

The President's News Conference With European Community Leaders May 7, 1992

President Clinton. Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. We have just completed our first meeting of the leaders of the United States and the European Community. I would like to offer a warm welcome to Washington and the White House to Prime Minister Rasmussen and to President Delors.

I had the pleasure of meeting with President Delors earlier, in March, and I'm delighted now to have the opportunity to see the Prime Minister of Denmark and the leader of the EC. Before I comment on some elements of the meeting, I want to describe first the attitude of this administration toward the European Community.

It often seems to be the case that there is a great deal of focus, understandably, on some of the trade disputes that divide us rather than the bonds which unite us. It's useful to recall that our common ground is far, far wider than the areas of disagreement. The United States has long been a strong proponent of European unity and the importance of our transatlantic ties. Thirty-one years ago, President Kennedy made a statement that I believe holds as true today as it did then. He said, "We see in Europe a partner with whom we could deal on the basis of full equality in all the great and burdensome tasks of building and defending a community of free nations." That same vision guides this administration.

The European Community is our largest single trade and investment partner. Our relationships with Europe are directly responsible for an inordinate number of American jobs, and if we cultivate that relationship properly and grow our trade and investment, it will mean more economic opportunities for the American people.

Even more important perhaps is our shared commitment to democratic values, to the protection of basic human rights, and to our collective responsibility to assist others who aspire to those values in their own society. We fully support Europe's efforts toward further integration, and we will work with the European Community to achieve our common goals.

We believe a strong and united European Community as a key partner in the pressing

problems around the world is very much in the interests of the United States. I want our partnership to be effective in finding solutions to the problems that we face together and to those few problems which continue to divide us.

Today we agreed to provide leadership to assure a successful conclusion to the Uruguay round. A new GATT agreement could spark economic recovery in Europe and create waves of growth around the world. I have worked quite hard on this in the last several weeks. Just a few days ago I met with the Finance Ministers and the Central Bankers from the G-7 countries. And I said to them what I said today to Prime Minister Rasmussen and what I reiterated to President Delors: The United States wants a successful GATT round, and we are prepared to take a lot of trouble to get it done. We agreed that we would do that. My guests and I are committed to wrapping up these negotiations by the end of the year. We directed our negotiators to proceed urgently with other trading partners to restore momentum to the negotiations. Our aim is to have tangible progress to report when Prime Minister Miyazawa hosts us in Tokyo in July.

We also reviewed the continuing tragedy in the Balkans. We agreed to work closely to avert further aggression against innocent populations. I've already answered some questions about this today, and I think I will let my guests make their statements before we make further comments.

We discussed our common efforts to support democratic reform in Russia, Ukraine, and the other newly independent states of the former Soviet Union. The results of the referendum in Russia clearly indicate support for the approach that we have taken. We agreed that the G-7 summit partners must continue to demonstrate their support for reform in Russia and in these other countries.

I thank the EC leaders for the role they have played in encouraging the Middle East peace talks and the support they have given to the United States in working toward a successful conclusion to those talks. We also had a brief discussion about the growing similarity of our approaches toward protection of our environ-

ment and other global problems. These are areas in which we can do more together. I asked the Prime Minister for some advice on health care and how they dealt with that in Denmark. We talked a little bit about the role of training the work force and its impact on productivity and how we need it to make both Europe and the United States more competitive in the global environment. And we agreed that we had a lot of things that we could learn from each other on and work together on.

We believe, finally, that we have proved in Europe and the United States that you can have societies that are diverse and strong, societies that have a rich mosaic of different cultures but band together in common values of democracy and economic freedom and human rights. We know from the hard experiences of this century the importance of collective action in Europe to advance our common security. For all these reasons, I believe today more strongly than ever that we share a future of cooperation and progress.

Thank you both for coming to Washington. I look forward to the progress we can make together in the weeks and months and years ahead.

Mr. Prime Minister.

Prime Minister Rasmussen. Thank you, President. Mr. Prime Minister, ladies and gentlemen, I wish to join the President of the United States in his positive appreciation of the result of this meeting.

We had, throughout, constructive talks. And of all important issues, I think we have been basing our talks on openness and on common ground. In view of the initiative of the Danish presidency to strengthen the transatlantic dialog, I find that the consultations today were most encouraging. May I mention that we have underlined and we did agree today, I think, that the American-EC consensus on the need to strength our cooperation, not least on the economic growth area and the need for creating new employment, is so important that it did play a major role in our discussion. And I feel that we also, as the true upholders of democracy and free markets, have a wide range of jobs to do together.

That leads me, Mr. President, to the subject you mentioned yourself, which I feel that the whole world are waiting upon the next answer to give. We have had an extensive and useful discussion on the tragic conflict in the former

Yugoslavia, in particular in Bosnia-Herzegovina. We both confined and confirmed ourself in having responsibility here. We both agreed upon the need to go forward together. And it is my view that this will happen. On Monday the Foreign Ministers will meet in Brussels of the EC. We have seen some new developments during the last couple of days. Let me mention the most important ones:

The leadership in Belgrade have said they will isolate the Serbs in Bosnia. Consequently, we must keep President Milosevic to his word.

Secondly, this means that the Bosnian Serbs now defy the whole international community's acceptance of the Vance-Owen plan. We, therefore, do not take the so-called Bosnian parliament's "no" for an answer.

And thirdly, I think that the international community, in particular the United States, the European Community, and Russia, is considering ways to increase the pressure on the Serbs in Bosnia. And may I confirm also, Mr. President, that the effectiveness of the sanctions has been a very, very important—has an important effects, and I want to thank you for the effective cooperation on that area also.

Let me finalize my comment about the Bosnian case. We keep all options open. We must continue to follow the path we have taken up until now, namely that any additional measure should be taken and that we should take it together under the auspices of the United Nations Security Council.

Allow me to turn to a few other major issues which I think is important. You mentioned yourself, Mr. President, the revitalization of the war of the economy. I was very happy today to state that after comments by President Delors and yourself, we did confirm each other once more in more detail the progresses on the GATT negotiations and the Uruguay round should be realized and would be realized also so that we together at the G-7 meeting in summer can present some positive results.

I feel also that our discussion about Russia was very promising, and I want to thank you about these interesting positive attitude. And may I finalize by underlining our environmental common issue and goals. Once more I feel that what we have done today is the next important step also in environmental question. What we do in Europe and what you do in the United States do have important issues and effects on both countries and situations.

So what we shall do once more is to cooperate, be it economics, be in foreign policy, be it the tragic war in Bosnia. Thank you so much for a good meeting and very constructive attitude, Mr. President.

President Clinton. Thank you.

Mr. President.

President Delors. President, Prime Minister, just a few words after the declaration of Mr. Rasmussen. My colleagues and myself thank President Clinton to give us the opportunity to discussion. I don't come back on Bosnia, but discussion was very fruitful just before an important meeting of the minister of foreign relations next Monday in Brussels.

On the other subject, we have deepened our discussion on the Uruguay round. And since my first visit to President Clinton, I note that we have made progress together in terms of procedure and also in terms of substance. We concentrate our mind on the market access with the hope to finalize concrete results and to come back to Geneva through a multilateral declaration.

We have also spoken about the economic outlook. For the first time, the Community has taken an initiative at the European level, mixed initiative with Community action and national action to improve the situation of the economy. We expect more growth with this first package, but we intend to rule over the situation and to complete, if possible, this package as far as the room to maneuver of the Community and each country allow the possibility to complete this package.

And we have also discussed about the future framework of the large Europe with the efforts met by the Community to open their market to the Eastern European countries and also to have this country's close cooperation, not only on the economic field but also in the political field.

Thank you.

Bosnia

Q. Mr. President, does this mean that you are closer now to getting the European Community to match up tougher military action in Bosnia?

President Clinton. Well, I think it means that the Prime Minister's words mean exactly what they say. The Prime Minister said to me in our conversation that he thought that some of the reports of the journey of Secretary Chris-

topher across the European capitals had minimized the extent to which European leaders and citizens in Europe feel responsible to do more to try to put an end to the killing and the suffering in Bosnia, and that as long as I was committed to the idea that we ought to do these things together, he thought we would move forward together to take more aggressive steps.

I told you, I can't be more specific than I have been. You know pretty much where I am, but I think I have to wait until Secretary Christopher comes home and gives me his report.

Q. So far, though, they have not gone along with you.

President Clinton. That's not entirely true. There has been a lot of agreement on what should be done. There is still some disagreement around the edges about what the overall specific tactical steps should be, but I think that there is a lot more agreement than you think. And I think in the next few days you will see a common approach emerging.

Q. Mr. President, you talk about a common approach. Does that automatically assume the use of force? And is the United States willing to provide arms to the Bosnians?

President Clinton. I think you know how I feel about that. I think that the imposition of the arms embargo by the United Nations, before actually this country was even created and recognized, had the unintended consequence of giving the Serbs an insurmountable military advantage, which they have pressed with ruthless efficiency.

So I feel very badly about what happened there. I think that's certainly one of the options that we have urged that be considered, and I think it's certainly one of the options that's still on the table. I think we've got to keep the heat on.

Let me ask first—we ought to rotate this. Is there a member of the European press here? Anybody here from Denmark or from the European Community covering the European Community?

Prime Minister Rasmussen. I see a couple of Danes over there.

President Clinton. Could you call on them, Prime Minister? We're going to have some equal opportunity here.

European Community

Q. Mr. President, do you understand the

many things people don't want to join the EC?

President Clinton. Don't want to join the EC?

Q. Yes.

President Clinton. Of course. That's a decision that's up to Denmark, of course. You'll get to vote on the Maastricht Treaty. But I can only—it's not for me to tell the people of Denmark how to vote, but I support the European Community. I support the Maastricht process. I hope it will prevail, but that's, of course, up to you.

Bosnia

Q. Mr. President, it appears, sir, that however things go, you may soon be asking Congress for some sort of approval or authorization for further action in the Balkans. Have you thought through, sir, what form you would want that to take and what it would be?

President Clinton. I have given some thought to it, Brit [Brit Hume, ABC News]. I'm going to be heavily guided there by the leadership, the bipartisan leadership in the Congress and people who care most about these issues. I think that, again, before I make a final decision on that, I'm very, very anxious to talk to Senators Nunn and Lugar and the other four Senators who went across the region and all the way to Moscow in the last week. And obviously, it's important that I have my report from Secretary Christopher, but I've given some thought to it. I think it depends in large measure on the sense of the Congress about how we ought to proceed as well—

Q. Mr. President, our bombing campaign during the Gulf war had only limited effectiveness. The Air Force was unable, for example, to take out the mobile SCUD missile sites. Given that fact, what rationale would there be for going to air strikes in Bosnia which is much more difficult terrain with artillery and installations that could be moved very easily?

President Clinton. Well, let me answer you in this way. If I decide to ask the American people and the United States Congress to support an approach that would include the use of air power, I would have a very specific, clearly defined strategy to pursue and very clear tactical objectives for the use of that air power, which would have a beginning, a middle, and an end, and which not only I but our military advisers had advised me could be achieved.

To be fair to the military in the Gulf, that's exactly what they said. If you remember, we had a different set of objectives in the Gulf

and a very different opponent. The land was more open and easier to bomb, but they also were more heavily armed with missiles. So it was a completely different situation.

I assure you today that if I decide to ask for the authority to use air power from the Congress and from the American people, I will make it very clear what the tactical objectives are, and they will be objectives that our military leaders say can, in fact, be achieved.

Health Care

Q. You said that you asked Mr. Rasmussen about the health care in Denmark. What about social affairs? Could you use anything from Denmark or the Scandinavian welfare system?

President Clinton. Perhaps. One of the things that we talked about, generally, was the extent that which all of our countries are now facing common problems. But each nation in Europe and the United States has perhaps done one thing better or more completely or in a more advanced way than another nation. And I think—something that's important is not to reinvent the wheel.

Yesterday I had a meeting with Republican leaders of the House and the Senate on the question of health care, and one of the things that encouraged me quite a lot is that some of them had actually traveled to Europe to look at some of the health care systems there. I think the more we can share with each other and learn from one another across a wide range, the better off we're going to be.

Andrea [Andrea Mitchell, NBC News].

Bosnia

Q. Mr. President, why do you think the Europeans have been so reluctant on the issue of lifting the arms embargo, whereas they have considered other options, but on that they seem to be fairly well stuck? And then I'd like it if Prime Minister Rasmussen could comment on his views on lifting the arms embargo.

President Clinton. Well, I don't think it's for me to speak for the Europeans. I think the arguments against lifting the arms embargo are fairly clear. You might argue that it will only widen the violence. You might argue that during the time between when you vote to do it and when it has an impact, it will only encourage the Serbs to intensify their efforts to kill and to gain territory. I think you might argue that it might make it difficult in the end to have

a settlement. I understand all those arguments. For me, they are outweighed by other considerations. But there are very serious concerns about that.

Q. Mr. Prime Minister?

Prime Minister Rasmussen. Yes. First of all, I think that what the President said, that we want to go together; and that, point two, we haven't closed any options, any options; and point three, I think that the discussion about lifting the weapons embargo, you cannot take that isolated.

You have, as the President said, to evaluate and to take decisions upon the first step, the next step, and the next step. And you have to have clear political goals: what should you obtain, and what is at stake, and what is your means. So, in my mind—and I think we had a quite useful and constructive discussion—in my mind, you cannot exclude any options, which I have underlined, including the question you mentioned. But, on the other hand, I feel that you cannot discuss weapon embargo lifting without placing it in a whole range of issues with other steps. That is at stake in the discussion right now.

The President. Susan [Susan Spencer, CBS News].

President's Approval Rating

Q. A non-Balkan question. We have a poll out tonight that shows that your job approval rating has gone from 64 to 49 percent in the last 2 months, with particular erosion on the economy, which is what most people think you were elected to fix. Why do you think this has happened, and what, specifically, do you think you can do about that?

President Clinton. I think there are two reasons. One is that I've been forced to deal with a lot of other issues. Most voters in this country don't like it when you spend any time on foreign policy because of the economic problems of the country. Secondly, I think even though the voters overwhelmingly supported the job stimulus package, what they really want is for the gridlock to end. And thirdly, I think that there is an inevitable sense that things take—people want things to happen immediately that don't happen immediately. And finally, I think that the stimulus got more publicity than the budget resolution. I think that, for example, I bet not 5 percent of the American people know that we passed a budget which has record-breaking defi-

cit reduction and a long-term investment plan, and it passed at the most rapid point of any budget in 17 years. I bet not 1 in 20 American voters knows that because we did it, and success and the lack of discord is not as noteworthy as failures. So a multi-trillion-dollar budget resolution got—I'm not criticizing you; this is just part of the deal—got less play than a \$16 billion stimulus failure. So I think that people only can vote on and express what they know.

I think the other big problem is, I haven't been out there as much as I should have been engaging the American people directly since February. I've been here doing huge, heavy lifting and long meetings on health care and the economy. That's what I've been working on, and I've been forced to deal with a lot of other issues. I think when the American people see that the program that I promised them on February 17th is still intact and on the boards and going forward, when they realize that we are going forward with health care and that that is, notwithstanding, what the perception is, taking the lion's share of my time and attention, and when I get back out there and engage them again on it, I think that those things will turn around.

But you know, you can't operate this job by polls. Anybody who thinks they can be President by polls—I didn't run the Governor's office that way. The only thing that matters is the polls that come around on election day, those are the things that matter. And you have to be willing to take on tough decisions. It takes a certain amount of time to do things, to make difficult decisions and to work through them, and you can't carry on a totally continuous campaign. It's simply not possible.

Middle East Peace Talks

Q. Mr. President, on the Middle East, you mentioned the Middle East talks. Do you think the U.S. should now offer proposals to bridge the gaps? Should the Syrians offer a full peace before Israel agrees to withdraw from the Golan Heights? And could you accept or see a Palestinian state eventually emerging from the talks?

President Clinton. If I answer any of those questions I will undermine the Middle East peace talks. The real answer to that question is, if those parties can agree among themselves in good faith to proposals which will bring an end to the hostilities between Egypt and Syria—

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I mean, between Israel and Syria, between Israel and the Palestinians—they can get the multilateral talks going, if they bring in the Jordanians, the Lebanese, that the United States will be prepared to be supportive of their agreements. That is the answer to that. And I hope they can reach them.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President's 14th news conference began at 2:03 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Slobodon Milosevic, President of Serbia.

Nomination for the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Valley Authority *May 7, 1993*

The President announced his intention today to nominate two Tennesseans, Johnny Hayes and Craven Crowell, to serve as members of the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Valley Authority. Following his confirmation, Mr. Crowell will be designated by the President as Chairman of the Board.

"The Tennessee Valley Authority is one of the great success stories of the 20th century," said the President. "It transformed the life of

an entire region, and still has tremendous impact today. Through their years of service to their State and their Nation, Johnny Hayes and Craven Crowell have proven themselves capable of exercising stewardship over this important institution."

NOTE: Biographies of the nominees were made available by the Office of the Press Secretary.

Nomination for the National Council on Disability *May 7, 1993*

The President announced today that he intends to nominate five new members to the National Council on Disability and that he has approved the nomination for reappointment of two others.

"I am pleased to announce these additions to the National Council on Disability," said the President. "With the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act, people with disabilities are now able to fully participate in our society. These outstanding people will ensure that all Americans are judged by their abilities, not their disabilities."

Among those the President will nominate is Marca Bristo, the president and executive director of Access Living of Metropolitan Chicago. Following her confirmation and appointment, Bristo will be designated by the President as Chair of the Commission.

The other new members the President will nominate are:

Michelle Alioto, television director, producer, writer, and host, and cofounder of the American Paralysis Association

Bonnie O'Day, executive director, Boston Center for Independent Living;

Hughey Walker, chairman, Georgetown (SC) County Council

Katie Pew Wolters, executive director, Steelcase Foundation, and member, Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council

The members being nominated for reappointment are:

John Anthony Gannon, president emeritus, International Association of Fire Fighters, and founder, John A. Gannon and Associates

Lawrence Brown, Jr., business and community relations manager, Xerox, and former running back for the Washington Redskins