

Q. Mr. President, are you trying to sell the Prime Minister on the benefits of the *Apache* helicopter?

The President. I've already done that. I've already made my pitch, if you will.

Prime Minister Kok. And Mr. President, if we don't buy them, we remain a great country.

The President. That's right. We have—you know, our relationship with the Dutch, it's a very—it's a deep and broad and complex one. There are a lot of things involved in it, and this is just one part of it. We are allies in every sense of the word, in so many ways. And we have to continue to work together. There are a lot of problems in Europe and beyond that require our cooperation and our mutual support. And of course, we have a terrific commercial relationship as well. So we have a lot riding on this relationship, and no single element of it can be allowed to define it.

United Nations Peacekeeping

Q. [Inaudible]—about U.N. peacekeeping forces that may be in jeopardy because of the attitude of the Republican Party?

The President. Well, I don't agree with the attitude of the party with regard to the peacekeeping forces in Bosnia and with regard to at least some of what I've seen in the House of Representatives on peacekeeping generally. I believe the United States should participate in peacekeeping. I think we should pay our way. I think we should continue to be a strong force there.

With regard to Bosnia, I think we should—the United States should support the Contact Group and should support those countries that do have their soldiers on the ground and at risk there. And we have said, for example, if we had to withdraw, if UNPROFOR collapsed, we would try to do our part to help people get out of Bosnia safely. But I think it would be a mistake for the United States to go off on its own and start making independent Bosnia policy. We don't have our soldiers there. The Europeans do have soldiers there; the Canadians have soldiers there. They have put their lives at risk. We have spent a lot of money in Bosnia, and we have supported from air and sea and from our hospital in Croatia, and a lot of other ways we've supported the operation of the U.N. in Bosnia.

Q. So you're with our Prime Minister and against the Republicans in this matter?

The President. That's correct. That's essentially—

Q. [Inaudible]

The President. [Inaudible]—Constitution—

Q. [Inaudible]

The President. There has to be a difference of opinion in the United States or you're on the long end of it—you're in the right position. [Laughter]

NOTE: The exchange began at 10:27 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

The President's News Conference With Prime Minister Wim Kok of The Netherlands

February 28, 1995

The President. Please be seated. Welcome. It's indeed a pleasure to welcome Prime Minister Kok to the White House. Since the days of our Revolutionary War when The Netherlands gave shelter to John Paul Jones' ships, The Netherlands has consistently been one of our most valued and trusted allies.

I also have warm personal recognition, Mr. Prime Minister, of your country. I last visited it a few years ago when I was Governor of Arkansas, and I hope I have a chance to visit

it again. In the meanwhile, I'm glad we had the opportunity to return the hospitality today.

The Prime Minister comes here at a very important time, when we are seeking to work together to meet the challenges of the post-cold-war era. One of the most vital issues we discussed is the effort to build a more integrated, more secure Europe, to ensure that democracy and prosperity grow strong in the years ahead. We reaffirmed our intention to press

ahead with the enlargement of NATO to include Europe's new democracies.

The Netherlands is playing a leading role in building bridges to these new democracies. It was the first NATO nation to host a Partnership For Peace exercise on its own soil, something for which we are very appreciative.

We also agreed that in parallel with this expansion NATO must develop close and strong ties with Russia. We share a vision of European security that embraces a democratic Russia.

The Prime Minister and I discussed a broad range of issues, including our interest in continuing to expand trade between our two nations. Not many people know just how rich our partnership is. The Netherlands is our eighth largest trading partner. And the Dutch people obviously think the American economy is a good bet because they have invested more in the United States than anyone except Britain and Japan. I hope this trading relationship will continue to grow with our friendship in the years ahead.

During our talks, we also agreed on the importance of indefinite extension of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons. We reviewed our joint efforts in the Caribbean where we are working together to combat narcotics trafficking.

I want to thank the Prime Minister and all the people of The Netherlands, especially, for the support they have given to our common efforts to restore democracy in Haiti, a truly remarkable success story to date. No other European nation has been as forthcoming at every stage of this endeavor, from sending ships for sanctions enforcement, to the police monitors in the multinational force, to the Dutch Marines, who are part of the U.N. mission. Like their involvement in the peacekeeping in the former Yugoslavia, this vital help to the people of Haiti writes yet another chapter in the great Dutch tradition of supporting humanitarian relief efforts and human rights around the world.

When I spoke 2 weeks ago at the Iwo Jima Memorial commemoration, I admired once again the wonderful gift that The Netherlands gave us in thanks in part for our part in liberating their country in World War II, the wonderful Netherlands Carillon. Today, I want to thank the Prime Minister and the people of The Netherlands for renovating and updating the Carillon, which is now receiving a 50th bell. This is the gift that I have here. Now, as the

Prime Minister reminded me, some of the bells are as big as he and I are. But this 50th bell, which I assure you—it's been over in the Oval Office for a day or so, and we have all lifted it. It's quite heavy and quite wonderful, and we thank him for this.

Bells have rung out the news of victory and liberty for centuries. As we move forward to meet the challenges of this new century, it is fitting that we and our Dutch friends will be reminded of the common cause we shared 50 years ago by the sound of this beautiful new bell. May it also be sounding 50 years from now and even beyond.

Mr. Prime Minister.

Prime Minister Kok. Thank you very much, Mr. President. Let me, first of all, express my gratitude and the gratitude of Minister for Foreign Affairs Van Mierlo to be here. Having been here at this official working visit, this visit underlined once and again the close links and the excellent cooperation and relation between our two countries, both on a bilateral basis and also in the international framework. And so I want to thank you for that occasion.

You said a few words about this bell. Indeed, this is one of the smallest ones we have, but it's number 50, number 50 on a row. And this symbolizes, with the words "Freedom" and "Friendship" on it, it symbolizes how grateful we still are and ever remain for the way in which the United States and the United States soldiers participated in liberating our continent, liberating our country. And I will be proud to see and to hear from far away, from in The Netherlands when, on the 5th of May of this year—

The President. We will ring—

Prime Minister Kok. —at the day where, 50 years ago, The Netherlands were freed, that the bells will ring, all the bells will ring, and that symbolizes then, again, our friendship.

Coming back to the main purpose of our talks and our visits, the President indicated the subjects that have been discussed. I think we live in a world where cooperation, partnership, and leadership is more necessary than ever before. In this world, we in The Netherlands participate in European cooperation. We want to strengthen the European Union. We want to expand the European Union. We want to offer perspective to the peoples of the Central and Eastern European countries that they can be part of our integrated European Union. And we want to

work on the security architecture together with the United States.

We are convinced—Europeans—but I'm even more convinced that without transatlantic cooperation, European integration at the end will not be successful. So we need each other. We need the United States in that role, and we want to strengthen our identity in Europe also in this field, foreign policy, security policy, but together with the United States.

And I want to end by saying that especially in this time, the role in which you, Mr. President, use the word "leadership," the way in which you are prepared to take the lead in going the way into the right direction in the universal context is impressive and encouraging, because we need each other. We need strong and good cooperation between Europe and the United States. We need leadership.

Sometimes I'm a little bit concerned about tendencies in American society where you get the impression—but I'm only here for a few days—you get the impression that there is a certain tendency towards isolationism, stepping somewhat back from the international scene. And that would be very riskful, to put it mildly. That would be very riskful, because responsibility and leadership is a necessity now and forever.

Thank you very much.

The President. We'll begin with one question from an American journalist, and then we'll alternate between the American and the Dutch journalists who are here.

Iran

Q. Mr. President, what can you tell us about the presence or nonpresence of missiles at the opening of the Persian Gulf?

The President. I can tell you that basically what General Shalikashvili said is accurate, and it's a situation that we're monitoring very closely. The missiles are rather old. As you know, they've been here for some time, in the possession of the Iranians. And we are monitoring them, trying to evaluate exactly everything we need to know about them. But we're on top of the situation, and we think there is no undue cause for concern at this moment.

United Nations Peacekeeping

Q. I have a question for the Prime Minister and the President. First, the President. The Prime Minister has expressed deep concern about the debate in this city of scaling down

the American contribution to U.N. peacekeeping operations. Especially the Republicans are pushing hard this idea. But when it comes to this point, who is responsible, though, the Republicans on Capitol Hill, or the President of the United States?

And to the Prime Minister: Which Washington did you like the best, the Washington of Dole, who you met yesterday, or the Washington of President Bill Clinton?

Prime Minister Kok. I will have to think about my answer. So, first, perhaps the President. [Laughter]

The President. You asked him the right question in the wrong way, so I'll try to fill up some time so he thinks of a clever answer. [Laughter]

Well, let me say our Congress has voted already. It's a matter of American law to reduce our peacekeeping contribution from 31 percent down to 25 percent, more in line with our world share of GDP, although it's smaller than that.

Nonetheless—and that was done before the last elections. And it was a part of an agreement I reached with the Congress that at least secured the money that we owed when I became President in back debts to the U.N. The United States was the biggest debtor to the U.N. We owed money, and I was trying to get the money and trying to move forward.

Now, we have been very active in supporting reforms of U.N. practices, in which I think we are in accord with, with The Netherlands on that. And we wanted to pay our dues, and we want to stay active in peacekeeping—at least our administration does. I appreciated what the Prime Minister said. A lot of Americans are understandably concerned about their own problems in the economic and other challenges we have here at home. But we cannot afford to walk away from not only the obligations but the opportunities to work together with other countries to solve problems before they get more severe and before the United States could be dragged in at greater costs in treasure and in human life.

So I very much support the comments the Prime Minister made. I have tried to keep the United States actively engaged with Europe, with Asia, with Latin America, and indeed with the entire globe in pursuing an aggressive strategy of promoting democracy and freedom and peace and prosperity. And that will continue to be my policy. It is a policy that under our

Constitution I can pursue as long as I am the President. But the Congress does have the ability to appropriate or fail to appropriate money. That is their job under our Constitution.

So that will answer most of your questions when you think about these conflicts coming up and what the United States can and cannot do. If I have a difference of opinion with them, if it relates to the appropriation of money, that's their first job. If it relates to the conduct of foreign policy under the Constitution, that's my primary job.

Prime Minister Kok. Now comes a difficult question. Well, let me tell you this. I'm not here to compare. I'm here to listen and to debate. And I'm grateful that the President of the United States explains his policies and his position in the way he did in our meeting.

In addition to this, I want to say this: We, to a certain extent, also see in other parts of the world, including The Netherlands, these tendencies of—in the period where the old enemy, communism, is not there anymore, after the cold war—certain tendency where perhaps a responsibility for international solutions of international problems is not always put high enough on the agenda. So it's not just an American discussion. Of course, in America, the discussion is more important than elsewhere because of the size of your country, you're a continent in itself, and because of the consequences if the United States would abstain from playing that active and prominent role.

So the lesson I draw from this short visit, and also from the short meeting yesterday with Senator Dole, is that we have to discuss and debate much more also with the Republicans, because I could imagine that quite some Senators and Members of the House are just a little bit unaware of the responsibility that has to be taken in order to solve the number of huge international problems.

Perhaps some Senators and Members of the House are not fully aware of what is the real situation in former Yugoslavia, what the situation, for example, of Dutch troops, Blue Helmets, is, and what the consequences would be of a unilateral arms embargo lift, where of course we here again today heard that the American President would not agree with.

But I think this type of debate, of debate with the Americans, also the Americans from the Republican side, is necessary. And I'm ready with my government to invest also in that type

of contact, because the wrongest solution for problems is drawing your back to each other. We have to discuss. And I'm glad, as I said before, that between the President of the U.S. and the Dutch Government there's a close similarity in view, vision, and perspective.

Q. Mr. President—

The President. One, two, three. I'll get to all of you. Go ahead. [*Laughter*]

Balanced Budget Amendment

Q. Virtually every major economist, with the exception of Milton Friedman, has said, in effect, that the balanced budget amendment is, in effect, a crackpot idea that could bring back the kinds of policies that triggered the Great Depression. Yet it seems to be benefiting from a political stampede on Capitol Hill. How do you account—

The President. Not yet, hasn't passed yet. It's hanging in the balance.

Q. If it does pass in the Senate later today, will you lead a campaign to block ratification by the States?

The President. Well, first of all, I will say—I will keep on saying what I've been saying. The only argument for it is the argument that many people who helped to create the problem we've got are making, which is that we can't help ourselves unless the Constitution makes us make a change.

We never had a chronic deficit problem before 1981. Our country was not into the business of permanent deficits, although we slipped into—we were undisciplined in the seventies, but not chronically so. Then in '81 and '82, and then again in '86 we made a series of decisions which gave us a permanent deficit. That needs to be corrected. We've made major steps in the last 2 years in correcting it.

The American people are right to want it corrected. But if we solve the so-called structural deficit problem, the permanent deficit problem, with the balanced budget amendment, then the next time we have a recession, it could make it much worse. That's why all the economists of all political stripes are against it.

And I'll just keep making that point and keep urging the Republicans—tomorrow, what happens tomorrow, however this vote comes out today? I've been here 770 days, and I want the members of the other party to propose and vote for something that will reduce the deficit. That has not happened yet. And I want them

to work with me. I will work with them in good faith to do more. That's what we ought—that's what the people hired us to do. They want us to make the decisions. If we do that, we can demonstrate that the amendment is not needed, but that we must get rid of this sort of permanent deficit that we built into our economy starting in the early eighties.

United Nations Peacekeeping

Q. Mr. President, I have a question on balanced budget of the United Nations. The obvious question of your leadership in foreign policy will be whether you will veto that nation that will diminish contribution to a U.N. peacekeeping. Will you do that?

The President. First of all, it's already in our law that we cannot—that we must ratchet down our contributions on a regular basis. Now, we also do other things, like what we did in Haiti with the multinational force, that we don't believe should be counted against that. But I will do everything I can to keep the United States involved in the United Nations in peacekeeping and to keep us supporting an active role in the world.

I believe the American people understand that we're better off having these burdens shared with all the nations of the world, trying to nip these problems in the bud and that if we walk away, as some suggest we should in our Congress, and don't spend any money on this, all we're going to do is make the world's problems worse, make other countries behave in a more irresponsible way, and wind up dragging American soldiers and American wealth into deeper and deeper problems that could be avoided if we have a responsible, disciplined approach to burden sharing and peacekeeping. So that's what I'm going to try to do.

Iraq

Q. I wonder if you've had a chance to talk about the sanctions against Iraq and whether or not there's a sense out there that the international community is willing to stand with the U.S. to keep them in place, especially because of what we're hearing from Russia and France on pulling back.

The President. Actually, we did not discuss that today.

Prime Minister Kok. No.

The President. You know what my position is. My position is that there are a whole set

of rules that Iraq must comply with before the sanctions could be lifted, and they haven't been. They shouldn't be lifted. That's what my position is.

"Apache" Helicopters

Q. Mr. President, did you convince the Dutch Prime Minister that The Netherlands should buy the *Apache* helicopter? [Laughter] And Prime Minister, have you already made a decision after your talks with the President?

The President. Well, maybe I can let him off the hook. He said that the decision had not been made, and I reaffirmed my conviction about two things: one, the high quality of the American helicopters, and second, the importance of having very good and interoperable equipment for NATO allies generally. I made the appropriate points in the appropriate way. The Prime Minister listened, made some good responses and made it clear that no decision had been made yet.

Bosnia and Croatia

Q. Did you assure the Prime Minister that the U.S. would take part in any possible withdrawal of U.N. peacekeepers from Croatia, if necessary?

The President. Croatia and what?

Q. Croatia with U.S. troops? Would U.S. troops help bring them out, if necessary?

The President. Let me, first of all, say, we did not discuss that explicitly. You know, the United States has—I guess we ought to get this clear—the United States has committed explicitly and has a plan for helping on the troops in Bosnia. And one of the reasons that the Dutch have been so strong in believing we should not unilaterally lift the arms embargo is that they have troops in and around Srebrenica, I think—

Prime Minister Kok. Right.

The President. And perhaps the most vulnerable of all of the United Nations troops are the Dutch. They have really been brave. They've stuck their necks out. They have prevented much more bloodshed and saved a lot of lives. And that's why they're against the unilateral lift of the arms embargo, because they know what could happen not only to their own troops but, if they are compelled to withdraw, what could happen in that fragile area. And we all remember it wasn't so long ago when that whole area was given up for lost and now hasn't been.

Now, we have gone through that. We're still doing our best to preserve the U.N. mission and presence in Croatia. We may not be able to persuade President Tudjman and his government to do that. We have, therefore, not articulated a clear position. Obviously, we feel a great obligation to all of our allies who are in UNPROFOR who are in vulnerable positions. But I want to say that we have not at this moment explicitly embraced a plan, consulted with the congressional leadership, and ratified it. But obviously, we are just as concerned about the U.N. forces in Croatia as those in Bosnia, but the decisionmaking process is at a different point.

Foreign Policy

Q. The Prime Minister is very concerned about what he perceives as isolationist tendencies in American society. Do you share those concerns? Do you think there is a danger that the United States may abdicate its role as a world leader?

The President. Yes, I share the concerns. No, I don't think the United States will abdicate its role as a world leader. I share the concerns because—for two reasons: One is, a lot of our people here know that the cold war is over, know that most Americans have worked hard for more than a decade now without any appreciable increase in their living standards, and would like to see us focus on our problems here at home in ways that make progress on our economic and social problems.

I believe that we have to make progress on our economic and social problems, but I don't believe that over the long run we can really solve our own problems at home unless we are also operating in a world that's more peaceful, more democratic, and more prosperous. The only way a wealthy country like The Netherlands or the United States grows wealthier is if there is growth in the world, and we trade into it, and we work our way into it.

So we have a very clear personal interest that does not permit us to be isolationists. And if we—we could get away with being isolationists for a couple of years, and then pretty soon we'd be spending even more of our money on military involvement, cleaning up foreign problems and dealing with the consequences of our neglect.

So I believe that we will resolve these tensions and debates by reaffirming America's leadership in the world. And that is my determination. That is what I'm committed to doing and why I'm so grateful for the Prime Minister's presence here in the United States and for his words and for the leadership and the example that The Netherlands have set in this area.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President's 87th news conference began at 12:55 p.m. in the Cross Hall at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Franjo Tudjman of Croatia.

Message to the Congress Transmitting the National Security Strategy Report

February 28, 1995

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 603 of the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, I am transmitting a report on the National Security Strategy of the United States.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
February 28, 1995.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 1.