

So I cannot—I would like to say again what I said last night—I'm very appreciative to Mr. Holbrooke, but also to Secretary General Solana and General Clark and all of our NATO Allies, as well as to the Secretary of State and Mr. Berger and our people who have worked for the better part of 3 months to try to bring about these developments. So I'm very pleased about where we are today, because we're not dependent on hope. We can just look at the facts and see what he does. It is a very good agreement. It is completely in accord with the United Nations resolution, and it gives us the chance to save an awful lot of innocent people from starvation or freezing this winter and to remove yet another very dangerous source of instability in Europe.

Q. Sir, if he doesn't comply, will he escape paying any price for what has happened so far?

The President. Well, I think he is going to pay the price of a defeat here for continued aggression by his government, and he's not going to succeed in his designs. I think the most important thing now is for us to save lives, return people to their homes, get them the humanitarian aid they need, and to remove completely and irrevocably the threat of aggression by the Serb military and other forces in Kosovo.

We've got to put first things first here. The most important thing is to right this situation, as we were able to do in Bosnia. And I think that today I'd say we have a pretty good chance of doing that. Again, we prefer compliance over conflict, and we hope that will be the case. But whether it is or not is entirely up to him now, and we have the verification system in place and so we'll know. And I'm very, very pleased with the work that all the people involved have done in these last several days. This is where the international community ought to be, what we ought to be doing, the position we ought to be taking. And I'm looking forward to events as they unfold.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:22 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House, prior to his departure for Silver Spring, MD. In his remarks, he referred to President Slobodan Milosevic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro); Special Envoy Richard C. Holbrooke, the President's nominee to be Ambassador to the U.N.; NATO Secretary General Javier Solana; and Gen. Wesley K. Clark, Supreme Allied Commander, Europe.

Exchange With Reporters at Forest Knolls Elementary School in Silver Spring, Maryland

October 13, 1998

Classroom Space

Q. Mr. President, Ashley Lewis was telling us before you came in that she actually likes this classroom, that it's one of the biggest in the school—

The President. It is big.

Q. Why should—can you explain to her, maybe, why you feel the need to spend \$1.1 billion to build new classrooms when the student population may not always be this size?

The President. Well, maybe I should let Secretary Riley answer that one, because it's going to be this size and bigger for a long time.

[At this point, Secretary of Education Richard Riley made brief remarks explaining the need

to replace temporary classrooms that were unsuitable for various reasons.]

The President. Accessibility.

Secretary Riley. Heat, cool, it's different kinds of problems in all the different temporary facilities. Some are better than others, as the Governor pointed out, but they're temporary, and it's not a permanent solution.

The President. Even if it is bigger. [Laughter]

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:05 p.m. in a portable trailer classroom. A reporter referred to sixth grade student Ashley Lewis, and Secretary Riley referred to Gov. Parris N. Glendening of Maryland. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.