

the military objectives to demonstrate the seriousness of NATO's purpose so that the Serbian leaders understand the imperative of reversing course; to deter an even bloodier offensive against innocent civilians in Kosovo; and, if necessary, to seriously damage the Serbian military's capacity to harm the people of Kosovo.

6. *Exit Strategy.* The duration of the requirement for U.S. military presence in Macedonia will depend on the course of events, and in particular, on Belgrade's reaction to the air operations. So long as air operations continue, force protection, support for those operations, and deterrence from possible FRY acts of violence will continue to be required.

7. *Costs.* The costs of the deployments covered by this notice like other costs of the air operations will be paid initially from FY99 Defense O&M appropriations. An estimate of likely costs for these limited deployments is being prepared, and I will ensure that it is provided to the Congress as soon as it is available.

8. *Effect on Morale, Retention and Readiness.* In the first instance, these deployments will have a positive effect on morale, retention and readiness because they will demonstrate the commitment of the necessary resources to maximize force protection for our personnel engaged in the air operations. United States forces participating in Task Force Able Sentry, as well as U.S. forces deployed to other locations in the region, are dedicated professionals serving with great pride and enthusiasm. Given the importance of the mission in Macedonia, we anticipate that U.S. forces would maintain the highest morale and effectiveness, just as they have in respect to other missions in the Balkans. Indeed, it has been our experience that personnel serving in these important and demanding positions experience higher retention rates than in other, less challenging assignments. However, we recognize that even deployments for the best of reasons increase the periods of separation from family and add other burdens to military service. The Department of Defense has underway extensive and effective programs to do what is necessary to manage personnel and other resources so as to reduce these problems. As

with any operational deployment, the effects on readiness for other operations are mixed. On the one hand, the personnel involved gain invaluable real world experience. On the other hand, normal training programs are interrupted. The numbers of personnel covered by this report are sufficiently limited, however, that any effect on the overall readiness of our U.S. Armed Services to meet other requirements, including major theater war contingencies, will be marginal. Finally, in accordance with sections 8115(b)(2) and (c), I have determined that it is necessary to order a Marine FAST team to Skopje, Macedonia, to protect our Embassy and U.S. persons at the Embassy. This team will remain deployed for as long as is necessary to protect our Embassy and U.S. persons.

Sincerely,

Bill Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 26.

Radio Remarks on Emergency Farm Measures

March 26, 1999

Today I have directed Secretary Glickman to take immediate measures to provide urgently needed resources to our Nation's farmers as they enter the spring planting season. I asked Congress to pass emergency funding of \$150 million to provide more than \$1 billion in loans for farmers and ranchers. Unfortunately, Congress did not complete action before leaving for a 2-week recess, in spite of the fact that many of our Government's critical emergency farm loan programs are set to run out of funds in the next several weeks.

Therefore, I am taking this immediate stop-gap measure so that our farmers, who face continuing low crop prices and difficulty in securing private loans, will be able to finance spring planting. This action will make more than \$300 million in loans available to farmers and ranchers. I urge Congress when

it returns from its recess to move immediately on our emergency request for funds for farm loans.

NOTE: The President's remarks were recorded at approximately 12:30 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House for later broadcast. These remarks were also made available on the White House Press Radio Actuality Line.

**Letter to Congressional Leaders
Reporting on Airstrikes Against
Serbian Targets in the Federal
Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and
Montenegro)**

March 26, 1999

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

At approximately 1:30 p.m. eastern standard time, on March 24, 1999, U.S. military forces, at my direction and in coalition with our NATO allies, began a series of air strikes in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) in response to the FRY government's continued campaign of violence and repression against the ethnic Albanian population in Kosovo. The mission of the air strikes is to demonstrate the seriousness of NATO's purpose so that the Serbian leaders understand the imperative of reversing course; to deter an even bloodier offensive against innocent civilians in Kosovo; and, if necessary, to seriously damage the Serbian military's capacity to harm the people of Kosovo. In short, if President Milosevic will not make peace, we will limit his ability to make war.

As you are aware, the Government of the FRY has been engaged in a brutal conflict in Kosovo. In this conflict, thousands of innocent Kosovar civilians have been killed or injured by FRY government security forces. The continued repression of Kosovars by the FRY military and security police forces constitutes a threat to regional security, particularly to Albania and Macedonia and, potentially, to Greece and to Turkey. Tens of thousands of others have been displaced from their homes, and many of them have fled to the neighboring countries of Bosnia, Albania, and Macedonia. These actions are the result of policies pursued by President Milosevic, who started the wars in Bosnia and Croatia, and moved against Slovenia in the last decade.

The United States, working closely with our European allies and Russia, have pursued a diplomatic solution to this crisis since last fall. The Kosovar leaders agreed to the interim settlement negotiated at Rambouillet, but the FRY government refused even to discuss key elements of the peace agreement. Instead, the Government of the FRY continues its attacks on the Kosovar population and has deployed 40,000 troops in and around Kosovo in preparation for a major offensive and in clear violation of the commitments it had made.

The FRY government has failed to comply with U.N. Security Council resolutions, and its actions are in violation of its obligations under the U.N. Charter and its other international commitments. The FRY government's actions in Kosovo are not simply an internal matter. The Security Council has condemned FRY actions as a threat to regional peace and security. The FRY government's violence creates a conflict with no natural boundaries, pushing refugees across borders and potentially drawing in neighboring countries. The Kosovo region is a tinderbox that could ignite a wider European war with dangerous consequences to the United States.

United States and NATO forces have targeted the FRY government's integrated air defense system, military and security police command and control elements, and military and security police facilities and infrastructure. United States naval ships and aircraft and U.S. Air Force aircraft are participating in these operations. Many of our NATO allies are also contributing aircraft and other forces.

In addition, since this air operation began, the U.S. Embassy in Skopje, Macedonia, has been subjected to increasingly hostile demonstrations by a large number of Serbian sympathizers. In response, I have authorized a unit consisting of about 100 combat-equipped Marines from USS NASSAU (LHA 4), which is supporting the air operations in Kosovo, to deploy to Skopje to enhance security at our embassy. These Marines will remain deployed so long as is necessary to protect our embassy and U.S. persons.

We cannot predict with certainty how long these operations will need to continue.