

Prime Minister Major. No, I'm not remotely concerned about that. We'll discuss the airdrops. I think, as a humanitarian initiative that's very welcome. And it'll have our support. I don't think it is going to endanger British troops.

Q. What is holding you up, Mr. President, in your decision?

The President. Just going through the procedures we have to go through to discuss this with our allies.

News Conference

Q. When are you going to announce a press conference?

The President. You know, I didn't realize it had been so long since I had one. I really didn't, Helen [Helen Thomas, United Press International], until you mentioned it the other day. I need to give you one. I'll get—

Q. When?

The President. I'm going to take it up with our folks. I didn't even know it had been a long time, since I answer these questions all the time.

The Vice President. It seems like there is a press conference every day.

Q. That's not a press conference.

The Vice President. Oh, I know. I know.

The President. I'll do better on that.

Q. You promise?

[At this point, one group of reporters left the room, and another group entered.]

Prime Minister Mulroney of Canada

Q. Do you gentlemen have anything to say about Brian Mulroney in his resignation today?

The President. I wish him well. I talked to him. We had a nice visit. And I don't think that I can add anything to the statement that was made. But I was very appreciative of the conversation we had, and I wish him well.

United Kingdom-U.S. Relations

Q. Can we ask how the special relationship is, Mr. President?

The President. Excuse me?

Q. Can we ask how the special relationship between the U.S. and Britain is?

The President. Absolutely.

Prime Minister Major. You have got the British press. [Laughter]

The President. Absolutely. It's special to me personally, and it's special to the United States, and I think it will be as long as I'm sitting here in this office.

NOTE: The exchange began at 3:10 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

The President's News Conference With Prime Minister John Major of the United Kingdom February 24, 1993

The President. Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I want to formally welcome Prime Minister Major to the White House and to the United States. We are delighted to have him here. As I'm sure you know, he has already met earlier today with people on the Hill and with members of my Cabinet. We have just finished the first of two meetings. We talked for about an hour, and then this evening we'll have a working dinner.

About the conversations we've had so far, I'd just like to make two points. First, we covered a wide range of topics. We talked about Bosnia, as you might imagine we would. We talked about the Middle East. And then the rest of our time was spent virtually exclusively talking

about economic matters, about the upcoming meeting of the G-7; about the importance of trying to get an agreement under GATT and my commitment to that; about the absolute necessity of the United States, Europe, and Japan working together during this difficult time to try to prevent a contraction of the global economy and instead to hopefully promote growth, not only here at home but throughout the world. And we talked about that at some considerable detail.

The Prime Minister, as you know, has been in office a lot longer than I have. And I asked him for his advice about a number of things

and his opinion about others. And we had a very, very good meeting. And I'm looking forward to our dinner tonight.

A second point I would like to make is to reaffirm something that some of you asked me during the photo op, and that is whether the United States will continue to have a very special relationship with Great Britain. The answer to that from my point of view is an unqualified yes. I think that only two Presidents ever lived in England. I think I'm one of only two. There may have been more somewhere in the past centuries. But this is a very important relationship to me, and I think it's off to a very good start. And I would like to say again how much I appreciate the candor with which the Prime Minister has approached the issues, with which we've discussed our mutual interests.

Mr. Prime Minister.

Prime Minister Major. Mr. President, firstly, thank you for your welcome today. And I've found our meeting extremely useful, and I look forward to continuing it this evening. And I certainly had some very useful meetings this morning on the Hill and with other members of your Cabinet earlier this morning, with Lloyd Bentsen, and of course over lunch as well with some of your colleagues.

It's nice, having had a number of telephone conversations over the last few months, to actually see a face across the table rather than just hear a voice across the phone. And I look forward to continuing that dialog this evening.

You set out some of the things that we were able to discuss over the last hour or so. I was particularly pleased we were able to reach such a meeting of minds on the importance of reaching an agreement to the Uruguay round as speedily as possible. I think we share the view that for a raft of reasons it's important to get a satisfactory and fair agreement to the GATT round, not just because of the impetus that will give to trade growth and hopefully to prosperity and job growth as well but also because of the very remarkable advantage that will give not just to the industrialized but to the nonindustrialized world with the many difficulties that are faced economically at the moment. So I was particularly pleased at our meeting of minds on that particular subject.

We found also a complete agreement about the need for the Security Council resolutions that have been imposed in respect to Iraq to be fully met and to be fully honored in the

future. I had the pleasure of being able to welcome the President's initiative, humanitarian airdrops in Bosnia. The United Kingdom—we've got a number of thousands of troops actually delivering humanitarian aid in central Bosnia. They've been doing that for some time. I think as a result of their activities, many people who otherwise might not have lived through this winter have done. And I think this new initiative by the President is thoroughly welcome. So it's been a very worthwhile and a very enjoyable meeting thus far, and I look forward to continuing it this evening.

The President. Thank you.

Northern Ireland

Q. Mr. President, do you still want a U.S. envoy—[inaudible]—Northern Ireland—

The President. Well, let me answer the first question. If the United States can in some way make a constructive contribution to a political settlement, of course, we'd be interested in doing that. But that is not a subject we have discussed in any way so far. And I think I'd rather wait to make further comments until after we have a chance to discuss it.

As far as the campaign, the campaign is over. You're a good one to ask that question, since you know that compared to previous campaigns I've been in, this was just sort of another day at the office. And once you achieve the responsibilities of office, that's what you have to do. I told the Prime Minister today that I was just grateful that I got through this whole campaign with most of my time in England still classified. [Laughter]

Bosnia

Q. [Inaudible]—on Bosnia. I'd like to ask both you and the Prime Minister, what do you think can be accomplished in the airdrops, since many in the military believe that it will not be terribly effective or efficient? And what other steps do you think need to be taken, military steps, in particular, such as some that were discussed during the campaign, in order to inflict enough pressure on the Serbs?

The President. Let me deal with the airdrops first. General Powell came over here last weekend, and we talked for a very extended period of time about this operation and about how we can maximize the safety to United States pilots and other personnel on the planes who'd be involved in this and minimize the prospect that

any humanitarian relief operation could be drawn into the politics and the military operations of this area.

We know that if we are high enough to virtually assure the complete safety of the people who will participate in the airlift, that a percentage of the packages we drop will be outside the more or less half-mile circle that we would be trying to hit. We also know that if we leaflet the area in advance, if we notify the people about what we're dropping and how to use the medicine and what kind of food will be there, to whatever extent people need it, they'll be on the lookout for it. And if they have to walk a mile instead of a half-mile for it, we think they will. So we believe that, A, there is a need in some of the remote areas, and B, we can do this with quite an effective but safe mission.

Now, insofar as other actions, I think there are a number of things that we're looking at. I'm encouraged by the United Nations interest in the war crimes issue. I'm encouraged by the conversation the Prime Minister and I had about the importance of trying to make the sanctions that are now in force actively be more effective.

But I would remind you that our policy is that we want to try to have a good faith in negotiations with all the parties there. We are committed to doing what we can to encourage the Bosnians to engage in negotiations within the Vance-Owen framework. And President Yeltsin has been very forthcoming on his part in trying to help get the negotiations back on track, too.

So, I think we should look at it just from that point of view. It would be a great mistake to read this humanitarian relief operation as some initial foray toward a wider military role.

Prime Minister Major. Can I just add something to that, as you requested. We're able, at the moment, to deliver a substantial amount of aid in central Bosnia by land. But the natural terrain of Bosnia, as a whole, means that isn't practicable for a raft of reasons, not least geographical reasons, at the moment in all parts of Bosnia. I think, therefore, you do have to look at imaginative ways of actually getting food aid and medicine aid through. And I think the prospect that the President is exploring is an imaginative one, and I hope it will prove successful. There are a number of logistics to be worked out.

On sanctions, one of the things we have been discussing in the last half an hour or so is the

prospects of enhanced sanctions, and I think there clearly are opportunities there that we'll need to examine.

Q. Such as?

Prime Minister Major. Well, I think we can improve the sanctions over the Danube, for example. I don't think they're being enforced very effectively.

Russia

Q. I would like to direct my question to both of you. Do you think that Yeltsin, President Yeltsin, is so politically weakened that his days are numbered? Also, what can the U.S. and the allies do to prop him up, to prevent another Communist takeover that could lead to another cold war? And are you going to meet President Yeltsin in March at any point?

Prime Minister Major. I don't think President Yeltsin is weakened by his present conflict to the extent that he's not going to continue. Clearly there are difficulties in the disputes he's had with Congress and, in particular, the Speaker. But I expect President Yeltsin to be there and to continue. I think he's the best hope for the Russians, and I think the policies and the movements towards reform that he has in mind and continues to have in mind are the right ways forward.

I think there are two things we can do to help Russia in general and President Yeltsin. One is the economic assistance that's been provided, and there's a great deal of discussion to be had about whether we're directing that in the right way and in the right volume.

And secondly, I think also there's the political messages of support to the reformers and to the reform policies, personified at the moment in the person of President Yeltsin. But the underlying purpose of the assistance is to assist the reformers and to assist the reform policies in Russia. I think we ought to give them political support as well as the practical and economic support that we've been giving them.

The President. I believe that President Yeltsin has not been paralyzed by what's happened. I support him and his role and what he's trying to do. I have not established a definite date for a meeting with him yet, but I do hope to meet with him soon personally.

I know he's having some trouble with his Congress, but that's part of being in a democratic society with an elected President separate from the Congress. He may just be learning

what it's like in our system. I don't want to minimize that, but I think it is a grave error to assume that he cannot continue and do well. I believe he can.

And I think that in terms of what we ought to be doing about it, I think the Prime Minister has pretty well laid out the kind of political and economic support we ought to be giving. But let me say that as all of you know, I have placed a great priority on this. The State Department will now have an ambassador at large whose job it is to coordinate a response not only to Russia but to all the Republics of the former Soviet Union. And we have a very distinguished American, Thomas Pickering, nominated to be our Ambassador to Moscow. We are putting a lot of effort into trying to support democracy and trying to support economic recovery there.

Multilateral Trade Negotiations

Q. [*Inaudible*—I don't have a word count, sir, but it's interesting that Prime Minister Major here may have said more about the importance of the Uruguay round than you have here in the White House. I wonder, do you take away from your meeting with him any renewed sense of the importance of that round, and if so, how you plan now to approach it?

The President. Well, we're going to ask for an extension of fast track authority. And we're going to really put a real effort into a successful conclusion of the round. I advocated that in 1991 at the beginning of my race for President, and I still feel very strongly that it's important.

I think if you look at the press response around the world to the economic plan I've presented to Congress, it's been very positive because our trading partners have been asking us for years to make a real effort to reduce the debt. And so we're doing that. And I think that sparks hope not only here at home but around the world. And I think if we were to successfully conclude the Uruguay round, that would also spark hope that we will be expanding trade on terms that are fair to everyone. So I'm very hopeful that we can get a trade agreement.

Northern Ireland

Q. Did you raise today the question of human rights in Northern Ireland, and did you get to discuss it with him—

The President. We haven't discussed Northern Ireland at all. And after we do, I'll be happy to answer your questions.

Bosnia

Q. Mr. Prime Minister, you expressed earlier—said that you are not remotely concerned about the British troops, that they will be in any danger because—[*inaudible*—defense against these deliveries, and the President has said—[*inaudible*—slight risk. And I'm wondering, beyond your saying you have this policy, if both of you could give some idea of why you sound so confident there will be no attempts to stop this—[*inaudible*]. There's been a lot of effort to block it so far.

The President. Well, all I can tell you is General Powell has been—let me answer, and then he'll answer—has been asked to design the mission in such a way that we would minimize risk to our folks. And we have obviously engaged in an extensive consultation, which is not over. Helen's [Helen Thomas, United Press International] been asking me every day when I was ready to make this announcement. The consultations aren't over. And one of the things that we want, we want everybody to know that this is a humanitarian mission, that we're prepared to help anybody who needs the food and medicine. And we want the broadest possible support for this. And we want all the people on the ground in the various factions to know that this is not a political issue with us. We're very encouraged by the responses we've gotten so far to all the elements with whom we have discussed this plan. That's all I can tell you.

Q. Mr. Prime Minister, could you answer, please?

Prime Minister Major. I don't think there's a great deal to add to it. As I indicated earlier, there's a twin-track approach. We're providing aid by land. The President has in mind aid delivered by air to areas where we can't reach it by land. I've no reason to suppose that that is going to put at risk the lives of the British soldiers in central Bosnia.

Q. But you're in an area where they have a fighter capability and an antiaircraft weapon. If they don't want this material to be delivered, they have to use that.

Prime Minister Major. Well, you asked the question. I've given you the judgment I make.

Middle East Peace Talks

Q. Mr. President, you said you discussed the Middle East. Did you reach any conclusion, and

do you favor returning to the peace talks even if the Palestinians do not?

The President. We talked mostly about the importance of adhering to the United Nations resolutions as they apply to Iraq and the aftermath of the Gulf war and about our general support for the peace process continuing. We didn't deal with that issue, and I think I ought to wait until the Secretary of State returns from his mission before I discuss it further.

Bosnia

Q. You talk about consultations on Bosnia. Is there any realistic expectations at this point that any other country except for the United States will be involved in this airdrop?

The President. Yes, we might have some other countries involved in it. I don't think it would be—I believe the Prime Minister made his statement. I think he's done his part. His troops are on the ground there. But I think there is a chance that we will have support from other nations.

Q. [Inaudible]—ask Great Britain to participate in the airdrop as well?

The President. No.

Q. [Inaudible]—question to both leaders. Do you think that the current Vance-Owen map forms the fair basis for a settlement of the crisis in the former Yugoslavia?

Prime Minister Major. Well, that's the matter that has to be negotiated between the parties. And I don't think I'm going to express a view on whether that is the right map. I think the process of seeking a negotiated settlement and trying to reach by agreement between the three parties, an agreement on the map that will enable a political settlement to be reached is the right way. But I don't think it's for me to judge whether the map is right.

Clearly, the views of the participants at the moment is that the map isn't right. But that is the purpose of negotiations. That is why I was delighted to hear this morning that Karadzic and Izetbegovic will be joining talks again with Boban so that they can actually talk to Cy Vance and David Owen and see if they can reach an agreement. The first prize is clearly an agreement that is reached voluntarily and willingly and as speedily as possible.

The President. The only thing I would say, just to add to that, is that I agree with what the Prime Minister has said. As you know, the United States feels very strongly that this agree-

ment must be just that, an agreement that must not be shoved down the throat of the Bosnians or anyone else if it's going to work. We also feel strongly that all the parties should negotiate in good faith.

And therefore, I agree with what he said about the map. I would make this further point: The United States has made it clear in our statement of policy that if an agreement is reached in good faith, that we would be prepared to be part of a NATO or United Nations effort to monitor or support the agreement, and that map would be difficult to monitor and support, I think.

But I think we're going to have to—before we make any final judgments, we need to give the parties a chance to reach their accord.

Spending Cuts

Q. Mr. President, on—[inaudible]—economics, you indicated you will find more spending cuts. Will you give a sense of when? And are you really talking about a new round of cuts or just—

The President. Oh well, what I said was, I have invited the Members of the Congress to present them to me and instructed our people to continue to look for them. And I presume as we define things that we're willing to put on the table, we will continue to do it. We don't have any orchestrated theory about how to do that now. But I'd be surprised if there aren't some more coming.

Airbus

Q. Mr. Prime Minister, were you disappointed or taken aback by what the President said the other day about the airbus, and were you reassured by your conversations today?

Prime Minister Major. There's an agreement over the degree of subsidies for projects like airbus. And that agreement continues into July, and I think there is no proposition in what the President said to change that particular agreement.

Northern Ireland

Q. Mr. President, you said you may discuss Northern Ireland this evening. Would you expect to discuss both the—[inaudible]—issue and the human rights issue? And do you share the view expressed by some Members of Congress, Senators and Representatives, that there are abuses to human rights in Northern Ireland that

need to be addressed? And perhaps the Prime Minister would like to address that allegation.

Prime Minister Major. Well, I'll address that point first. The real abuse of human rights in Northern Ireland is the abuse of human rights of people who find bombs in shopping malls when they're going about their ordinary, everyday business. I think that is the abuse of human rights that is overwhelmingly the concern of everybody in Northern Ireland on both sides of the sectarian divide.

Over the past 2 or 3 years, the British Government with the Taoiseach and with the political parties in Northern Ireland, have been engaged on talks to try and find a political settlement to a problem that has existed in Northern Ireland for generations. We are seeking that agreement. Those talks, I believe it is fair to say, have made more progress than most people believed was possible.

Talks came to a halt with the general election in the Republic of Ireland and the forthcoming local elections in Northern Ireland. But it is the policy of my government to resume those talks, to resume those talks with all the parties in Northern Ireland and try and reach a satisfactory political settlement and remove many of the disputes and hatreds that have existed for generations.

Those disputes and hatreds are worsened by violence, whether it is the IRA violence or whether it is the response to IRA violence which has also been prevalent over the last year or so. I condemn both unreservedly and without any distinction.

Q. Mr. President—[inaudible]—respond to that.

The President. I believe that obviously there has to be a political solution there, or there will be no solution at all, and that the human rights issues will have to be addressed in that context. Whether the United States can play any sort of constructive role is something that we want to discuss later this evening.

Press Secretary Myers. Last question.

Economic Program

Q. Mr. President, here just one week after your speech announcing your budget and economic plan, Senator Bob Dole is pronouncing it in trouble. What's your read on that, and do you think this is the start of a war of words that's going to slow down the whole process?

The President. Well, I think you have to expect that there would be some trouble. And the Senate Minority Leader can say that. But he was here during the last 12 years when other Presidents and the Congress quadrupled the national debt. I'm trying to do something about it and turn it around and go in the opposite direction. The surveys show that a big majority of the American people support my initiative. The response from people and governments around the world, it's been almost uniformly positive that America's trying to change the nature of its economic policy, reduce its debt, increase investment in high growth items. And I never expected this to be easy. This is a fundamental change. I don't expect it to be easy. But I hope that I'll be working with Senator Dole and with others to bring it to a successful conclusion.

Q. Can I follow up on that, Mr. President?

Prime Minister Mulroney of Canada

Q. [Inaudible]—Canada? Have you spoken to the Prime Minister?

The President. Yes, I spoke to the Prime Minister of Canada. We had a very nice conversation, which was mostly personal. And I thanked him for his kindness to me. And he assured me that his country would continue to work with me and that he would personally until his tenure in office was over. I wish him well. He seemed to be a person who had worked through this and was very much at peace with himself today.

Prime Minister Major. Can I just answer that point as well? I regard Brian as an old friend and a good friend. I shall miss him. He's been a very good friend to the United Kingdom and a very good friend to the Commonwealth. So I'm sad to hear of his decision today. It must be his decision. I wish him well in the future, and I look forward to seeing him in the United Kingdom in a few weeks' time.

Northern Ireland

Q. Mr. Prime Minister, do you think there's any constructive role the United States can play in solving the Northern Ireland problem?

Prime Minister Major. I think from time to time distinguished visitors from the United States in Northern Ireland have come back to the United States, and they have actually explained the remarkable changes that have taken part in Belfast. There was a delegation that was there recently. And the reality is that anyone

who knew the place 10 years ago and knows the place today will see there is an absolute and total sea change. And I think the fact that there is a great knowledge about the willful peace amongst people in Northern Ireland and especially the ordinary people of Northern Ireland of both sides of the sectarian divide, the more that is understood, the better. And what is actually needed in Northern Ireland to help speed that is more understanding of the process, more support for the talks, more investment for job creation, and less money to fund terrorism.

And the more people know about that, the nearer we come to a solution.

Press Secretary Myers. Thank you.

NOTE: The President's fourth news conference began at 4:32 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, the Prime Minister referred to Lord David Owen and Cyrus Vance, Co-chairmen of the International Conference on the former Yugoslavia; Alija Izetbegovic, President, Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina; Radovan Karadzic, Bosnian Serb leader; and Mate Boban, Bosnian Croat leader.

Statement on the Planned Resignation of Prime Minister Brian Mulroney of Canada

February 24, 1993

Prime Minister Mulroney and I had a good conversation following his announcement that he is stepping down as Prime Minister of Canada. Prime Minister Mulroney has been a good friend and partner of the United States, and I wish him well. The Free Trade Agreement, the NAFTA, and Canada's voice in helping to move the world into a more hopeful era are all testimony to his leadership and courage.

It was a pleasure to meet with the Prime Minister earlier this month and to speak with him several times since my election. I greatly appreciated the Prime Minister's insight and wise counsel in tackling the common challenges of promoting world economic growth and peace. My meeting with him reinforced my conviction that Canadian engagement in world affairs remains as vital as ever. That our meeting was

my first as President underscores the close relationship between our two countries. Our enduring friendship is based on the common vision we share of peace and democratic principles. From peacekeepers in Bosnia and Somalia to partnership in the G-7 and in NATO, Canada has been a true global ally. Both our people benefit from our important trading relationship, with \$200 billion in goods and services alone exchanged each year.

Our steadfast relationship with Canada is an indispensable element in the essential continuity of American foreign policy. As the Prime Minister and the people of Canada prepare for the road ahead, I want them to know that the United States is and will remain their friend and partner. Our cooperation will continue to grow in the years ahead.

Remarks to Business and Labor Leaders and an Exchange With Reporters on the Economic Program

February 25, 1993

The President. Thank you very much. To all the business and the labor leaders who are here, and to Representative Clayton and the many Members of the House whom she represents so ably. Let me begin with a simple thank you

to all of you for your support of our common efforts to turn our country around and put our Nation on the right track.