

Remarks on the NATO Airstrikes Against Serbian Targets and an Exchange With Reporters

March 28, 1999

The President. Good afternoon. All Americans can be very proud of the skill and bravery of the American servicemen involved in the rescue operation yesterday in Kosovo. Indeed, we can be proud of all of our men and women in uniform who are involved in the NATO mission.

From the outset, I have said to the American people that this military operation entails real risks. But the continued brutality and repression of the Serb forces further underscores the need for NATO to persevere. I strongly support Secretary General Solana's decision yesterday to move to a new phase in our planned air campaign, with a broader range of targets including air defenses, military and security targets, and forces in the field.

In the last 24 hours, I have been in close contact with key NATO Allies, including Prime Minister Blair, President Chirac, Chancellor Schroeder, and Prime Minister D'Alema. All of

them share our determination to respond strongly to Mr. Milosevic's continuing campaign of inhumane and violence against the Kosovar Albanian people. That is what we intend to do.

Thank you very much.

Q. Has the bombing made things worse, sir?

Q. Sir, is the allied bombing driving the atrocities, sir?

The President. Absolutely not.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:15 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House, prior to his departure for Camp David, MD. In his remarks, the President referred to NATO Secretary General Javier Solana; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; President Jacques Chirac of France; Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder of Germany; Prime Minister Massimo D'Alema of Italy; and President Slobodan Milosevic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro).

Remarks on the Unveiling of a Portrait of Former Secretary of State Warren M. Christopher

March 30, 1999

Thank you very much, Secretary Albright, Chris, Marie, other members of the Cabinet who are here, Secretary Rubin, Secretary Shalala. We thank very much Tunky Riley and Hattie Babbitt for being here. And we're glad that Tom and Oya are here, and past and present officials of the State Department, other distinguished guests.

I would like to begin by saying that it is ironic but perhaps appropriate that we are unveiling the portrait of this truly wonderful, distinguished American, who did so much to bring peace to Bosnia, at a time when we are engaged in a struggle for peace in Kosovo. I hope you'll just let me say a word about that.

The NATO military operation is continuing today against an expanded range of targets, including Serbian forces on the ground in Kosovo. The allies are united in our outrage over President Milosevic's atrocities against innocent peo-

ple. We are determined to stay with our policy. As President Chirac said yesterday, what is happening today must strengthen our resolution.

Countries from throughout the Balkans, from Greece to Turkey to Romania to Bulgaria, are helping us to meet the mounting humanitarian crisis. We are all dealing today with the same horrible pattern of conduct we saw in Bosnia. We saw that conduct resume in 1998 in Kosovo, when a quarter of a million innocent people were driven from their homes. We saw it escalate in January and February of this year, as Serbian forces, in violation of the agreement the President had made last October, moved from village to village and atrocity to atrocity while their leaders pretended to negotiate for peace in France.

Now it is clear that as the Kosovar leaders were saying yes to peace, Mr. Milosevic was