

Remarks to Citizens Involved in Humanitarian Relief Efforts for Bosnia and an Exchange With Reporters

December 12, 1995

The President. Well, first of all, let me say that I know I speak for everyone here in thanking the people who have spoken and thanking them, more importantly, for their remarkable efforts. I want to express my appreciation to two of their Representatives who joined us: Congressman Ehlers from Michigan and Congressman Moran from Virginia. To Franklin Graham, thank you, sir, for the remarkable work that you are doing and for giving people like Mary the chance to be remarkable in their own right.

What you have just heard is a series of astonishing human testaments. I don't know that I've ever felt more proud to be an American than I did in the last few minutes just listening to these people talk. And I know all of you feel that way as well.

The purpose of our mission is to take advantage of this remarkable opportunity we have when all of the parties have agreed to make peace, when they have agreed that the madness you have just heard recounted ought to stop.

We saw further evidence of their good-faith intention to do their part this morning, when the French pilots were released. And I just, by pure coincidence, had the French Ambassador in this morning, and I told him to convey to President Chirac the joy of all Americans that these pilots are free because the mission that we all undertook together through NATO had a lot to do with bringing about this peace agreement.

Since I became President, I have said that I thought the United States had an obligation to participate in the enforcement of a peace agreement. Because we have a peace agreement, which is enforceable, which can be protected, which can be enhanced by the NATO force, the work that you have just heard about will be able to be multiplied hundreds of times over. And that's the thing I want to emphasize to all of you.

The NATO mission in which the United States will play a leading role by separating the forces, by making sure the territory is

the way the peace agreement agreed, by maintaining a secure environment, will permit more of these things to be done, will permit the reconstruction effort to proceed, not only the physical reconstruction effort but the human reconstruction effort.

And I have just told all of the folks whom you heard speak that it is very important that these efforts continue in Bosnia and, in fact, be intensified because there are a lot of lives that have to be put together; there are a lot of communities that have to be rebuilt. But this kind of energy by the American people and by others throughout the world who will join now in helping them can help to turn the worst nightmare in Europe since the end of the Second World War into a story of reconciliation and peace and progress.

And again, let me say, there is nothing I can say to add to what these fine people have said. But when Americans like these folks are willing to do what they have done, I think it is incumbent on the United States, the other NATO powers, the others who are joining with us, to make sure that this peace takes hold and is preserved so that they can do it in an atmosphere free of fear for themselves and help that country come back and help all these little children regain their childhood.

I hope we all live to see the day when the only bombs in the world are peace bombs.

Thank you very much.

Q. Mr. President, are you going to be able to get this through Congress, win approval?

The President. Well, let me say I'm quite encouraged by two things. Number one, a very large number of Members of Congress, especially House Members, have actually gone to the region in the last few days, and I applaud them for doing it. And some of those with deep reservations about the missions have gone. I have no exact vote count for you, but I can tell you that it's clear to me that there's been a real shift among those who have gone. Those who have gone have come back more favorable than they left America. And so I can't believe that when the time for the counting comes that Congress won't support our troops in this mission. I believe they will.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:15 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Franklin Graham, president of Samaritan's Purse; Mary Damron of Ikes Fork, WV; and President Jacques Chirac of France.

Statement on the 1st Anniversary of the Summit of the Americas

December 12, 1995

Last December, I joined the other 33 democratically elected leaders from the Western Hemisphere in Miami for the historic Summit of the Americas. Working in a new spirit of cooperation, we set a common agenda to strengthen the advance of democracy in our region, to protect our environment and natural resources, to expand opportunities for our nations and our communities, and to promote a new partnership for hemispheric prosperity.

Over the last year, the hemisphere's leaders have worked hard to realize the ambitious program defined at the summit. We are working together to challenge money-launderers, narcotics traffickers, and others who ignore the rule of law. A new hemispheric Partnership for Pollution Prevention will phase out the use of leaded gasoline and other chemicals that contaminate our air and poison our soil.

In June, we hosted a meeting of regional trade and commerce ministers to discuss measures to facilitate trade liberalization and to begin preparations for the negotiation of a Free Trade Area of the Americas by the year 2005. Already, falling trade barriers have allowed our exports to the hemisphere to grow by 12 percent in the first half of 1995 to \$112 billion, generating over 180,000 export-related jobs. Steady progress means more jobs and opportunities for American workers and U.S. businesses as we look toward the next century.

Working together, the democratic nations of this hemisphere have achieved much. I know we can accomplish much more. Despite the challenges faced by our hemisphere this past year, the foundations of the summit remain strong and our nations, including the United States, remain committed to our common goals.

Statement on the Resignation of Lee Brown as Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy

December 12, 1995

It is with regret that I have accepted the decision of Dr. Lee Brown, Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy, to return to private life and a teaching position. As Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy and as a former police officer, Dr. Brown has devoted much of his life and the entirety of the past 2½ years to fighting the scourge of drugs in America.

My administration is strongly committed to the battle against drugs, which will never be over until every child in America knows that drug use is dangerous, illegal, and wrong. We still have far to go, but under Dr. Brown's stewardship, we have made solid progress: cracking down on the international drug trade by breaking the powerful Cali drug cartel, calling for drug testing of high school athletes, toughening punishment of drug-related violence, and challenging the entertainment industry and sports figures to do their part to speak out about the dangers of drugs.

I am grateful for Dr. Brown's good service and for the groundwork that he has laid. My administration will not rest until every young American knows the difference between right and wrong when it comes to drug use.

Letter to Senators Robert Dole and John McCain on the Balkan Peace Process

December 12, 1995

Dear Mr. Leader:

I am writing in response to your December 12 letter on equip and train. You raise several questions to which I would like to respond.

First of all, the United States will take a leadership role in coordinating an international effort to ensure that the Bosnian Federation receives the assistance necessary to achieve an adequate military balance when IFOR leaves. As in all things related to our effort to bringing peace to the region, U.S. leadership has been critical.