

our part in bringing an end to this dangerous conflict.

During this Olympic season, let us recall that only 10 years ago the winter Olympics were held in Sarajevo. Today, Sarajevo's athletic fields have been transformed into makeshift cemeteries for those killed in that city's siege.

In the week since NATO issued the ultimatum, the big guns around Sarajevo have fallen silent. Now let us work to help make this break in the violence continue so that Sarajevo's future may be marked by images of peace rather than by those of war and carnage.

While the cold war may be over, but the world is still full of dangers and the world still looks to America for leadership. Now, with our interests at stake and with our allies united at our side, let us show the world our leadership once again.

Thank you, and God bless America.

[At this point, the radio address ended, and the President took questions from reporters.]

#### Bosnia

Q. Mr. President, has President Yeltsin assured you that the Russian role will be entirely constructive and under the NATO leadership and that there is no risk of a renegade Russian force protecting Serb weapons or Serb forces?

The President. Last night the United Nations Commander on the ground, General Rose, said that he was confident that all the U.N. forces, including the Russian forces, would carry out the U.N. mandate. And I have no reason to believe otherwise.

Q. But has President Yeltsin given you any such assurance? When was your last communication with him?

The President. When did I talk to him—the day before yesterday, I think. And we've been in constant communication. Based on my communications with him, I have no reason to believe otherwise.

Q. Mr. President, if there is compliance, is Sarajevo sacrosanct, or will you try to extend and pose the ultimatum in other parts where their slaughter goes on?

The President. I think for the next day and a half I'd like to let my statement stand for itself.

Q. Mr. President, could you just give us an idea of what you think the likelihood would be of the need for air strikes?

The President. I have nothing to add to the statement I made on that. I think my statement's pretty clear.

Q. Do you wish you had prevailed a year ago on this, in this action, and could have saved thousands of lives?

The President. We didn't have the votes we needed, though. We didn't have the consensus a year ago, we have now.

Q. Do you agree with Mr. Churkin that if there are air strikes, it could lead to a wider war—it would in fact produce a wider war?

The President. The purpose of the air strikes is made clear in the resolution of NATO and what the U.N. asked us to do. I think it is clear and self-contained and stands for itself. The words are clear.

#### President's Health

Q. Are your eyes doing better, Mr. President?

The President. They are much better. The doctor told me that nothing would heal them but time, and they're getting a little better. I don't look like the monster from the deep as much as I did 2 days ago.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:06 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Lt. Gen. Michael Rose, Commander of the U.N. Forces in Bosnia. Deputy Foreign Minister Vitaly Churkin was the Russian Special Envoy to the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia.

## Remarks and an Exchange With Reporters on Bosnia February 20, 1994

The President. I talked this morning with Secretary Perry and General Shali and General Joulwan and Admiral Boorda in Europe. There

is a lot of activity on the ground. The Serbs seem to be moving weapons and also bringing the U.N. forces to the weapons that cannot be

moved. So that much is encouraging. But we are monitoring this as the day goes on. The deadline will stand, and I expect to get further reports throughout the day and to talk to Manfred Woerner later in the day after we see what happens.

*Q.* There seems to be some flexibility on this deadline. I mean, is it exactly at 7 p.m. our time, even if they found out they couldn't move certain weapons?

*The President.* The deadline only makes the artillery positions subject to attack, and I think that we should keep the deadline and we should keep working at it. There may or may not be some questions about whether all those weapons can be put into U.N. control, depending as much as anything else on the weather there. And we're just monitoring it.

Right now the report I got just before I came to church here was encouraging, directly from Secretary Perry and the military command we have there. But we're just going to have to wait and see what happens as the day unfolds.

*Q.* Are you hopeful, Mr. President, that you won't have to bomb?

*The President.* Well, I'm hopeful because of what I see happening. But basically, we have the procedures in place now, and as I said yesterday—I want to say again—what happens after 7 p.m. tonight will be determined by the facts on the ground. We have already authorized, I and the other leaders in the NATO coalition, we have already authorized our military commanders, working with the U.N., to draw their own conclusions and take appropriate actions. So the mechanisms are in place. This will be determined, as I said yesterday, entirely by what happens on the ground. We'll just have to see.

*Q.* Does the United Nations still have to authorize the first strike?

*The President.* Yes, the United Nations would have to approve the first strike. And right now,

as I said, the activities on the ground seem encouraging. We'll just have to see. But there are still, plainly, weapons that are not yet under U.N. control, and they're not yet beyond the 20-kilometer safe zone. So we'll just have to see.

*Q.* Are you going to talk to Yeltsin before you—

*Q.* Are you going to talk to President Yeltsin?

*The President.* Well, we are in touch, close touch with the Russians, and I may well talk to him before any final determination is made. But that decision has not been made yet, and partly it's a function of the huge time difference, you know, between Washington and Moscow and what time it will be there by the time we know something. But we are keeping in close touch with the Russians, and I may well talk to President Yeltsin within the next 24 hours.

*Q.* What are you going to do all day?

*The President.* I don't know yet. I'm going to go take my family to lunch right now. It's a nice day, and I'm just going to be—

*Q.* Where are you going?

*The President.* We'll probably go back to the house and eat. But I'm going to be where I can get some reports.

Thank you.

NOTE: The exchange began at 12:51 p.m. outside Christ Episcopal Church. During the exchange, the President referred to Secretary of Defense William J. Perry; Gen. John Shalikashvili, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; Gen. George A. Joulwan, Supreme Allied Commander, Europe; Adm. J.M. Boorda, commander in chief, U.S. Naval Forces in Europe; and NATO Secretary General Manfred Woerner. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

## Statement on Results of NATO Action on Bosnia February 20, 1994

I have just been informed by NATO Secretary General Manfred Woerner that NATO and United Nations commanders have concluded that all known heavy weapons of the parties

have been withdrawn from the exclusion zone around Sarajevo, are under the control of the United Nations, or soon should be. Therefore,