

We have been more than a year now without any substantial progress. And I think the larger message here, apart from the tragedies involved for everybody, is that delay is not the friend of the peace process. It's time to move.

Situation in Indonesia

[At this point, a question was asked in French, and a translation was not provided.]

President Clinton. Would you translate for the Americans?

President Chirac. Well, of course, we would like to have a peaceful solution to the Indonesian crisis—all the more, considering that Indonesia needs the international community in order to overcome the financial crisis. And of course, we will encourage fully any solution that would be liable to settle the political crisis in Indonesia.

President Clinton. Let me say, first, we have been working since last November with President Soeharto and with Indonesia to try to work through the financial crisis. The IMF has modified its plan on a couple of occasions to try

to make it possible to have both reform and to minimize the harm to ordinary citizens in Indonesia.

In terms of who should govern Indonesia, that is a question for the Indonesians to decide, not the G-8. But I do believe that resolving the crisis now requires not only economic reform but also a genuine dialog between the Government and all the elements in society to try to determine how they should go forward. That, to me, is the most important thing. The result of that dialog is for them to decide, not us.

President's Health

Q. Mr. President, how is your back?

President Clinton. Great. Much better today.

NOTE: The exchange began at 1:52 p.m. at the Swallow Hotel. In his remarks, the President referred to President Chirac's wife, Bernadette, Councillor General, Correze Department; and Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu of Israel. President Chirac spoke in French, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks Prior to a Working Luncheon With President Jacques Chirac of France in Birmingham, United Kingdom

May 15, 1998

I was playing on a basketball team in Oxford, and I can remember playing the University of Birmingham. But it's changed very much. I learned today Birmingham has more meters of canals than Venice. I didn't know that, either. And I went walking—it's amazing—you should take a little time to go for a walk on the canal. It's utterly amazing; it's beautiful—it's beautiful. Mostly it's new development, mostly in the last 10 years, new pubs, new stores. But they have a lot of the old hooks lifting things off the barges—[inaudible]—factories, heavy industry.

But it's very, very beautiful. It's amazing what they've done. I now see why Tony wanted us to come. I mean it's a real symbol of—[inaudi-

ble]—in a new direction. Even if you just have a few minutes, I think, to walk along the canal and have some local person explain how it works, as I did, it's fascinating.

So we have to go to work, everyone. [Laughter]

They have to work, too. They work hard. When we go on these walks, they have to carry all this heavy equipment. I feel so badly for them. You didn't even get a beer, did you, when we were done? [Laughter]

NOTE: The President spoke at 2 p.m. at the Swallow Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom.