

Q. And also the President of Bosnia calling for air strikes, too.

The President. Well, the President of Bosnia, yes—but what the NATO leaders, what the others voted for was to leave on the table the proviso that bombing could be done in order to relieve Sarajevo if that were appropriate or to further the U.N. mission by opening the airstrip at Tuzla or, if necessary, to facilitate the transfer of troops from Canadian to Dutch at Srebrenica. Now, that is a very rather narrow NATO mandate.

And what happened was as soon as the meeting was over, it was not clear how strongly or firmly some of them felt about that. But I think it's also clear that the U.N. Secretary General, who has a say in some of those decisions, but not all of them, based on what the international law is now, is still opposed to it. And I don't have any information that leads me to believe that the other NATO allies, that the heads of state as opposed to people in the European Parliament, have changed their mind about whether there should be any bombing at this time.

That's all I can tell you.

Q. What about—

The President. Let me say, I believe in general what I've always believed. There's not going to be a settlement in Bosnia until the sides decide that they have more to gain from signing a peace agreement than by continuing the fighting. And now the government finally has been able to get some arms, even though it was, in my view, unfairly the only side subject to

the arms embargo—they've been able to get some weapons. And they appear to be, the Bosnian government, most reluctant to sign a peace agreement at this time. But if they can work out something on access to the sea and protection of Sarajevo and then the Moslem enclaves to the east, perhaps we can still get an agreement. But there will not be—the killing is a function of a political fight between three factions. Until they agree to quit doing it, it's going to continue. And I don't think that the international community has the capacity to stop people within the nation from their civil war until they decide to do it.

Now, there are things we can do to retard it, to keep it within bounds, to keep it within humanitarian limits. And I wouldn't rule out any of those options. But there has been no decision by anybody to enter the war on the side of one of the combatants, which is what some would like. But there has been no decision to do it. They're going to have to make up their own mind to quit killing each other, and the circumstances are, in fact, on the battlefield are somewhat different than they have been for the previous 12 months. But I hope that it means that it's more likely that there can be a settlement, and I still have some hope that that will occur.

NOTE: The exchange began at 12:06 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks Announcing the Nomination of William Perry To Be Secretary of Defense and an Exchange With Reporters

January 24, 1994

The President. Thank you very much, and good afternoon. I want to welcome all of you here, especially the distinguished Members of Congress who are here and the members of Secretary Perry's family, whom he will introduce later.

One year ago I selected Dr. Bill Perry to serve as my Deputy Secretary of Defense. Today, based on his lifetime of accomplishment and his solid leadership at the Pentagon, I'm

proud to announce my intention to nominate him as the next Secretary of Defense.

He has the right skills and management experience for the job. He has the right vision for the job. He has served with real distinction as both Under Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Defense. For years and throughout his service this past year he has been at the cutting edge on defense issues.

Years ago he had a vision of the power of Stealth technology, technology that helped the

United States to win the Persian Gulf war and helped save American lives. He's been a leader in reforming the Pentagon's procurement process and improving financial accountability. And I expect he'll have more to say about that today and in the weeks and months ahead.

He's been instrumental in developing a defense budget for the coming fiscal year that protects the readiness of our forces and promotes our aggressive efforts at defense conversion and the development of dual-use technologies and the creation and the preservation of American jobs. And he played an important role in the recent breakthrough to eliminate Ukraine's nuclear weapons.

He brings a broad and valuable background to this job. He has proven experience in the private sector, is chairman, director, and founder of several successful defense-related corporations. He's served in the United States Army. His academic career as a professor of mathematics and engineering has also contributed to our Nation's security. And in every aspect of his work, Bill Perry has earned high respect from members of both parties, in the Congress, in the military, among those who study military strategy, and in the business community.

He's demonstrated leadership, integrity, and a mastery of his field. Time and again, we heard about him what I have come to know personally: Bill Perry is a real pro. You can depend on him. That's why Secretary Aspin and many others recommended that I select Dr. Perry for this post.

Let me note with appreciation that Secretary Aspin has agreed to stay, as he said he would, until his successor is confirmed.

Now we have a lot of work ahead of us. We need to continue reshaping our forces for this new era so that they remain the best trained, the best equipped, the best prepared, and the most strongly motivated in the world. We must implement the recommendations of the bottom-up review. We must continue to deal with the new threats of weapons proliferation and terrorism. We must continue our aggressive work at defense conversion to save and create American jobs and to maintain our industrial base that is so critical for our national defense. And we must reform the procurement process.

Bill Perry comes extraordinarily well-prepared to meet these challenges. I hope and I trust that Congress will quickly confirm him. And I look forward to working closely with him as

an integral part of the national security team. I think he will do a remarkable job.

Dr. Perry.

[At this point, Defense Secretary-designate Perry made brief remarks.]

Secretary of Defense Nominee

Q. Did you have to be persuaded to take this job, and what do you think will be the toughest part of it?

Deputy Secretary Perry. No, I did not have to be persuaded to take the job. I met with the President to discuss this job Friday morning, and I left that meeting fully prepared to take on the job. I had a meeting with my family that evening, because it's not just me that's getting into this job. I put them under considerable strains when I do it, too. And we had a follow-up meeting on Saturday morning with the White House where I told them that if I had to accept the job at that time, my answer would have to be no.

I met then with the Vice President. And he told me I could take my time, take some more time on the decision, meet with my family further. I took advantage of that, and on Sunday afternoon I called the Vice President back and said if you still want me for your Secretary of Defense I'm eager to serve.

Q. Dr. Perry, why did you have second thoughts?

Deputy Secretary Perry. The second question here—

Q. Sir, why didn't you say yes immediately? What made you have to think about it?

Deputy Secretary Perry. I tried to explain that. It was because I did not want to drive my family into my decision without their support. And so I wanted to wait until I had the full support for it.

Q. Mr. President, why was this job so hard to fill?

The President. It wasn't easy to fill—it wasn't hard to fill, I mean. We had an abundance of talented people to consider, but I asked Secretary Perry, and he said yes. It wasn't difficult at all. I mean, I can't say any more than you already know about what happened in the previous example. But we didn't go on a big search here. We had a very short list, and I quickly narrowed it to one. I had an interview with one person. I asked him if he'd take the job, and he did. I don't think that qualifies as dif-

ficult. Now, I have had some difficult positions to fill, this one wasn't.

Q. Well, what do you think he brings to the job that your current Defense Secretary did not?

The President. I don't think the two things are related. Secretary Aspin made his statement last month; we had our press conference on that, we answered your questions. It's got nothing to do with what we said here today.

Women in the Military

Q. Mr. Perry, are you going to go along with Secretary Aspin's views on military women in planes and ships and—

Deputy Secretary Perry. Yes.

The President. Good for you, Sarah [Sarah McClendon, McClendon News Service].

Deputy Secretary Perry. Secretary Aspin created many important legacies in his year. I mentioned the bottom-up review, his work on all of the social aspects in the military. In particular, his advancement of the women in combat is one which I enthusiastically support.

Secretary of Defense Nominee

Q. Dr. Perry, is there anything at all in your background that's come up over this past week-end of vetting that could conceivably cause you or the administration any problems during the Senate confirmation process? In that regard, I'm specifically also referring to the so-called "nanny problem."

Deputy Secretary Perry. Nothing has come up that I believe would cause me any problems in the confirmation process.

Russia

Q. Dr. Perry, do you think that with the return to conservative government in Moscow,

that there's a possibility there may be a new cold war starting? I mean, it's early, but are there trends?

Deputy Secretary Perry. I would observe that we cannot control the events in other countries, including Russia, but we can influence them. And I believe the President has adopted a program to assist not just the Russians but many of the nations in the former Soviet Union to help stabilize their economy, and this is the most constructive thing we can do to minimize the chance of that unfortunate disaster occurring.

Defense Budget

Q. Was your answer categorical about the nanny question, Dr. Perry?

Q. What about the current budgetary crunch, sir, that the Pentagon faces and the possible difficulty you may have in actually carrying out the blueprint that the President has laid out?

Deputy Secretary Perry. In order to carry out the bottom-up review with the funds that are posed for it, we will have to manage the Pentagon very well. We will have to have real acquisition reform. We will have to have careful planning and management of our programs. We have to do all of this while we're maintaining a very high level of readiness and a level of morale and cohesion in the military forces. It is a difficult management job, and I believe it's doable, and that's what I'm undertaking to do.

Thank you.

The President. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:08 p.m. on the State Floor at the White House.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on the Cyprus Conflict January 24, 1994

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. Chairman:)

In accordance with Public Law 95-384 (22 U.S.C. 2373(c)), I am submitting to you this report on progress toward a negotiated settlement of the Cyprus question. The previous report covered progress through September 15, 1993. The current report covers the remainder of September through November 15, 1993.

On September 20, 1993, the United Nations Security Council responded to the September 14 Report of the Secretary General on his good offices in Cyprus. The reply was contained in a Presidential letter and conveyed the Security Council's continued support for the Secretary General's efforts. In the letter, the Security Council reiterated the obligation of both parties