

We no longer have a country, as I said 7 years ago, where I worry about me, you worry about you, they worry about them. I didn't want that then, and I don't see that today. We know—we know—we are all in this together. We know that we'll all do better if we do the responsible thing, if all our neighbors have opportunities and if we live together as citizens in one community.

You have all helped to make that the new reality of 21st century America. I want you to be proud of it but not to rest on it. Help your Governor. Help your legislators. Realize the dreams of your children. Don't run away from the work of governing. Stay with the real things that real people care about and the politics will take care of themselves.

Thank you. God bless you. And on to tomorrow. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:23 p.m. at the Armory. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Jeanne Shaheen of New Hampshire and her husband, Bill; Jeff Woodburn, State chair, and Sophia Collier, State finance chair, New Hampshire State Democratic Party; J. Joseph GrandMaison, Director, Trade and Development Agency; Stephanie Powers, Director, School-to-Work Initiative, Department of Education; Patricia McMahon, Director, Community Outreach and Liaison, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration; Edward E. (Terry) Shumaker III, Ambassador to Trinidad and Tobago; George C. Bruno, former U.S. Ambassador to Belize; Dick Swett, Ambassador to Denmark; political consultant Michael Whooley; and Mayor Patricia T. Russell of Keene, NH, and her husband, State Representative Ronald G. Russell.

Remarks Prior to Discussions With President Jacques Chirac of France and an Exchange With Reporters

February 19, 1999

President Clinton. Is everyone in?

Q. Yes, sir.

President Clinton. As you know, we're going to have a press conference at the conclusion of our meetings. But I just wanted to take this opportunity to welcome President Chirac and the members of his delegation back to the White House. We have had a good working relationship and a warm personal friendship. I'm delighted to see him.

We have a lot of important things to discuss, especially the situation in Kosovo, but also the work we've been doing on the international financial matters and many other things. And we'll be able to discuss them later at the press conference.

But mostly, I just want to welcome him here and give him the chance to make a few remarks, if you would like.

President Chirac. I want to say how happy I am to be with you here and with President Clinton, my good friend.

We're going to have a very interesting day's work together. We'll, of course, first be talking about Kosovo and also a number of other important questions, like the international financial monetary situation in preparation of the NATO summit and a number of other subjects.

And I want to thank President Clinton for his welcome.

Kosovo

Q. President Chirac, do you think that there will be a settlement, a peaceful settlement in Kosovo or military action? Do you think that both sides will make an accord by noon tomorrow?

President Chirac. I hope with all my heart that both sides would understand that their intention is to find an agreement, because the side which would not understand that would then have to bear the consequences. And those consequences would be serious for them but also for their country and their people—as the time for peace has come, and every side must make this effort to make peace possible. And we are determined, really determined and firm on this.

Q. President Clinton, does Mr. Milosevic deserve more time and, if not, sir, why not?

President Clinton. We'll answer all the other questions at the press conference.

NOTE: The exchange began at 12:05 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. A journalist referred to President Slobodan Milosevic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). President Chirac spoke in French, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

The President's News Conference With President Chirac of France

February 19, 1999

President Clinton. Please sit down. Good afternoon. President Chirac and I, as always, have had a very good meeting. We had a lot to discuss, and we have a lot to do together.

Most importantly, today we are working together to end the fighting in Kosovo and to help the people there obtain the autonomy and self-government they deserve. We now call on both sides to make the tough decisions that are necessary to stop the conflict immediately, before more people are killed and the war spreads.

The talks going on outside Paris are set to end on Saturday. The Kosovo Albanians have shown courage in moving forward the peace accord that we, our NATO allies, and Russia have proposed. Serbia's leaders now have a choice to make: They can join an agreement that meets their legitimate concerns and gives them a chance to show that an autonomous Kosovo can thrive as part of their country, or they can stonewall. But if they do that, they will be held accountable.

If there is an effective peace agreement, NATO stands ready to help implement it. We also stand united in our determination to use force if Serbia fails to meet its previous commitment to withdraw forces from Kosovo and if it fails to accept the peace agreement. I have ordered our aircraft to be ready, to act as part of a NATO operation, and I will continue to consult very closely with Congress in the days ahead.

The challenge in Kosovo and the one we have addressed in Bosnia underscore the central role NATO plays in promoting peace and stability in Europe. Today the President and I discussed the 50th anniversary summit, which will be held here in Washington in April, to admit Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic as new members, and to set NATO's course for the new century.

The conflicts in the Balkans also highlight the need to strengthen stability across south-east Europe. The United States and France are pleased to announce today that we will pursue a new initiative we hope other allies will join, to increase cooperation with south-east Europe's emerging democracies on se-

curity matters, to coordinate security assistance to them from NATO countries, to promote regional cooperation and economic development.

The President and I also discussed our common efforts to reform the global financial system and to support economic recovery in countries that have been so hard hit. Last fall, working with other G-7 nations and key emerging economies, we set out a comprehensive agenda: making financial systems more open and resilient, improving international cooperation on financial oversight. Just this weekend in Bonn, our finance ministers will address these topics, and the creation of a new financial stability forum.

We're moving ahead on promoting sound lending practices and strengthening protections for the most vulnerable members of societies when crisis strikes. We need to do more to reduce the debts of the poorest, most heavily indebted nations, as they seek to meet basic human needs and undertake economic reforms. And I thank President Chirac for championing this cause for such a long time. Our budget makes a significant new investment in that challenge, and we proposed ways to help the IMF, with its existing resources, do the same.

On these issues we're aiming to make real progress by the time of the June G-8 summit in Cologne, Germany. I very much appreciate the President's leadership in this area.

We discussed the continuing challenge of promoting economic recovery in Russia and working with Russia to prevent its weapons of mass destruction, missiles, and technologies from falling into the hands of outlaw nations and terrorists. We will continue our cooperation on securing peace in the Middle East. We talked about the Middle East peace process at some length. We talked about our common determination to restrain Iraq's weapons of mass destruction program.

We want to expand cooperation in Africa, promoting peace in the Great Lakes region, encouraging an African Crisis Response capability. And today we are announcing that we're joining together with African nations in an effort I spoke about first last year in Senegal, building an African Center for Security Studies, to promote peace and democracy.