

We and our allies did everything possible to end this crisis peacefully, but now we are at arms. We and our allies are united on this point: We must stay the course and persist until we prevail.

Again I say, Mr. Milosevic can end this crisis right now by withdrawing his forces, permitting deployment of an international security force, and allowing the unconditional return of all displaced persons.

As I told the Members of Congress today I will shortly submit to them an emergency supplemental budget request to fund our military operations and munitions needs while maintaining our military readiness, to provide urgently needed assistance to the frontline states, nations bordering Kosovo, that are struggling to preserve their own stability as they cope with refugees and turmoil in the region, and of course, to fund our portion of caring for the hundreds of thousands of refugees.

These expenses are an immediate and urgent emergency. They are necessary so that we and our NATO Allies can continue to pursue this mission. I look forward to working with Members of both parties in both Houses to pass this appropriation soon and to continuing our mission to free the people of Kosovo of the oppression to which they have been subject and meet the conditions which I have outlined.

Thank you very much.

Q. Mr. President, the lawmakers said that you haven't taken ground troops off the table.

Q. Mr. President, can you reach the refugees in Kosovo, Mr. President—inside Kosovo—can you reach those refugees, and does it have to be done by land?

The President. Let me answer that. Well, the real answer to that question is that it is a very hard one, and we are working on it. We are quite concerned about the hundreds of thousands of refugees in Kosovo. The ones that are out of Kosovo, there is a big problem in providing food and housing and medical care, dealing with the ones that are just dehydrated. But at least we are now organized, and we're moving on that.

There is a much bigger problem with the people within Kosovo, and there are any number of problems with providing aid from the air. First of all, there is the possibility that if we airdrop supplies, they won't actually get to the refugees, that the Serbian forces will take them up. Secondly, there is the problem of risk to our aircraft of going into Kosovo airspace to try to airdrop the supplies. So we are looking at both of those problems and what can be done about them and what other options we have. It is a huge problem.

For the last couple of days, we've been working very hard on it. As soon as we have more to say on it, I'll be glad to make the appropriate announcements, and our people will be at work on it. It is a very large problem. We're aware of it. We know what the obstacles are, and we're doing our best to overcome them.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:45 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Slobodan Milosevic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro).

Joint United States-China Statement on World Trade Organization Accession Negotiations

April 13, 1999

President Clinton and Premier Zhu spoke this afternoon on the telephone. During the conversation, they agreed that both sides should move intensively on negotiations toward resolution of the remaining issues in their talks on China's accession to the WTO. They have

agreed to have negotiations continue by the end of the month in Beijing.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.