

have to be resolved before the Kosovars can either stay home or go home, for those who have left, and do so peacefully, and do so with some measure of autonomy. And it seems to me that will require, clearly, for some period of time, some sort of international force that will be able to protect their security.

So the elements, the framework that we dealt with in France is still the framework people are going to have to deal with; whatever label you put on it, those are the—the objectives that we seek to achieve will require certain means to realize.

Helen [Helen Thomas, United Press International].

Russian Involvement

Q. Mr. President, what about the deepening Russian involvement? Apparently, we understand they are now going to offer aid; they're sending ships into the Mediterranean. Are they ready for a fight?

The President. I don't believe so. I believe that—as I said before and I'll say again, one of the unfortunate side effects of this whole crisis—and we saw it a little bit in Bosnia, but we were able to resolve it, thank goodness, in Bosnia in a way that brought us together with the Russians in the peacekeeping force there—

is that this whole issue has put great strains on the domestic politics of Russia, in the Russian Duma, because of the religious and cultural identity and the ethnic identity of the Russians with the Serbs.

But I think that, based on my experience in dealing with this in the last few days, and my experience in dealing with the Russians over the last 6 years, and what appear to be the facts now, they are looking for ways to continue to oppose what NATO is doing, but to leave open the prospect that they could play a very constructive role in making a peace. I don't think anyone wants to see this conflict escalate, and I certainly don't believe the Russian Government does.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:23 p.m. in the Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Slobodan Milosevic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro); Staff Sgt. Andrew A. Ramirez, USA, Staff Sgt. Christopher J. Stone, USA, and Specialist Steven M. Gonzales, USA, infantrymen in custody in Serbia; and President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. The President also referred to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Statement on Signing the Small Business Year 2000 Readiness Act *April 2, 1999*

Today I am pleased to sign into law S. 314, the "Small Business Year 2000 Readiness Act."

In 9 months we will enter the new millennium. We have made tremendous progress in our efforts to address the Year 2000 (Y2K) computer problem. In spite of this progress, however, too many businesses, especially small- and medium-sized firms, will not be ready unless they act immediately.

This week, the Small Business Administration (SBA), the Department of Commerce, the Department of Agriculture, and other Federal departments and agencies of the President's Council on Year 2000 Conversion are sponsoring "Small Business Y2K Action Week." At hundreds of Y2K seminars and training events across the country, these agencies are educating

small businesses on the steps necessary for achieving Y2K compliance.

The message we are delivering to small businesses at these events is that every small business must take responsibility for making sure it is ready for the Year 2000 by taking action now. Every business should assess its exposure to the Y2K problem, ask its vendors and suppliers to be ready as well, and develop contingency plans in case its own critical systems or the systems of its vendors fail as we move into the Year 2000.

The legislation I am signing today will help ensure that the Nation's small businesses have access to the capital they need to be "Y2K-OK" in the Year 2000. The Act will authorize the SBA to provide loan guarantees for two Y2K

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purposes. First, it will enable small businesses to purchase the systems, software, equipment, and services necessary to become Y2K compliant. Second, it will assist small businesses that suffer economic injury as a result of the Y2K problem during the Year 2000. Authority for this special program will terminate on December 31, 2000.

I want to especially recognize the job that Administrator Aida Alvarez and the Small Business Administration have done in ensuring that the Nation's small business community is ready to meet the Y2K challenge. Through its leadership of Small Business Y2K Action Week, and its other extensive outreach efforts, the SBA has done an excellent job of raising the awareness of small businesses concerning the Y2K chal-

lenge. I would also like to thank the Congress for acting swiftly this session to ensure that we have this additional tool for assisting small businesses in their efforts to address this problem.

The Nation's small businesses are the backbone of our country's vibrant and growing economy. In signing S. 314 today, I hope to ensure that our small business community will move into the Year 2000 with minimal disruption to our Nation's economy.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
April 2, 1999

NOTE: S. 314, approved April 2, was assigned Public Law No. 106-8.

Message on the Observance of Easter, 1999

April 2, 1999

Warm greetings to everyone celebrating Easter.

Today Christians across America and around the world commemorate with great joy the central mystery of their faith: the Resurrection of Jesus. In this season, we celebrate Christ's victory over sin and death, and we rejoice in the new life that He won for us through His suffering, death, and rising from the dead.

That new life empowers us to overcome sin and to recognize our capacity for forgiveness and love. We have seen in our own communities and in other nations across the globe the vio-

lence and human tragedy spawned by hatred, intolerance, and fear born of ignorance. If we are to destroy the roots of hatred, we must examine our own hearts and actions and learn what we can and must do to build just communities united in understanding and mutual respect. May this sacred season of renewal, hope, and new beginnings inspire our efforts and light our way to a brighter, more peaceful future.

Hillary joins me in extending best wishes for a blessed and joyous Easter celebration.

BILL CLINTON

The President's Radio Address

April 3, 1999

As we gather in our homes during this sacred week to observe Easter and Passover, let us take a moment to think about the plight of the people in Kosovo, who have been forced from their homes by a campaign of violence and destruction, and who look to us for help and hope.

The tragedy in Kosovo has been mounting for over a year now. Over the last 2 weeks,

Serbian forces have intensified their attacks against innocent civilians there, leaving no doubt about the cold, clear goal of their leader, Slobodan Milosevic, to keep Kosovo's land while ridding it of its people.

Nearly one out of every three people in Kosovo has been made homeless since the start of this conflict. Even before the recent surge, well over a quarter of a million people had