

Statement on the Aircraft Tragedy at Elmendorf Air Force Base in Alaska September 22, 1995

Hillary and I were very saddened to learn of the death of the American and Canadian service members in the crash of a U.S. Air Force AWACS aircraft at Elmendorf Air Force Base in Alaska this morning. Their loss reminds us

how much we owe those who serve our Nation's Armed Forces. Our hearts and prayers go out to the families, friends, and loved ones of those who were killed, both in the United States and in Canada.

The President's Radio Address September 23, 1995

Good morning. I want to talk to you today about the prospects for peace in Bosnia. Over the past weeks, American leadership and the determination demonstrated by NATO and the United Nations have helped to bring Bosnia closer to peace than at any time since the war began there 4 years ago. Let me be clear: There are many tough obstacles still to overcome, but we are determined to press forward for a lasting peaceful settlement.

At the end of the cold war, Serbian nationalism forced the breakup of Yugoslavia. An ugly and dangerous war broke out in the heart of Europe, risking an even wider conflict in the Balkans which could have drawn the United States and many other countries in. Bosnia, a land in which Muslims, Serbs, and Croats had lived together peacefully for centuries, was literally torn apart.

As President, I have worked to do everything in our power to support the search for peace in Bosnia, to stop the conflict from spreading beyond its borders, and to ease the terrible suffering of the Bosnian people. We can't force peace on the parties; only they themselves can make it. That's why I have refused to let American ground troops become combatants in Bosnia. But we can press the parties to resolve their differences at the bargaining table and not on the battlefield. We will spare no effort to find a peaceful solution, and we will work through NATO to implement a settlement once the parties reach it.

Working closely with our partners from Europe and Russia, last year we proposed a peace plan that would preserve Bosnia as a state with Bosnia's Muslims and Croats holding 51 percent

of the land and 49 percent going to the Bosnian Serbs. The Muslims and the Croats accepted our plan. But the Bosnian Serbs did not. Instead, they laid siege to Sarajevo and the other U.N.-declared safe areas, denying food, denying medicine, denying supplies to innocent civilians. They continued to make war. They refused to make peace.

This July, as the Serbs continue their assaults against the safe areas, America pressed NATO and the U.N. to take a tougher stand, and our allies agreed. When a Bosnian Serb shell slaughtered 38 people in Sarajevo just 3 weeks ago, we insisted that NATO and the U.N. make good on their commitment to protect Sarajevo and the other safe areas from further attacks. We demanded that the Serbs stop offensive actions against the safe areas, withdraw their heavy weapons from around Sarajevo, and allow road and air access to the city. When they refused, NATO began heavy and continuous air strikes against Bosnian Serb military targets.

These NATO air strikes, many, many of them flown by courageous American pilots and crews, convinced the Bosnian Serbs to comply with our demands. They stopped shelling Sarajevo. They moved their heavy weapons away from Sarajevo. They opened the roads and the airports to convoys carrying food and medicine and other supplies.

I salute our pilots and crews and their NATO colleagues. Because they did their job so well, today the people of Sarajevo can walk the streets of their city more free from fear than at any time in many months. And I want to make absolutely clear that if the Bosnian Serbs strike again