Well, first let me say a word about the outgoing government. I think Prime Minister Ciampi did a fine job of bridging the period of transition and giving a sense of stability and security and confidence to the rest of us about Italy and what was going on. We all followed the elections with great interest. As you know, your system is quite a bit different from ours, so here in America we were very interested to see how the election would come out and then how a government would be formed.

I haven't met with your new Prime Minister, but I am looking forward to it. The Ital-

ian Foreign Minister was here just a few days ago to assure the United States of the continuing commitment of Italy to the sort of partnership we have had. The Italian-American relationship is extremely important for our ability to work for peace in Bosnia, for our ability to maintain a stability in the entire region, and for our long-term economic partnerships as well. So I am looking forward to it, and I am basically quite optimistic. I'm hopeful.

Mr. Lugato. Sir, you were just quoting the new Prime Minister. Can I ask you what is the perception that you have of Mr. Berlusconi? That at the same time he is a successful businessman, number one Italian TV tycoon, and Prime Minister. Now, many in Italy, they think that's too much, and they think that in the United States this couldn't happen.

The President. Couldn't happen?

Mr. Lugato. That's what I'm saying.

The President. Well, you know, as I said, we've never met so I have no direct perception. But I think that we live in a world in which the media is very dominant. I mean, our perceptions are so shaped by what we see and what we hear that it is not surprising that in certain nations people who have made their careers and fortunes in the media would rise to the top of the political system.

I think the question is, then once you have the job, what do you do with it? And I think I have the impression that in the campaign he projected strength, he projected a sense of where Italy should go and a willingness to make sure that certain changes would be made to make the system function and to provide a measure of stable progress. And that, of course, is the challenge that we all face.

So I am sort of like, I think the Italian citizens—I say that the man has been elected; give him a chance. Let's see if he can do his job. Give him a chance, and give him a little support.

Ms. Kramar. Talking about the new government, Berlusconi also has a coalition with a different party called Alianza Nazionale, which has always been a right-wing party. And five of our new ministers belong to that party. Of course, you must have read all the newspapers here and the columns saying that

Italy is going back to a new Fascist era. What do you think about that?

The President. I think it's a little premature to make that sort of extreme judgment, for several reasons. I mean a lot of the political parties in multiparty democracies have their roots in the past and certain ideas and images and policies of the past, which may not be a valid way of judging them today. In Poland, for example, they had an election and the, if you will, the children, the descendants of the former Communist Party, won a big portion of the election. Does that mean they are going to go back to communism? Not necessarily. In Argentina, one of my favorite examples, the President Menem won as the heir of the Juan Perón's party, but he privatized the economy. He grew it. He stabilized inflation.

In Italy, when I was last in Italy in 1987, I was staying in Florence and traveling around through to Bologna and to Siena and to many other cities. And I was noticing all these governments governed by people who said they were members of the Community Party. But they were pro-NATO, and anti-Soviet Union, pro-United States, pro-free enterprise. I think we must judge people by what they do, not by the labels behind them. So let's give them a chance to govern and see what they do.

Administration Goals

Mr. Lugato. Mr. President, what is the America that you would like to see? And do you think you are on the right track to build it?

The President. Yes, I think we're going in the right direction. I want America to be able to do the following things: One, I want America to rebuild itself. I want a strong American economy, and I want this incredibly diverse country of ours to be coming together with a stronger sense of community. I want us to have a mature and accurate idea of what the relationship between the Government and the people should be. What can the Government do, what must the people do for themselves from the grassroots up in their families, their communities, their workplaces? I want an America that is moving outward into the 21st century, reaching out to other countries and leading a world in which

we do not dominate but in which we must lead, where we cooperate with our friends and allies to provide for security against the proliferation of weapons, against terrorism, against aggression, against all the pressures to dissolve in all these countries and where we try to advance the cause of prosperity, democracy, and human rights, and where we try to limit chaos and misery, doing what we can in a cooperative way as we did in Somalia or as we work together to try to help the African countries deal with the tragedy of Rwanda and Burundi, and et cetera, et cetera. Those are the things I think we should be doing.

Foreign Policy

Mr. Lugato. So, Mr. President, you have a vision also for the world. Now, how do you explain that your foreign policy—I know that you don't deserve that, but—has been so criticized, has been unfocused, uncertain? How do you explain that?

The President. Well, I think that there are, if you will, three parts of it, and one part of it has been criticized. No one has criticized what we have done to protect the security of Americans, that is, working with the Russians to make Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Belarus nonnuclear states, reducing our nuclear arsenals. We don't point our nuclear weapons at each other any more. We are working in partnership. That's been very successful.

The second thing we have done is to try to advance international trade and to promote freedom and openness through that in our own hemisphere with the North American Free Trade Agreement, with our leadership to get the GATT agreement worldwide, with our continuing efforts to engage China and Japan and other Asian countries. We are working in ways that—in our country, we have seen more progress than in a generation in reaching out to the world economically.

The third area is the most difficult: To what extent can America influence adverse events in other parts of the world? And particularly, they mention Bosnia and, in our backyard here, Haiti. The real issue there, it seems to me, is that there is a lot of confusion about exactly how much our country should do.

We have interests and values at stake in Bosnia. Should we be on the ground there with troops? I don't think so. Should we lift the arms embargo, as maybe a majority of my Congress wants to do? I don't think so. I don't agree with the arms embargo. I think it was a mistake in the first place. But we are now involved in a cooperative venture in Bosnia with our allies in NATO and the United Nations and principally with Europe to try to help to bring that awful conflict to an end and, in the meanwhile, to make sure it does not spread. In that environment where we are working to push toward a solution, we cannot impose our will, and we have to be flexible and listening. That is the frustration people have. People say, "Well, President Clinton doesn't favor the arms embargo, but he won't lift it." That's right. Because if I lift the arms embargo all by myself, then why should Italy observe the embargo on Saddam Hussein, or any other country?

We have done the following things constantly. I have always said I would not send troops into Bosnia while the war was going on because that would complicate the U.N. mission and because I did not think that was the right thing to do. I would, however, support the troops there with air support, with the airplanes for the humanitarian airlift, and then I'll work to get NATO to agree to an out-of-area mission to use airpower there to keep the Bosnian war from spreading into the air and to try to protect Sarajevo and these other areas. That is my policy. If we can reach an agreement on clear dividing lines for peace, then I would be prepared to have the United States participate in that peace effort. I think that shows leadership, I think it shows a respect for the European powers, and I don't think it shows vacillation. But it is frustrating because people say, "Well, the U.S. is the only superpower in the world, and Europe is very strong and rich. Why can't we just fix this?" We forget the history of Bosnia. It can't be fixed easily.

Ms. Kramar. Mr. President, on a more personal level, you are an idealist. You always wanted to be President of the United States, ever since you were a child. Now you are in the position of being probably the most powerful man in the world, and yet you wake up in the morning, you read the papers, and

you see that there is violence in Rwanda, there is violence in Bosnia, there is violence in Haiti and in the streets of America. How does it feel to be not able to change this?

The President. Well, one of my great predecessors, Harry Truman, who was President, as you know, right after World War II, said that he discovered after he became President that his job largely consisted of trying to talk other people into doing what they ought to do anyway. Sometimes I feel that way, that I don't have as much power as I thought I would have.

On the other hand, this is a place with some power. As anyone who has ever exercised power will tell you, there is always the tug of the mind and the heart, of the interests and the values. And what you have to do is to decide how much you can do and do that and do it as well as you can and then try to marshal the energies and ideas and values of other people to help.

So that is what I am trying to do. I am trying to construct a framework in which Italy and France and Germany and England and the South American powers and the Asian powers and the African powers can cooperate to try to deal with horrible problems in which the United States leads but does not attempt to do something it cannot do. And every day I think about it. I am doing my best to live out my ideals, understanding that I have to have everyone else's help in order to do it. But I am, frankly, more optimistic than I was about the future of the world than when I took office.

Mr. Lugato. Mr. President, we thank you very much, and clearly be welcome in my country and have a great time in Italy.

The President. I can't wait to come. Thank you.

NOTE: The interview began at 3:10 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. The interviewers were Giuseppe Lugato, RAI Television, and Silvia Kramar, RTI Television. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Letter Accepting the Resignation of David Watkins as Assistant to the President for Management and Administration

May 27, 1994

Dear David:

I write to accept your resignation and to say that I understand your reasons for submitting it.

At the same time, it should be stated that you undertook your assignment as Assistant to the President for Management and Administration with great vigor and effectiveness. During your tenure, we changed and upgraded the technology upon which this White House depends and future White Houses will depend; from telephones to computers, you brought us into the modern age. Moreover, you opened this house—the people's house—literally to thousands more visitors than had ever been welcomed here in White House history. For these, and many other accomplishments large and small, you deserve great credit.

Hillary and I will never forget the loyal friendship you and Ileana have given to us over the years.

Sincerely,

Bill

NOTE: A letter of resignation from David Watkins to the President and a letter from Chief of Staff Thomas F. (Mack) McLarty to Mr. Watkins were also made available by the Office of the Press Secretary. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Proclamation 6695—National Safe Boating Week, 1994

May 27, 1994

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

The discovery and subsequent development of the United States evolved through the exploration and utilization of the abundant waterways of this great Nation. During