

seen in Rwanda, the Middle East, Northern Ireland, Bosnia, Kosovo—you name it—it will be incumbent upon the United States to be a force for tolerance and racial reconciliation for the foreseeable future.

So this is just simply a phase of this work that is coming to an end, and I think you should see it as a springboard, both in the recommendations the advisory commission will make and in the document that I will put out after that.

Q. So could there be a council on race?

President Clinton. I understand they may recommend that, and if they do, of course, I will take it very seriously.

President Havel. One of my whole life personal ideals is ideal of a civic society. I must tell you that America—and America especially in time of President Clinton, because this is the America I know the best—is for my work, for my support of civic society, a big inspiration.

Thank you.

President Clinton. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President's 164th news conference began at 3:13 p.m. in the Dean Acheson Auditorium at the State Department. During the later portion of the news conference, President Havel spoke in Czech, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter. In his remarks, President Clinton referred to Minister of Foreign Affairs Jan Kavan, Minister of Defense Vladimir Vetchy, and Prime Minister Milos Zeman of the Czech Republic; Josef Tosovsky, Chairman, Czech National Bank; President Ernesto Zedillo of Mexico; President Fernando Henrique Cardoso of Brazil; Prime Minister Jean Chretien of Canada; President Jacques Chirac of France; Christopher R. Hill, U.S. Ambassador to the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; and President Slobodan Milosevic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). President Havel referred to St. Louis Cardinals first baseman Mark McGwire and Chicago Cubs outfielder Sammy Sosa, who broke Major League Baseball's single-season home run record. Reporters referred to former White House intern Monica S. Lewinsky.

Message to the Congress Transmitting the Report of the Commodity Credit Corporation

September 16, 1998

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by the provisions of section 13, Public Law 806, 80th Congress (15 U.S.C. 714k), I transmit herewith the report of the

Commodity Credit Corporation for fiscal year 1996.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
September 16, 1998.

Remarks at the State Dinner Honoring President Vaclav Havel of the Czech Republic

September 16, 1998

The President. Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, President Havel, Mrs. Havlova, friends from the Czech Republic, my fellow Americans. Welcome to the White House, Mr. President.

As a playwright, you could hardly have written a more dramatic scenario than the one you have in fact lived over the last 10 years. Your Presi-

dency has reminded people around the world that words do matter, that creativity has a place in politics, that a nation's strength is measured not by its ability to control people but rather by the opposite: its success in moving and empowering them.

As you showed us in the press conference today, you have never lost the honesty, spontaneity, the contagious friendliness of your writing. I feel quite certain no other head of state would have appointed Frank Zappa as a cultural ambassador—[laughter]—or taken our favorite Czech-American, Madeleine Albright, out on the town in New York to hear some good music; or given the President of the United States a personally inscribed tenor saxophone and forced him to play it. [Laughter]

Since you became President, you have brought back democracy and civil society. You have led the Czech Republic to a place of prominence in the new Europe, and we look forward to your becoming a member of NATO.

Together we have been partners in Bosnia and in other Balkan trouble spots, working to repair the ravages of intolerance and injustice. And together we will be partners to build a peaceful, prosperous, and free Europe in the 21st century.

We value our ties to the Czech people. The first Czechs arrived in the New World in the 17th century, and many more came in the wake of the revolution of 1848. Dvorak composed his magnificent, “New World Symphony,” borrowing the rhythms he heard during his travels across the United States, especially from African-American folk music. The flag of the Czech Republic was designed and first flown in New York to honor a visit by the great patriot Tomas Masaryk. From athletes to artists, from actors to astronauts, from secretaries to Secretaries of State, Czech-Americans, many of whom are here tonight, have lent their gifts to our grateful Nation.

We shared the world’s sadness when Czechoslovakia lost its freedom 50 years ago. We felt a similar sense of loss when the Prague Spring was followed by Soviet invasion in 1968. But you and your comrades, Mr. President, taught us again that all seasons are cyclical, that spring always returns. In 1989, your Velvet Revolution rejuvenated the entire world.

There is an old Czech-American saying that too much wisdom does not produce courage. That’s a nice way of saying, I think, that too much time spent in books may keep people too much away from the active world. Mr. President, you have lived a life of the mind and a life of action. You have shown us wisdom and courage. You have made us believe that we can not only dream our dreams but redeem them.

Ladies and gentlemen, I ask you to join me in a toast to the President of the Czech Republic, Mrs. Havlova, and to the people of the Czech Republic.

[At this point, President Havel made brief remarks, offered a toast, and then presented President Clinton with the Order of the White Lion.]

The President. If I put all this on—[laughter]—I may feel like royalty.

Mr. President, I first saw Prague in the second week of January in 1970. I was a young student of no visible means and fairly poor prospects. I remember that I went to Prague with a pair of rawhide boots and a Navy pea jacket I bought in the Army-Navy surplus store. But I learned something there that is as vivid to me today as it was then.

When all of you were at a moment of despair, I saw in the young students I met there a love for freedom that you gave life to again. And whenever I look at this award, I will know that it’s too grand for me to wear, but I will be very glad that we could do something in the United States, through NATO, to help ensure that that freedom will never, ever be lost again.

Thank you, sir.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:53 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Dagmar Havlova, wife of President Havel. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of President Havel.