

NATO bombed and when the opposition forces started winning some battles on the ground. And we've been able to maintain a peace there.

People don't have to like each other. People may have legitimate grievances. But ethnic cleansing and killing people wholesale because of their race or religion is wrong. And the United States is in a position to stand against it, and we ought to.

I know there are a lot of people who disagree with me. They say, "Well, we don't have any vital national interest." I would argue to you that we do. It's not only a moral, humanitarian issue. We'll be better off if our best allies in the world, in Europe, live in a continent that is whole and democratic and at peace and free of this sort of thing.

First of all, they won't be wasting their money tearing each other up. Secondly, they'll be better trading partners. Thirdly, they'll be better partners in helping us solve problems in other parts of the world. And if we can put an end to ethnic cleansing in Europe, then we can put an end to it in Africa, and we can put an end to it wherever else it rears its ugly head.

If we can't solve this problem, it's very difficult to understand how our children are going to live in peace in a world where every radical terrorist group can get on the Internet and figure out how to build a bomb or get weapons or do anything else they want to do. We have got, at least, to tell people that in the world of the 21st century, it is not okay to kill people just because they're of a different race or ethnicity or religion.

That's why I must say, I want to applaud the Senators who are here, who are trying to pass that hate crimes act in the legislature, in honor of James Byrd. I think it's very important. It makes a statement.

This is the last thing I'll say about this. I've already talked longer than I meant to, but if you don't remember anything else I say, remember this: It is one thing to say that we all ought to get along together and quite another to do what is necessary for us to do so in decency and honor.

The differences among us are a part of what makes life more interesting and makes this country so successful, as long as they are contained. When the differences among us are used, as they are in Kosovo today, as they

were in Bosnia before, as an instrument of human destruction, they can quickly make life unbearable.

Now, we can't force anybody to like anybody else. Maybe not everybody in this place tonight likes everybody else. But we live according to certain rules, and we do it not only because it is morally right but because we do better when other people do well. When we do the right thing or, as Hillary says, when we act like we're in a village, we all are better off.

So I ask you to think about this. The Democratic Party has stood for community and for opportunity and for citizen responsibility. We have refused to accept all these phony choices we were presented with, between economic growth and the environment, between accountability and help in education, and all the other things. These ideas have led America to a better place. That's why I'm here. I'm glad I was President. I hope I was the instrument of a lot of the good things that have happened in this country. But the most important thing is that we continue in this direction, that we stay on this course, that we embrace these ideas. And that is why it is important to support this party.

I'm very grateful to you. Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:38 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to Roy and Mary Spence, dinner hosts; Texas State Senators Carlos Truan and Gonzalo Barrioneto; Gary Mauro, former Texas land commissioner; Judy Trabulsi, Nancy Williams, and Tom Henderson, who worked with the President on the 1972 McGovern campaign in Texas; former Gov. Ann Richards of Texas; and Joseph J. Andrew, national chair, Democratic National Committee. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

May 8, 1999

Good morning. I want to talk to you today about our efforts to help the people and communities devastated by the terrible tornadoes that hit Oklahoma, Kansas, Texas, and Tennessee this week. These tornadoes killed over 50 people, injured hundreds more, and damaged or destroyed thousands of homes and

businesses. I know I speak for all Americans when I say to the families who lost so much, our thoughts and prayers are with you.

Today I'll be flying to Oklahoma City to get a firsthand view of the destruction. This is a duty I've performed many times in the aftermath of many natural disasters. One thing I've learned is that the images we see on television can never fully convey the level of sheer destruction or the depth of human grief caused by these disasters. Yet, I've also learned that the worst of nature can bring out the best in people.

At times like these, families rally together; neighbors help neighbors; strangers reach out to strangers; while police, doctors, firefighters put in 24-hour days in often hazardous conditions without complaint. Natural disasters create many victims but bring forth many heroes. There are some challenges that no individual, indeed, no community can handle alone. And on these occasions the National Government must act quickly, effectively, compassionately.

When I became President, I vowed that the Federal Government would do a better job of helping communities respond to the ravages of nature, and it has. As part of Vice President Gore's reinventing Government effort, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, under the direction of James Lee Witt, has gone from being much criticized to becoming a model of disaster relief, now recognized all around the world for its speed, skill, and dedication.

Officials from FEMA and other Federal agencies are already on the ground in communities hit by this week's tornadoes, healing wounds, searching for missing persons, providing shelter, clearing debris, restoring power and water, issuing emergency expense checks. But more must be done.

Today I'm glad to announce the Department of Labor will spend over \$12 million to provide temporary jobs for some 3,500 Oklahomans. Men and women who lost their jobs and businesses destroyed by the tornadoes will be paid to serve at relief centers, to distribute food and water, to help on construction crews. They'll be able to feed their families by rebuilding their communities.

I'm also announcing today that I'll ask Congress for an additional \$372 million for

FEMA's disaster relief fund. These resources are crucial for our disaster relief efforts, and I urge Congress to act quickly on my request.

Finally, in the balanced budget that I sent to Congress there is \$10 million to further improve the National Weather Service's next generation Doppler radar network. This system makes it possible to issue warnings in advance of coming tornadoes so that local residents can seek shelter. Over the last decade, average warning times have doubled from 6 minutes to 12 minutes. Residents of hard-hit Cleveland County, Oklahoma, received warnings a full 35 minutes before the tornado touched down there this week, and that warning saved lives. That's also why I support the creation of a national weather center for state-of-the-art tornado and severe storm forecasting at the University of Oklahoma.

The Federal Government has a responsibility to provide individuals with the tools they need to improve their own lives. That's what we're doing in Oklahoma this week. Natural disasters test our faith, but they also show us that the old-fashioned American values of neighborly care and concern are still very much alive. And they remind us of the enduring power of the American people to emerge from calamities even stronger.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 6:03 p.m. on May 7 in La Colombe d'Or restaurant in Houston, TX, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on May 8. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 8 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Remarks Following a Walking Tour of Tornado Damage in Del City, Oklahoma

May 8, 1999

Thank you very much. Governor Keating and Mrs. Keating; Congressmen Istook and Lucas. I don't know if Senator Nickles and—there he is, over there. Thank you very much.

We have, obviously, James Lee Witt, our FEMA Director, here with me, and Buddy Young, his Regional Director, and many others here: our SBA Administrator, Aida Alvarez; the Deputy Secretary of Housing and