

Mike Jackson, British Royal Army, Commander, Kosovo International Security Force; Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov of Russia; CW3 David A. Gibbs, USA, and CW2 Kevin L. Reichert, USA, Apache helicopter pilots killed in a training acci-

dent in Albania on May 5; Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder of Germany; Deborah Tannen, professor, Georgetown University; and President Slobodan Milosevic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro).

Videotaped Address to the Kosovar Refugees

June 12, 1999

To all the people of Kosovo, who have suffered so much in the face of Mr. Milosevic's savage campaign of ethnic cleansing, I'm happy to say that the time of return is near. The Serb forces who drove you from your homes are leaving Kosovo. All are required to leave. The NATO-led troops who will protect you are beginning to go in. Mr. Milosevic has failed utterly in his efforts to erase your history, your culture, your presence from your land. Soon, you will be going home.

Now we must make sure you can return safely. I know you're anxious to reunite with your loved ones, to find out what condition your homes are in, to reclaim your land. But before you do, we must be certain all the Serbian forces have left and see to it that international forces are in place throughout Kosovo. We must start clearing the landmines, some of which may be in your homes, in your community buildings, along roads and bridges. We need to make sure there's enough food, water, and shelter to meet your needs. And we most urgently need to reach the desperate people who have been trapped in the hills and forests of Kosovo.

Until all of you can return in safety, we will provide aid in Albania and Macedonia. And we will not forget the kindness of the nations that have given you shelter, or their own needs for assistance and stability.

As you prepare to go home, I know you have many reasons to be bitter and full of anger. But I ask you not to let Mr. Milosevic have

the victory of seeing your spirits broken and your hearts turn to stone. No one should do to the ethnic Serbs who live in Kosovo what their leaders did to you. Do not prove Mr. Milosevic right, that people of different ethnic and religious groups are inevitably enemies.

No human being should ever have to experience what you have been forced to endure. We will seek effective justice through law for the perpetrators of these crimes. But we must have an end to ethnic cleansing and the beginning of a Kosovo where every child can go to school, every family can practice its faith, every community can live a normal life in peace. That is what we fought for. That is what NATO peacekeepers will help build when they go in. That is the future we now have a chance to shape together.

I thank you for your courage and your endurance, and I look forward to seeing you go home.

NOTE: The address was videotaped at approximately 6:35 p.m. on June 11 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for later broadcast on the U.S. Information Agency WORLDNET in the Balkan region. The transcript was embargoed for release until 2 a.m., e.d.t., on June 12. In his remarks, the President referred to President Slobodan Milosevic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). A tape was not available for verification of the content of this address.