

marks, he referred to Rear Adm. Thomas C. Lynch, USN, Superintendent of the U.S. Naval Academy.

Remarks to the American Society of Newspaper Editors in Annapolis *April 1, 1993*

Thank you very much, Mr. Topping, distinguished guests at the head table, ladies and gentlemen. I want to say a special word of thanks and acknowledgement to the Superintendent of the Naval Academy, Admiral Lynch, who's here with us and who came up with me. He just gave me something I was told even a politician couldn't get in this country anymore, a free lunch. [*Laughter*]

I just had lunch with 4,000 of the finest young men and women in this country or in any country, who are here at the Naval Academy. I went around the table, the table where I was sitting, and I asked every one of the young men and women who were seated at my table why they decided to come to the Naval Academy. And I wish every one of you could have heard their answers. It would have moved you immensely.

And as I go now to meet with President Yeltsin in Vancouver, I will be even more freshly reminded about what the stakes are, because as much as any group of Americans, those young people about to enter our Nation's Armed Forces have a very great stake in what will occur.

I'm delighted to be here with all of you who do so much to shape what our people think and even to give them access to what they need to know about these and other important issues. Had we met last year, if my voice had been in full flower, we doubtless would have talked almost exclusively about the economic issues facing America. And I am quite mindful of the fact that I am the first member of my party for a very long time who received a majority of the editorial endorsements of America's newspapers. That is something that I took very seriously. I was honored to receive them. And I can only hope that a year or so from now, those of you who did it will still be glad you did. In my heart of hearts, I hope that those of you who didn't will be sorry you didn't. [*Laughter*] But today, in this magnificent place in this

wonderful State, I might also say I'm delighted to be joined here by my former colleague in the Governors' Association and my friend Governor Don Schaefer, the Governor of Maryland. Thank you for being here.

I want to talk to you about the events in Russia, about our policies toward the newly independent states of the former Soviet Union, and about my meetings with President Boris Yeltsin this weekend. But first, I wish to speak about America's purposes in the world. That is not something we often examine, for it is human nature to focus on daily affairs most of the time. In our own lives, we do our jobs, we raise our children, we nurture our relationships, we struggle with the dilemmas of the moment one day at a time. Yet we are each guided by some sense of purpose, drawn from our families and our faith, which shapes the millions of small events of our life into a larger work that bears the imprint of our character.

And so it is in the life of a nation. Decisions command attention. Crises drive action. But it is only with an overriding sense of purpose, drawn from their history and their cultures, that great nations can rise above the daily tyranny of the urgent to construct their security, to build their prosperity, to advance their interests, and to reaffirm their values.

A clear sense of purpose is most essential, yet most elusive, at times of profound global change. A half a century ago, our Nation emerged victorious from the Second World War to discover itself in wholly unfamiliar terrain. The old empires of Europe and Asia were gone. A new Communist empire loomed. Ours was the only economy in the world still strong and dominant.

Former Secretary of State, the late Dean Acheson, later described it as a time of "great obscurity." Yet in that dim obscurity, he and George Marshall and President Harry Truman and other leaders in both political parties saw

the stakes clearly enough. They acted decisively. They accepted the mantle of leadership. Their sense of purpose helped to rescue Europe, to rebuild Japan, to contain aggression, and to foster two generations of unprecedented prosperity and peace.

And now thanks in large measure to their vision, carried forward through succeeding generations, and thanks, too, to the enormous courage of the people of Russia and the other Republics of the former Soviet Union and the people of Eastern Europe, freedom has once again won a very great victory.

Over the past 4 years, the Berlin Wall crumbled. The cold war ended. The Soviet Union gave way to 15 sovereign states. Millions threw off the constricting yoke of communism so they could assume instead the ennobling burdens of democracy.

Yet these victories also confront us with a moment of profound change, a challenge. The collapse of the Soviet Union changed the international order forever. The emerging economic powerhouses of the Pacific are changing the financial order forever. The proliferation of demonic weapons of mass destruction threaten to change the distribution of military power forever. Resurgent ethnic conflict is challenging the very meaning of the nation state. The rise of a global economy has changed the linkages between our domestic and our foreign policies and, I would argue to you, has made them indivisible.

In a time of dramatic global change we must define America's broader purposes anew. And part of that purpose clearly consists of reviving economic opportunity and growth here at home, for the opportunity to do well here at home is the ultimate basis of our influence abroad.

Congress is acting this week to break the gridlock, to build our prosperity. Just today, the Congress passed the heart of my economic program, a long-term plan to drastically reduce the deficit and increase investment in our Nation's economic future. After years of policies that have diminished our future, Washington has finally realized that the best social program is a good job, and the best route to deficit reduction is a growing economy founded on a bold plan of change that will both cut spending and increase investment to empower the working people of this country.

Our program invests in people by changing the Tax Code to reward work and investment;

by working to ensure that anybody who works 40 hours a week and has children in the home won't have to live in poverty anymore; by providing our children with education and nutrition and the immunizations they need to start life successfully; by reinvesting the way we educate and train our workers to make it properly adequate for the new global economy; and by creating jobs now through investment in infrastructure and safe streets and community development in communities large and small all across this land.

The American people had the courage to call for change last November and gave me the awesome opportunity and responsibility to try to implement that change. I am hopeful that Congress will now have the courage to vote for all those changes this week. As I said, today they voted for a plan that both reduces the long-term deficit and increases our investment in the things that will grow this economy, in new jobs and new technologies and new education strategies.

I hope now they will adopt the short-term jobs program that will add a half a million new jobs to this country over the next 2 years. Let me say parenthetically that one of the great challenges of every wealthy country in the world today is not only to promote growth but to create jobs. There are many, many examples in the 1980's, when in Europe and elsewhere countries had great growth but produced no new jobs. That is what has happened here in the last year or so. And we must prove that we can do better.

As I have said so often over the last year and a half, in the global village, with this kind of global economy, there is simply no clear dividing line between domestic and foreign policy. We can't be strong abroad unless we're strong at home. And we cannot be strong at home unless we are actively engaged in the world which is shaping events for every American. There is a sense in which every one of the young people in this country today will live a life which is shaped by events beyond our borders as well as events within our borders.

And so today I say again we must have a clear sense of our purposes around the world. Everyone knows the world remains a dangerous place. And our preeminent imperative is to ensure our own security. That is why we're working to ensure that our military is not only the finest in the world but also specifically tailored

for the challenges of this new era, for the central fronts of our fight for a safe world have moved from the plains of northern Europe to our efforts to stem weapons of mass destruction, to relieve ethnic turmoil, to promote democracy, to expand markets, and to protect the global environment.

During the cold war our foreign policies largely focused on relations among nations. Our strategies sought a balance of power to keep the peace. Today, our policies must also focus on relations within nations, on a nation's form of governance, on its economic structure, on its ethnic tolerance. These are of concern to us, for they shape how these nations treat their neighbors as well as their own people and whether they are reliable when they give their word. In particular, democracies are far less likely to wage war on other nations than dictatorships are.

Emphatically, the international community cannot seek to heal every domestic dispute or to resolve every ethnic conflict. Some are simply beyond our reach. But within practical bounds and with a sense of clear strategic priorities, we must do what we can to promote the democratic spirit and the economic reforms that can tip the balance for progress well into the next century.

From the first hours of my administration, several critical situations have demanded our attention, in Iraq, in Somalia, in Haiti, in the Middle East, in the former Yugoslavia, and elsewhere. We have sought to develop strategies to address these and other immediate challenges. And I'm encouraged by the progress which has been made in most of the areas of challenge.

Yet all of us must also focus on the larger questions that this new era presents. For if we act out of a larger sense of purpose and strategy, our work on the crises of the late 20th century can lay the basis for a more peaceful and democratic world at the start of the 21st century.

The end of the long, twilight struggle does not ensure the start of a long peace. Like a wise homeowner who recognizes that you cannot stop investing in your house once you buy it, we cannot stop investing in the peace now that we have obtained it. That recognition was a triumph of President Truman's era. But unlike then, we lack the specter of a menacing adversary to spur our efforts to engage other nations. Now, not fear but vision must drive our investment and our engagement in this new world.

Nowhere is that engagement more important than in our policies toward Russia and the newly independent states of the former Soviet Union. Their struggle to build free societies is one of the great human dramas of our day. It presents the greatest security challenge for our generation and offers one of the greatest economic opportunities of our lifetime. That's why my first trip out of the country will be to Vancouver, to meet with President Yeltsin.

Over the past month, we have seen incredibly tumultuous events in Russia. They've filled our headlines and probably confused our heads. President Yeltsin has been at loggerheads with the People's Congress of Deputies. Heated political standoffs have obstructed economic change. Meanwhile, neighboring states, such as Ukraine and the Baltic nations, have watched Russia anxiously while they grapple with their own reforms and while they deal with economic problems equally severe.

For most Americans, these events, while dramatic, are still very remote from their immediate concerns. After all, in every community we have our own problems. We've got our own needs. We face a stagnant economy and dislocations brought about by the end of the cold war and the downsizing of the military budget. We've got all these big companies restructuring themselves. And for the last 2 years small business has not created enough new jobs to offset that. It's projected that two-thirds of the growth of our income in the next 5 years, two-thirds, will be absorbed by health care cost increases. And 100 percent of the wage increases for the next 5 years will be absorbed by health care cost increases unless we act. We're worried about our cities, like Los Angeles, coming up on the anniversary of the disturbances there a year ago. And many people say, in the face of all this and with a huge budget deficit, why in the world should we help a distant people when times are so tough here at home?

Well, I know that we cannot guarantee the future of reform in Russia or any of the other newly independent states. I know and you know that ultimately, the history of Russia will be written by Russians and the future of Russia must be charted by Russians. But I would argue that we must do what we can. We must act now, not out of charity, but because it is a wise investment, a wise investment building on what has already been done and looking to our

own future. While our efforts will entail new costs, we can reap even larger dividends for our safety and our prosperity if we act now.

To understand why, I think we must grasp the scope of the transformation now occurring in Russia and the other states. From Vilnius on the Baltic to Vladivostok on the Pacific, we have witnessed a political miracle, genuinely historic and heroic deeds without precedent in all of human history. The other two world-changing events of this century, World Wars I and II, exacted a price of over 60 million lives. By contrast, look at this world-changing event. It has been remarkably bloodless, and we pray that it remains so.

Now free markets and free politics are replacing repression. Central Europe is in command of its own fate. Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia are again independent. Ukraine, Armenia, and other proud nations are free to pursue their own destinies.

The heart of it all is Russia. Her rebirth has begun. A great nation, rich in natural and human resources and unbelievable history, has once again moved to rejoin the political and economic cultures of the West. President Yeltsin and his fellow reformers throughout Russia are courageously leading three modern Russian revolutions at once to transform their country: from a totalitarian state into a democracy; from a command economy into a market; from an empire into a modern nation-state that freely let go of countries once under their control and now freely respect their integrity.

Russia's rebirth is not only material and political; it is genuinely spiritual. As the Librarian of Congress James Billington said, "Evil has been transcended by repentance without revenge. Innocent suffering in past gulags has been given redemptive value. And the amazingly nonviolent breakthrough of August 1991, which occurred on the Feast of the Transfiguration, was indeed a miracle through which ordinary people rediscovered a moral dimension to their own lives." Across what was the Soviet Union, the freedom to pray has been met by a resurgence of worship.

Nothing could contribute more to global freedom, to security, to prosperity than the peaceful progression of this rebirth of Russia. It could mean a modern state, at peace not only with itself but with the world. It could mean one productively and prosperously integrated into a global economy, a source of raw materials and

manufactured products and a vast market for American goods and services. It could mean a populous democracy contributing to the stability of both Europe and Asia.

The success of Russia's renewal must be a first-order concern to our country because it confronts us with four distinct opportunities. First, it offers us an historic opportunity to improve our own security. The danger is clear if Russia's reforms turn sour, if it reverts to authoritarianism or disintegrates into chaos. The world cannot afford the strife of the former Yugoslavia replicated in a nation as big as Russia, spanning 11 time zones with an armed arsenal of nuclear weapons that is still very vast.

But there is great opportunity here. Across most of our history, our security was challenged by European nations, set on domination of their continent and the high seas that lie between us. The tragic violence in Bosnia reminds us again that Europe has not seen the end of conflict within its own borders.

Now, we could at last face a Europe in which no great power, not one, harbors continental designs. Think of it: Land wars in Europe cost hundreds of thousands of American lives in the 20th century. The rise of a democratic Russia, satisfied within her own boundaries, bordered by other peaceful democracies, could ensure that our Nation never needs to pay that kind of price again.

We also face the opportunity to increase our own security by reducing the chances of nuclear war. Russia still holds over 20,000 strategic and tactical nuclear warheads. Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan have nuclear weapons on their own soil as well. We are implementing historic arms control agreements that for the first time will radically reduce the number of strategic nuclear weapons. Now, by supporting Russia's reforms, we can help to turn the promise of those agreements into a reality for ourselves and for our children, and for the Russians and their children, too.

Second, Russia's reforms offer us the opportunity to complete the movement from having an adversary in foreign policy to having a partner in global problem solving. Think back to the cold war. Recall the arenas in which we played out its conflicts: Berlin, Korea, the Congo, Cuba, Vietnam, Nicaragua, Angola, Afghanistan. We competed everywhere. We battled the Soviets at the U.N. We tracked each other's movements around the globe. We lost

tens of thousands of our finest young people to hold freedom's line. Those efforts were worthy. But their worth was measured in prevention more than in creation, in the containment of terror and oppression rather than the advancement of human happiness and opportunity.

Now reflect on what has happened just since Russia joined us in a search for peaceful solutions. We cooperated in the United Nations to defeat Iraqi aggression in Kuwait. We cosponsored promising peace talks in the Mideast. We worked together to foster reconciliation in Cambodia and El Salvador. We joined forces to protect the global environment. Progress of this kind strengthens our security and that of other nations. If we can help Russia to remain increasingly democratic, we can leave an era of standoff behind us and explore expanding horizons of progress and peace.

Third, Russia's reforms are important to us because they hold one of the keys to investing more in our own future. America's taxpayers have literally spent trillions of dollars to prosecute the cold war. Now we can reduce that pace of spending, and indeed, we have been able to reduce that pace of spending, not only because the arms of the former Soviet Union pose a diminishing threat to us and our allies. If Russia were to revert to imperialism or were to plunge into chaos, we would need to reassess all our plans for defense savings. We would have to restructure our defenses to meet a whole different set of threats than those we now think will occur. That means billions of dollars less for other uses: less for creating new businesses and new jobs; less for preparing our children for the future; less for the new technologies of the 21st century which our competitors in Germany, Japan, and elsewhere are pouring money into right now, hoping they can capture the high wage jobs of the future. Therefore, our ability to put people first at home requires that we put Russia and its neighbors first on our agenda abroad.

Fourth, Russia's reforms offer us an historic opportunity. Russia, after all, is in a profound economic crisis today. But it is still an inherently rich nation. She has a wealth of oil and gas and coal and gold and diamonds and timbers for her own people to develop. The Russian people are among the most well educated and highly skilled in the world. They are good people sitting on a rich land. They have been victimized by a system which has failed them. We

must look beyond the Russia of today and see her potential for prosperity. Think of it: a nation of 150 million people able to trade with us in a way that helps both our peoples. Russia's economic recovery may be slow, but it is in the interest of all who seek more robust global growth to ensure that, aided by American business and trade, Russia rises to her great economic potential.

The burning question today is whether Russia's economic progress, whether Russia's democratic progress will continue or be thwarted. I believe that freedom, like anything sweet, is hard to take from people once they have had a taste of it. The human spirit is hard to bottle up again, and it will be hard to bottle up again in Russia. Yet if we cannot be certain of how Russia's affairs will proceed, we are nonetheless certain of our own interests. The interest of all Americans lie with efforts that enhance our security and our prosperity. That's why our interests lie with Russian reform and with Russian reformers led by Boris Yeltsin.

America's position is unequivocal. We support democracy. We support free markets. We support freedom of speech, conscience, and religion. We support respect for ethnic minorities in Russia and for Russian and other minorities throughout the region.

I believe it is essential that we act prudently but urgently to do all that we can to strike a strategic alliance with Russian reform. My goal in Vancouver will be that. And that will be my message to the man who stands as the leader of reform, Russia's democratically elected President, Boris Yeltsin. I won't describe today all the specific ideas that I plan to discuss with him. And of course, I don't know all those that he will discuss with me. But I want to tell you the principles on which our efforts to assist reform will rest.

First, our investments in Russian reform must be tangible to the Russian people. Support for reform must come from the ground up. And that will only occur if our efforts are broadly dispersed and not focused just on Moscow. I plan to talk with President Yeltsin about measures intended to help promote the broad development of small businesses, to accelerate privatization of state enterprises, to assist local food processing and distribution efforts, and to ease the transition to private markets. Our goal must be to ensure that the Russian people soon come to feel that they are the beneficiaries of reform

and not its victims. We must help them to recognize that their sufferings today are not the birth pangs of democracy and capitalism but the death throes of dictatorship and communism.

Second, our investments in Russian reform must be designed to have lasting impact. Russia's economic vessel is too large and leaky for us to bail it out. That's not what's at issue here. Our challenge is to provide some tools to help the Russians do things that work for themselves. A good example is Russia's energy sector. Russia is one of the world's largest oil producers; yet millions of barrels of the oil Russia pumps each month seep out of the system before ever reaching the market. Just the leakage from Russia's natural gas pipelines could supply the entire State of Connecticut. The Russians must make many reforms to attract energy investments. And by helping to introduce modern drilling practices and to repair Russia's energy infrastructure, we can help Russia regain a large and lasting source of hard currency. Over the long run, that effort can help to protect the environment as well and to moderate world energy prices. We have a direct interest in doing that.

Third, our people must do what we can to have people-to-people initiatives, not just government-to-government ones. We have entered a new era in which the best way to achieve many of our goals abroad is not through diplomats or dollars but through private citizens who can impart the skills and habits that are the lifeblood of democracy and free markets. We intend to expand efforts for retired American business executives to work with Russian entrepreneurs to start new businesses. We intend to work so that our farmers can teach modern farming practices; so that our labor leaders can share the basics of trade unionism; so that Americans experienced in grassroots activities can impart the techniques that ensure responsive government; so that our Armed Forces can engage in more exchanges with the Russian military; and so that thousands and thousands of young Russians who are reform's primary beneficiaries and reform's primary constituency—so that they can come to our country and study our government, our economy, and our society, not because it's perfect but because it's a great example of a democracy at work.

Fourth, our investments in reform must be part of a partnership among all the newly independent states and the international community.

They must be extended in concert with measures from our allies, many of whom have at least as much stake in the survival of Russian democracy as we do. Working through the international financial institutions, we can do great things together that none of us can do by ourselves.

This principle is especially important as we help Russia to stabilize its currency and its markets. Russia's central bank prints too many rubles and extends too many credits. The result is inflation that has been nearly one percent a day. Inflation at such levels gravely imperils Russia's emerging markets. In Vancouver, I plan to discuss the progress we are making among the major industrialized nations to help Russia make the leap to a stable currency and a market economy. While we cannot support this effort alone in the United States and while we must insist on reciprocal commensurate Russian reforms, American leadership to curb inflation and stabilize the currency is essential.

Fifth, we must emphasize investments in Russia that enhance our own security. I want to talk with President Yeltsin about steps we can take together to ensure that denuclearization continues in Russia and her neighboring states. We will explore new initiatives to reassure Ukraine so that it embraces the START Treaty, and to move toward the goal of the Lisbon Protocol agenda, which was intended to ensure that Russia is the only nuclear-armed successor state to the Soviet Union. Ukraine will play a special role in the realization of these objectives, and we recognize our interest in the success of reform in Ukraine and the other new states. I'll talk with President Yeltsin about new efforts to realize the two-thirds reduction in United States and Soviet strategic nuclear arsenals envisioned under START. And I'll suggest steps both of us can take to stem the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, something that will be a major, major cause of concern for years to come.

Sixth, we must recognize that our policies toward Russia and the other states comprise a long-term strategy. It may take years to work completely. That was the key to our success in the cold war. We were in it for the long run, not to win every day, not to know what every development in every country would be. We had clear principles, clear interests, clear values, a clear strategy, and we were in it for the long run. As the Soviets veered from the

terror of Stalin to the thaw of Khrushchev, to the gray days of Brezhnev, to the *perestroika* of Gorbachev, our purpose always remained constant: containment, deterrence, human freedom.

Our goals must remain equally fixed today: above all, our security and that of our allies but also democracy, market economies, human rights, and respect for international law. In this regard, I welcome President Yeltsin's assurance that civil liberties will be respected and continuity in Russia's foreign policy maintained as Russia strives to determine her own future.

The path that Russia and the other states take toward reform will have rough stretches. Their politics may seem especially tumultuous today, in part because it's so much more public than in decades past, thanks to the television and to the other mass media. Then, the ruler of the Kremlin had only subjects; now, the ruler of the Kremlin has constituents, just like me, and it's a lot more complicated. We must be concerned over every retreat from democracy but not every growing pain within democracy.

Let me remind you of our own early history. It was marked by revision of our governing charter and fistfights in Congress. Vaclav Havel has noted, "Democracy is not a destination, but it's a horizon toward which we make continual progress." Just remember how long it was from the signing of the Declaration of Independence to forging a real new Constitution to the election of the first President, and then you can't be so impatient about what's happened in the short stretch of time from Gorbachev to Yeltsin to the present crisis. As long as there are reformers in the Russian Federation and other states leading the journey toward democracy's horizon, our strategy must be to support them. And our place must be at their side.

Moreover, we and the Russian people must not give up on reform simply because of the slow pace of economic renewal. Recall for a moment how many of the world's economic success stories were written off too soon. Western visitors to Japan in 1915 dismissed its economic prospects as dismal. Korea's economy was described as a "hopeless case" by American experts in 1958, and look at them now. Many Germans after World War II anticipated decades of national poverty. A German Minister of Economic Affairs noted after the war, "Few realized that if people were allowed once more to become aware of the value and worth of freedom, dy-

namic forces would be released." The miracle of prosperity that Japan, Korea, and Germany have discovered awaits those who are willing to sustain democratic and economic reforms in Russia and in her neighboring states. I believe that, and I hope you do too.

Despite today's troubles, I have great faith that Russian reform will continue and eventually succeed. Let me here address directly the Russian people who will read or hear my words. You are a people who understand patriotic struggle. You have persevered through an unforgiving climate. Your whole history has been punctuated with suffering on a scale unknown to the American people. You heroically withstood murderous invasions by Napoleon and Hitler. Your great literature and your music, which has so enriched our own culture, were composed with the pen of longing and the ink of sorrow. Your accomplishments of education and science speak to your faith in progress. And now, as you seek to build a great tomorrow for Russia upon a foundation of democracy and commerce, I speak for Americans everywhere when I say, we are with you. For we share this bond: The key to each of our futures is not in clinging to the past but in having the courage to change.

As we look upon Russia's challenges, we should remember, all of us, that the American and Russian people have in common so much. We are both rooted deeply in our own land. We are both built of diverse heritage. We are both forever struggling with the responsibilities that come with vast territory and power. We both have had to deal with the dilemmas of human nature on an immense scale. That may be why there has been so little real hatred between our people, even across the decades when we pointed weapons of nightmarish destruction at each other's lands.

Now, as in the past, America's future is tied in important ways to Russia's. During the cold war, it was tied in negative ways. We saw in each other only danger. Now that the walls have come down, we can see hope and opportunity.

In the end, our hope for the future of Russian reform is rooted simply in our faith in the institutions that have secured our own freedom and prosperity. But it is also rooted in the Russian people. The diversity of their past accomplishments gives us hope that there are diverse possibilities for the future. The vitality of Russian journalism and public debate today gives us

hope that the great truth-seeking traditions of Russian culture will endure and that Russia's antidemocratic demagogues will not, indeed, must not in the long run prevail. And the discipline of Russia's military, which has proved itself anew in August of 1991 and since, that discipline gives us hope that Russia's transition can continue to be peaceful.

Fifty years ago, in a different period of historic challenge for Russia, the great Russian poet Anna Akhmatova wrote, "We know what lies in the balance at this moment and what is happening right now. The hour for courage strikes

upon our clocks, and the courage will not desert us."

The opportunity that lies before our Nation today is to answer the courageous call of Russian reform, as an expression of our own values, as an investment in our own security and prosperity, as a demonstration of our purpose in a new world.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:26 p.m. in Dahlgren Hall at the U.S. Naval Academy. In his remarks, he referred to Seymour Topping, president of the society.

Question-and-Answer Session With the American Society of Newspaper Editors in Annapolis

April 1, 1993

Bosnia

Q. Mr. President, I support your vision and am grateful to be here for this historic speech. As a journalist and a citizen I am deeply anguished over the reports from Bosnia: deliberate, premeditated rape, the shelling of innocent civilians, families forced from their homes, children crushed to death in desperate attempts to escape. I'd like to ask two brief questions. Do we have a national interest in checking the spread of greater Serbian ethnic cleansing in the Balkans? And are we losing our credibility as a nation as this horrifying aggression in a sovereign state continues without your unrestrained, forceful, and public condemnation of it?

The President. Yes, we have a national interest in limiting ethnic cleansing. I disagree with you that I have not given a forceful and public condemnation of it. I think the issue is whether you think the United States is capable of doing what Europe has not in somehow forcing its will upon Bosnia and the former Yugoslavia. Since I have become President we have dramatically stiffened the embargo on Serbia. We have hurt them very badly economically, but the war continues. We do not have the votes in the United Nations at the present time to lift the embargo on arms to the Bosnians. If we did, it would endanger the humanitarian mission there carried on by the French and British, who

oppose lifting the embargo, and they have kept many people alive.

I decided that I would support the Vance-Owen peace process when it was clear that that was what our European allies wanted to do and that that was the best vehicle for a potential peace. Now, the Bosnians and the Croats have signed on to that, the Muslims and the Croats in Bosnia. We are waiting to see whether the Serbs will. If they do not, we will then have to contemplate where we go from there. But I would remind you that when I became President the situation there was already grave. We had a policy through the United Nations which I think was of limited effectiveness, which I have tried to stiffen as well as I could.

But the United States has many commitments and many interests, and I would just remember that the thing that I have not been willing to do is to immediately take action the end of which I could not see. Whatever I want to do, I want to do it with vigor and wholeheartedly. I want it to have a reasonable prospect of success. And I have done the best I could with the cards that I found on the table when I became President. If you have other ideas about what you think I ought to do that would minimize the loss of life, I would be glad to have them.

Q. Sir, do you condemn it here today?

The President. Absolutely. I condemn it, and