

Treatment Unit at the National Naval Medical Center, following surgical treatment for a knee injury he sustained on March 13 when he lost his footing on a staircase at the home of professional golfer Greg Norman. In his remarks, the President referred to Comdr. David P. Adkison,

USN, chair, orthopedic surgery, National Naval Medical Center; and Joel E. Cohen, orthopedic surgeon, St. Mary's Medical Center, West Palm Beach, FL. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

## Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on the Deployment of United States Forces to Albania *March 15, 1997*

*Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)*

In February 1997, civil unrest broke out in Albania after a nationwide pyramid investment scheme destroyed the life savings of tens of thousands of investors unaware of the fraudulent nature of those investments. Protesters took to the streets and later joined political opponents of President Sali Berisha in demanding his removal. By March 13, much of Albania, including the capital city of Tirana, had fallen into widespread disorder. Looting and gunfire was reported throughout the country as sympathetic police and military officials refused to enforce the law. While there was no evidence that Americans were being directly targeted, the disorder and violence sweeping the country subjected American citizens and property to risks ranging from criminal acts to random violence.

On March 13, due to the rapidly deteriorating security situation and the potential threat to American citizens and the American Embassy, U.S. military personnel were deployed to provide enhanced security for the American Embassy in Tirana and to conduct the evacuation of certain U.S. Government employees and private U.S. citizens. Approximately 25 U.S. Marines entered the capital city on March 13 and immediately took up positions in and around the American Embassy compound. Evacuation operations began concurrently as U.S. CH-46 helicopters operating from the USS *Nassau* amphibious ready group transported approximately 50 U.S. citizens to U.S. Navy ships at sea. Evacuation efforts resumed on March 14 and are expected to continue for several days. The res-

cue helicopters are escorted by AH-1W Cobra helicopters, which came under fire but were not damaged during separate, sporadic incidents on March 14. In addition, a 150-member Marine rifle company has also been inserted near the American Embassy to provide additional security for the evacuation.

The Marines involved in this operation are from the Marine Expeditionary Unit currently operating in the Adriatic Sea. Although U.S. forces are equipped for combat, the evacuation is being undertaken solely for the purpose of protecting American citizens and property. United States forces will redeploy as soon as evacuation operations are complete and enhanced security at the American Embassy is no longer required.

I have taken this action pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct U.S. foreign relations and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive.

I am providing this report as part of my efforts to keep the Congress fully informed, consistent with the War Powers Resolution. I appreciate the support of the Congress in this action to protect American citizens and the American Embassy in Tirana.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Strom Thurmond, President pro tempore of the Senate.

## Exchange With Reporters March 16, 1997

### *Recovery From Knee Surgery*

Q. How are you feeling, sir?

Q. Good morning, Mr. President. How are you feeling, sir?

*The President.* I feel fine today. I was a little sore yesterday, you know, the first day after the operation when the pain started to wear off—I mean, the painkiller, you know, the anesthesia. But I feel fine today, and I've done 2 days of therapy, learned to use my crutches.

Hillary wanted me to come home before she left for Africa. She and Chelsea wanted me well settled, so that's what I'm doing.

Q. Is that going to be difficult for you to use crutches for the next few months?

*The President.* I just want to do it well. It will be an interesting experience. I just want to be careful and not make any mistakes and do it well. But I think I'll be perfectly mobile and perfectly fine.

I also want to say that the medical team I had at the Bethesda Naval Medical Center did a magnificent job. They really were wonderful, and I feel very fortunate. And the American people should know that that military medical center is a very good place, not just for the President but for everybody who is treated there.

### *President's Planned Travel*

Q. Did they have to twist your arm to get you to delay the trip to Helsinki for a day?

*The First Lady.* No twisting of arms—or any other limb. [Laughter]

*The President.* No, because I can go back to Copenhagen and do that probably when we do the NATO meeting.

### *Recovery From Knee Surgery*

Q. Sir, does it hurt every time you move?

*The President.* No.

Q. It doesn't?

*The President.* No. You just have to learn to use a few different muscles. But it's quite interesting. I mean, it will be a learning experience. It's like going back to school and learning some new things.

Q. Do you think this will get you any sympathy votes in Congress for any of your bills? [Laughter]

*The President.* I don't know, but if it does, I'll take them any way I can get them. [Laughter] I'd be very grateful if it did.

Q. Glad to have him home, Mrs. Clinton?

*The First Lady.* Yes, I'm very glad to have him home.

*The President.* Goodbye.

NOTE: The exchange began at 11:46 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House, following the President's return from the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, MD, where he underwent knee surgery on March 14. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

## Statement on the Murder of John Slane in Northern Ireland March 17, 1997

I am deeply saddened by the murder last Friday of John Slane in Belfast. Our sympathy goes out to Mr. Slane's family and friends. This horrific killing deserves universal condemnation. I hope the British authorities will quickly identify who is responsible.

As I have said so many times, nothing worth having in Northern Ireland can be achieved by killing and maiming, terror and threats. The

people of Northern Ireland deserve a future of peace and prosperity unmarred by brutality and fear in their daily lives. I urge the people of both communities to make known in every way they can their repudiation of violence by any group, for any reason. I will continue to stand with those who stand for peace, today as we commemorate the saint who brought the message of peace to Ireland, and every day.