

maintain some sort of distance between the protests and the subject of the protests. I don't believe they have banned them all.

Q. There seem to be some protests brewing there for your arrival, sir. What's your reaction to that, and—

President Clinton. First of all, I'm delighted to be going, and I'm not concerned about the protests. Greece and the United States have been great allies. They're very important to us. The Greek-American community is a very important part of our country, and the country has made absolutely astonishing progress over the last 10 years. And I would hope that this would be an opportunity for us to talk about what we have in common and where we're going.

I also think that the Greek people and the Government should be quite encouraged by this new Cyprus initiative and by the fact that I found a receptive ear here on three separate occasions when I spoke in Turkey about the necessity of the Turkish people and the Greeks being reconciled. So I know that a lot of people in Greece disagree with my position on Kosovo, and they have a right to their opinion, and I have a right to mine. I believe I was right, and I think that the facts have proved that I was right. But I don't mind. Greece is the world's oldest democracy. If people want to protest, they ought to have a chance to do it.

Situation in Chechnya

Q. Mr. President, do you think President Yeltsin might be changing course now on

Chechnya by allowing an OSCE official to go and follow the political process?

President Clinton. Well, I think it's encouraging that the OSCE Chairman-in-Office has been invited there. I also think it's encouraging that this charter signing, which we're going to have in here in a few minutes, will be joined by Russia, because the charter specifically says that we do have to be concerned about internal affairs in other countries. So this is a significant move by Russia, and so these two things are encouraging.

Obviously, we've got a lot of turns in the road on Chechnya before it's resolved, but I would say that, compared to how things were when we all got here, those are two things that are hopeful.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:47 a.m. at Ciragan Palace. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; George J. Mitchell, Special Assistant to the President for Northern Ireland; Gen. John de Chastelain, Canadian Defense Forces (Ret.), chair, Independent International Commission on Decommissioning; Ulster Unionist Party Leader David Trimble; President Boris Yeltsin of Russia; and Foreign Minister Knut Vollebaek of Norway, Chairman-in-Office, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Statement on the Agreement Modifying the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty

November 19, 1999

Today I joined the leaders of 30 nations in signing an agreement that will adapt the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) to the post-cold-war world.

The original CFE treaty limited the armaments of the Eastern and Western blocs, a division that has happily been erased since the collapse of the Warsaw Pact. The adapted treaty will place legally binding limits on the armed forces of every individual country that is party

to it, from the Atlantic to the Urals. It will require nations to provide more information about their deployment of military equipment. It will strengthen the requirement that host nations must consent to the deployment of foreign forces on their territory, which speaks directly to the interests of a number of nations of the former Soviet Union including Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, and Azerbaijan.

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The adaptation agreement will also open the treaty to accession by other European countries, and it will preserve NATO's ability to fulfill its post-cold-war responsibilities.

In all these ways, the adapted treaty will enhance peace, security, and stability throughout Europe. Therefore, it is in America's national interest to sign it now and to lock in the commitment of other nations to its terms. At the same time, in order to reap these benefits, we

must have confidence that there will be real compliance.

Russia has pledged that it will comply with the flank provisions of the adapted treaty by reducing its forces in the North Caucasus. This must be done as soon as possible. I will only submit this agreement to the Senate for advice and consent to ratification when Russian forces have in fact been reduced to the flank levels set forth in the adapted treaty.

Statement on the Texas A&M University Bonfire Tower Tragedy

November 19, 1999

Today I spoke with Dr. Ray Bowen, president of Texas A&M University, to extend my deepest sympathies on the tragedy that occurred at the campus. This is a heartbreaking loss. America stands with the College Station community as

it joins together during this difficult time. Hillary and I offer our thoughts and prayers to the families and friends of those who were injured or killed in this devastating incident.

Remarks on Arrival in Athens, Greece

November 19, 1999

Hello. Thank you all for coming out to greet us. My family and our American delegation are very glad to begin our visit to Greece. Thank you very much.

I have come here as a philhellene, a friend of Greece. And I look forward to experiencing that wonderful quality of Greek hospitality known to all the world as *filoxenia*.

Through this visit I want the American people to see the changing face of Greece: the powerhouse of southeast Europe with the highest growth rate in the EU, a booming stock market; a nation on a fast track to join the European Monetary Union; an old democracy that is a model for the young democracies of the Balkans; the gateway to their markets; a driving force in the effort to rebuild war-torn nations and to bring them into Europe.

We look to ancient Greece for inspiration, but we look to modern Greece for leadership and partnership. Tomorrow I want to speak with the people of Greece about what we can do together to build a Europe that is undivided, democratic, and at peace for the first time in

history and about how, together, we can overcome the remaining challenges to that vision by stabilizing the Balkans and achieving lasting reconciliation between Greece and Turkey, with resolution of all outstanding issues, including Cyprus.

Our nations have so much in common. We are allies with a shared commitment to peace and security; democracies with a long tradition of impassioned political debate about issues that affect our lives and engage our convictions. Above all, we are two nations proud of our past but focused on the future.

I look forward to that future and to our partnership with confidence and hope. And I look very much forward to our visit with you.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:02 p.m. at Ellinikon International Airport.