

there. They have soldiers on the ground in Bosnia. And we had a good talk. And I think there have been further communications today between the Secretary of State and the Foreign Minister and between the Secretary of Defense and the Defense Minister. So we are trying to work very closely with the Russians. They have a critical role to play if we are going to get these peace talks going again. And I hope we can.

Q. [Inaudible]

The President. We had quite a good talk, I thought. I explained to him what happened. I think in the beginning he was concerned that he didn't know about it in advance. I explained clearly what happened, that the United Nations asked for this, that Boutros-Ghali the day before had put out a press release supporting this action if the shelling didn't stop, that General Rose had received the appropriate approval

from the civilian authority in Bosnia, and that it was an action taken under existing authority, and that indeed I thought that the U.N. had notified all the UNPROFOR members that it would be taken, but that it was not any kind of new or different thing. And when these things occur, there is often not a lot of time. There was just, you know, somewhere between 30 minutes and an hour and a half, I think, the decisionmaking time. I don't know the exact time, but we responded in an entirely appropriate way, I think, under the circumstances.

Thank you.

NOTE: The exchange began at 9:19 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House, prior to a foreign policy meeting. In his remarks, the President referred to U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks in a Telephone Conversation on Public Housing April 11, 1994

Secretary Henry Cisneros. Mr. President, this is Henry Cisneros in Chicago.

The President. Hello, Henry, how are you?

Secretary Cisneros. Good, sir. I'm here with Senator Carol Moseley-Braun and Congressman Bobby Rush and Vince Lane of the housing authority, who's a good friend of yours, and about 200 folks at Progressive Community Church. And we are gathered together to talk about how to deal with the violence that's plagued the Chicago Housing Authority, Robert Taylor, Stateway, and other developments, over the last couple of days.

We're sitting at a table with about 20 guns that were picked up last night in police actions, a very violent weekend that resulted in about 15 shootings and 5 deaths. One 16-year-old was killed last night at Washington Park Homes, here in the area. We're looking at about 20 or so rifles, pistols, automatic weapons that were picked up in police action last night. So this is a very serious circumstance, and the group is very appreciative for your call, sir.

The President. Well, I'm very concerned that—all the efforts that have been made there over the last several years, and I'm glad Senator

Moseley-Braun's there; I'm glad Bobby Rush is there; I know you're in his district. And I know Vince Lane remembers the trip that we took into Robert Taylor Homes back in 1991, before I even started running for President. And I'm so worried that all the progress that's been made will be undermined by the court decision. I wonder if some of this violence has not been almost aggravated by the decision. And I'm hoping that you'll be able to find a constitutional solution to this working with the Attorney General.

I know that this bike team effort last night did net a significant amount of guns and other things, and I'm encouraged by what you say. I want to encourage all the citizens who are there that we're going to do everything we can to support them and enable them to have control over their lives and not allow criminals to find shelter in the very public housing communities that they're terrorizing. I think it's very important. I just want to say, you tell me what you think we have to do, and I'll do it. I've seen what can be done there when people can take control of their own destinies. And I think

we owe it to them to do everything we can to give them their homes back.

Secretary Cisneros. Mr. President, we're looking at a strategy that is essentially four elements. And I'll prepare a report for you with the Attorney General and have something on your desk, hopefully, by tomorrow or the next day. But obviously the first piece is to focus on the sweeps and the legality of what can be done to get the sweeps constitutional; secondly, to focus on other security measures, other measures we can take, such as Operation Safe Home and other things we can do; thirdly, to focus on such things as recreational programs this summer, recreational activity, midnight basketball, ballparks, antigang things, youth mentorship—critically important, and the community recognizes that's so; and then finally to focus on the long-term-vision remake of public housing in Chicago. And we've got some ideas about that. And I'll get it all to you in writing. But I just wanted to give you kind of the strategy.

I'm going to ask Senator Moseley-Braun to say a word, if I may, Mr. President.

Senator Carol Moseley-Braun. Good morning, Mr. President.

The President. Good morning, Senator.

[*Senator Moseley-Braun suggested that the public housing problem be addressed by investing money in securing buildings, providing security forces, and creating jobs and opportunity.*]

The President. Thank you. You know, there's some money in the—some significant money, especially in the House version of the crime bill, that would provide for some jobs for young people in high crime areas.

Senator Moseley-Braun. Right.

The President. And that's one of the things that we tried to do in rewriting it over on the House side, was to get some money in there so that we could determine the impact on the crime rate of providing jobs for people. I think—of course, I know you agree with me, what we're going to find is if we can go into some of these neighborhoods and put people to work, the crime rate will go way down.

[*Senator Moseley-Braun voiced support for the legislation and reiterated the need for initiatives to reverse the history of neglect.*]

The President. Thank you.

Senator Moseley-Braun. Thank you again, sir.

The President. Thank you so much.

Representative Bobby Rush. Mr. President?

The President. Yes.

Representative Bobby Rush. Bobby Rush. How are you doing?

The President. Hi, Bobby. Nice to hear your voice, Congressman.

[*Representative Rush thanked the President and called on Congress to assist in finding resources to improve public housing. He then introduced a community leader who listed problems facing residents of public housing and encouraged the President to take a stand.*]

The President. Thank you very much. Thank you for what you said.

Secretary Cisneros. Mr. President, thank you very much.

The President. I want to thank the gentleman for his remarks. As I said, I once came to Chicago and visited the projects with Vince Lane shortly before I declared for President. And I would like to come again. And I do care a lot about what's going on there. And I'm encouraged by this meeting. And I want to thank Secretary Cisneros for so promptly responding to my request and going over there and spending the night and getting in closer touch with the situation. I feel better about it. And I hope we can do some things to help. I believe we can.

Secretary Cisneros. Mr. President, thank you for calling. I'm going to sign off with Vince Lane saying a couple of words to you, and we'll close out. We appreciate your time very much. We know there's things swirling in the world and you've got a busy schedule, so we deeply appreciate your call.

The President. Thanks.

Mr. Vince Lane. Mr. President?

The President. Yes, Hi, Vince.

Mr. Lane. How are you?

The President. Great.

[*Mr. Lane, Chicago Housing Authority chairman, thanked the President for his leadership in sending Secretary Cisneros and involving Attorney General Reno to address the problems in Chicago public housing.*]

The President. Well, thank you, Vince, and thanks for blazing away for us and making people believe that we could actually do something to improve life in public housing. You showed me that it could be done years ago, and I'm

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convinced that maybe we can use this court decision as a spur to even do a better job, a more comprehensive job. We're going to do everything we possibly can.

Mr. Lane. God bless you.

The President. Thanks. It's nice to hear your voice.

Goodbye, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you.

NOTE: The telephone conversation began at 10:27 a.m. The President spoke from the Oval Office at the White House.

Remarks to Law Enforcement Officers *April 11, 1994*

Thank you very much, Officer Williams, if you just keep doing your work, and I'll be glad to carry your notebook anytime. There are a lot of days when you do more than we do up here anyway. [*Laughter*] I want to thank you, and thank you, Earline Williams, for your commitment and your remarkable statement and the work you and your husband are doing. Thank you, Eddie, for reminding us that we have an obligation to fight for your future. Thanks for bringing your friends, and thank you, officers, for giving him something to look up to and believe in. I want to welcome the new officers from Albany, Georgia, and thank them for their commitment to law enforcement and thank all the other people in law enforcement who are here at the local and State and Federal level.

In the last congressional recess, like the Attorney General, I got out around the country and listened to people, talked to them about a lot of issues. And I found that all over the country in every region, among people from all walks of life, all races and income groups and political parties, there is a deep concern about the tide of crime and violence in this country and about the underlying strains on our fabric as a common people that these have imposed.

We have simply got to do everything we can to move forward in helping the American people to reduce crime, to say no to those things which they ought to say no to, and to give our young people some more things to say yes to.

I came here today to emphasize how terribly important it is that the House of Representatives consider the crime bill immediately on its return. The Speaker has agreed to do that. I then want the Senate and the House to get together and resolve their differences and send me the crime bill as soon as possible. The American

people have waited long enough. We don't need to waste their time with frivolous or political amendments and delay. We don't need to take months on a task that can be done in a couple of weeks. If the bill is on my desk in weeks, I will only take a minute to sign it, and then the American people will begin to have the tools they need to solve so many of their problems.

This has been a good year for us in this country. Our deficit is going down, and our economy is going up. Twice as many private sector jobs have come into this economy in the last 14 months than in the previous 4 years. After 7 years of gridlock, the Brady bill became the Brady law and is already working to stop felons and fugitives from purchasing handguns. And I'm proud that it was passed with the help of America's law enforcement officers.

But everything that we are trying to do to move this country forward and to bring this country together will be undermined unless we can give the American people a greater sense that they are secure in their homes, on their streets, and in their schools. The number of murders has tripled since 1960; so has the number of crimes per uniformed police officer. Death by gunfire will soon surpass death by car accidents. Almost a third of all of our families have had someone victimized by crime. Today, one in 20 American children carry a weapon to school, and over 150,000 stay home every day because they're afraid of what might happen to them in school.

We know the crime bill cannot solve all these problems. We know many of them will have to be solved by those people who are here today in uniform and people like them and the friends and neighbors they have, like Mrs. Williams. We know that. We know that unless there are