

the last 6 months, all 19 NATO nations and 20 others, including Russia and Ukraine, have provided military personnel and other support personnel to KFOR.

In Kosovo, the U.S. forces are assigned to a sector principally centered around Gnjilane in the eastern portion of Kosovo. For U.S. KFOR forces, as for KFOR generally, maintaining a safe and secure environment is the primary military task. United States forces conduct security patrols in urban areas and in the countryside throughout their sector. Approximately one-half of KFOR's total available personnel is directly committed to protection tasks, including protection of the ethnic minorities. The KFOR forces are under NATO command and control and rules of engagement.

In addition, other U.S. military personnel are deployed to other countries in the region to serve in administrative and logistics support roles for the U.S. forces in KFOR. Specifically, approximately 1,000 U.S. military personnel are operating in support of KFOR in Macedonia, Greece, and Albania.

Since my report to the Congress of December 15, in accordance with UNSCR 1244 and the MTA, FRY military, paramilitary, and police forces have not reentered Kosovo. The KLA agreed on June 21, 1999, to a cease fire, to withdraw from the zones of conflict in Kosovo, and to demilitarize itself. On September 20, 1999, KFOR Commander Lieutenant General Sir Mike Jackson accepted the KLA's certification that the KLA had completed its demilitarization in accordance with the June 21 agreement. The UNMIK thereafter established a civil emergency services entity known as the Kosovo Protection Corps that is intended to provide civic assistance in emergencies and other forms of humanitarian assistance.

The UNMIK has made progress in establishing an interim administration for the people

of Kosovo. The KFOR, within its means and capabilities, is providing broad support to UNMIK. As UNMIK is still developing its structures in Kosovo, KFOR continues to support UNMIK at all levels, including public administration, and is represented at the Kosovo Transitional Council and the Joint Civil Commissions. The KFOR personnel provide a security presence in towns, villages, and the countryside. Checkpoints and patrols are organized in key areas in Kosovo to provide security, resolve disputes, and help instill in the community a feeling of confidence. In addition, KFOR is helping to provide assistance in the areas of humanitarian relief, international civil police training, and the maintenance of civic works resources.

Ethnic tensions in Kosovo, however, remain a concern, particularly in areas where Kosovar Serbs and Kosovar Albanians live in close proximity.

NATO has planned for KFOR's mission to be formally reviewed at 6-month intervals with a view to progressively reducing the force's presence and, eventually, withdrawing. Over time, KFOR will incrementally transfer its security and policing responsibilities as appropriate to the international civil administration, local institutions, and other organizations.

I have taken these actions pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct U.S. foreign relations and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive. I appreciate the continued support of the Congress in these actions.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Strom Thurmond, President pro tempore of the Senate.

Remarks at a Reception for Representative Edolphus Towns in New York City

June 16, 2000

Well, thank you very much. I, too, want to thank LaDane and Ed Bergassi and the McGoverns for making this possible. And Bronx

Borough President Freddy Ferrer, I'm delighted to see you in here. We've been friends a long time now. And I'm very glad to be here for

Ed and Gwen. You know, he was asking for that empowerment zone. I started to tell him, "Ed, that's what fundraisers are, empowerment zones for politicians." [Laughter]

We also have Jim McManus here, who is the president of the Manhattan Democratic Club, thank you for coming; and a lot of other people who have been active in public affairs in New York a long time. Let me just say, I'm honored to be here for Ed. I like this guy, and he has been with me for a very long time. I just reminded him that in January of 1992, when I had been a candidate for President for about 3 months, 90 days, at a time when only my mother felt I could be elected—[laughter]—I spent Martin Luther King's birthday in his district going to Thomas Jefferson High School.

And I remember what it was like. There was the sense that these kids really weren't sure anybody cared about them. A young person had just been shot in the school a week before; the circumstances were heartbreaking and tragic. He took me there. He wanted me to see those kids. He wanted me to hear their stories. He wanted me to talk to the people. He thought it would be good for me, and he thought I needed to represent his people if I intended to be President. And I thought I needed to go.

Do you remember—at the time, I was terribly naive. President Bush was still referring to me as the Governor of a small southern State. And I was so naive, I thought it was a compliment. [Laughter] Truth is, I still do. [Laughter] And what do you know? Now I'm a New Yorker—[laughter]—and I like that.

I want to thank you, Ed, for what you said about the empowerment zones. It's one of the things we did in our economic plan in 1993. It passed by one vote. As Vice President Gore says, whenever he votes, we win. So we had a tie vote. He broke the tie; we passed the economic plan. The deficit came down. Interest rates came down. The economy took off. The rest is history.

But one of the things that was in that economic plan—that, I might add, got no votes from the other party—was the provision for empowerment zones, to give incentives for people to invest in poor areas and neighborhoods that weren't participating in the mainstream economy. I want to say more about that in a moment.

But tonight I want you to think about this election, just for a minute. Let's be serious just for a minute. I won't talk long, but I want you to think about it because somebody might ask you why you came here. And you ought to have an answer.

I think the election of 2000 is just as important as the elections of '96 and '92. It's hard for me to say, since it's the first time I won't be on the ballot in over 25 years. [Laughter] Why is that? Why do I believe that? Because I think what a country does with its great times can be as stern a test of its judgment and character as what a country does in the face of adversity.

You know, in '92—I'm very grateful—the State of New York gave me and Hillary and Al and Tipper Gore an enormous vote in '92, an even bigger one in '96, and I'm very gratified. But after all, the country was in trouble in '92. So people said, "Well, you know, maybe this kid is a Governor of a small southern State, but we're in trouble. Let's take a chance."

Now, I've done everything I could for 7½ years to turn this country around, to move it in the right direction, to get the economy going, to build one America, to reach across the racial and other lines that divide us, to deal with the crime issue, the welfare issue, the environmental issue, the health care issue, to do these things seriously, to make America a good friend and neighbor to the rest of the world.

So what are we going to do with the longest expansion in history? What are we going to do with the first 3 years of back-to-back surpluses in anybody's memory? What are we going to do with the virtual certainty that we'll have surpluses for another 10 or 15 years now? What do you want to do with that? That's really what this election is all about.

And the person who wins the Presidency and the party that wins the House and makes progress in the Senate races will depend upon what the American people think the election is about. Very often the answer to a question depends on what the question is.

Now, what I think we ought to be doing is saying, "Hey, this won't last forever, and we're not going to blow it. We're going to make the most of it, to build the future of our dreams for our children. We're going to take on the big problems that are still out there. We're going to seize the biggest opportunity that is

there before us. We're going to do big, important things." That's what I think we ought to do.

I think we ought to make a commitment to keep the economy going, to keep paying down the debt, and to give economic opportunity to all the neighborhoods that have been left behind. That's what my new markets initiative is all about. I want to give people like you, who can afford to come to this fundraiser, the same financial incentives to invest in poor areas in America we give you to invest in poor areas in Latin America and Africa and Asia today.

I think we ought to make a commitment to eliminate poverty among children in working families, and to do more to help families balance work and family, with child care and with health care initiatives that working people can afford for their families. I think we ought to do more to guarantee excellence in education to all of our kids and access to college to everybody who gets out of high school. That's what I think. You may not agree with any of this. You have to decide.

I think we ought to do more to roll back the tide of climate change—it's going to change life for New Yorkers dramatically in the next 30 years if we don't do it—for all Americans—and to prove that you can keep cleaning up the environment and growing the economy. I think we ought to do more to build one America across all the lines that divide us. I think we ought to pass hate crimes legislation. I think we ought to pass employment nondiscrimination legislation. I think that we ought to do these things.

I think we ought to do more to be a force for peace and freedom and decency around the world. I don't think we ought to make the U.N. practically beg us just to pay our dues that we owe. We're honored to have the U.N. It's headquartered in New York. We get a lot out of it. It's a great source of prestige for our country. Every time the U.N. sends a peace-keeping mission somewhere, it's a place we don't have to send American soldiers. And I think it's awful that some in our Congress act like they're doing the world a favor when they pay what we owe to the United Nations. That's what I think. And I think we ought to be a better partner and look for more opportunities to work with and through other people in the years ahead. But you've got to decide what you think.

I think we ought to do more to meet the challenge of the aging of America. I'm the oldest baby boomer. When all of us baby boomers retire, there will only be two people working—[laughter]—for every one person on Social Security. Now, there will be more than two people working—[laughter]—but there will only be two people working for every one person on Social Security. So what are we going to do?

Well, we can have more people on Social Security working; that's why we lifted the earnings limit on Social Security this year—a good thing we all did together, with the Republicans and the Democrats.

I think we ought to preserve Medicare and add a prescription drug benefit. If we started a Medicare program today for seniors, we would never have one without drugs—ever. But in 1965, when Medicare was established, being old was a very different thing. First of all, everybody who lives to be 65 in America today has got a life expectancy of 83. Some of you younger people here, who are still having children, will give birth to children whose life expectancy, once we decode the human gene, will be nearly 100.

And I think when we know that pharmaceuticals more and more will keep us alive, let us live longer, and let us live better, to have a Medicare program without a program that is affordable for all of our seniors I think is crazy. So I think it's a big deal. Now, that's what I think it's about.

The other point I want to make to you is, there are big differences between the parties—legitimate—second point. All the Republicans opposed my economic plan in '93. They said it would be bad. Well, 22 million jobs later—and we've got the longest economic expansion in history—this is not an argument. We were right, and they were wrong. Now, their argument is, "Okay, we've got a good economy; let's go give all this money away in a big tax cut again." You have to decide. It's very appealing. You might think this thing is so strong, nobody can mess it up, and you'd like to have the extra cash. Our position is harder to take. Our position is, we want a tax cut, but not as big as theirs because we think we still need money to educate our kids, and we think we need money to meet our other commitments, and we think we ought to keep paying this debt down.

We're for a minimum wage; they're against it. We think we ought to have a more aggressive environmental program; they think we ought to relax our environmental efforts. There are real differences.

We think we ought to do more to help the cities; by and large, they disagree. The only area where we've got just a chance to have a bipartisan agreement is to give incentives for people who invest in the poor areas of urban and rural America, and I'm hoping and praying we get it. There are big differences.

So number one, the stakes are high. Number two, there are big differences. Here is the third, most important point: They hope you won't think there are very big differences on election day. So there's a lot of nice talk and kind of bumping and hugging going along here in these elections.

For example, there was a big story in the press today about how the Republicans had hired pollsters to teach them how to talk about the importance of providing prescription drugs, to teach them the words—say, you know, “We could lose the Congress over this, because we're not really for giving all these seniors prescription drugs.” So they hired pollsters to tell them the words to say to convince you that they are for it. And they're nice words. I would like to say some of those words. I have said some of those words.

But there is a big difference. They don't believe that all seniors should get the help. They believe that we should subsidize, with tax money, insurance policies that even the insurance companies—I've got to give them this; I fought with them for 7 years—but even the health insurance companies say they cannot offer policies at affordable prices that real people will buy.

So the Republican plan does not offer our seniors a chance to get prescription drug coverage—like he wants—Ed Towns—badly.

Now, you need to think about this. I mean, you're here for him, and we couldn't beat him with a stick of dynamite with this one. But it's important that you understand that every one of these elections matters. And I'm not on the ballot. I've done everything I could do to turn this country around.

I talked to a gentleman the other day who said, for a lame duck, I was still quacking pretty loudly. *[Laughter]* I'm doing all I know to do. But I want you to think about this.

I want you to remember, number one, we've got the chance of a lifetime; what are we going to do with it? I think we ought to be dealing with the big issues, big opportunities, big challenges. Number two, there are real differences between the two parties—honest. We don't have to say anything bad about the Republicans. I don't like all this. They're just differences. But number three, they hope you won't understand how deep those differences are, because most folks agree with us.

Now, those are the things I want you to remember. So if somebody asks you how come you came, say, “I like Ed Towns. He's been a good Congressman. He's fighting to deal with the things that we ought to deal with, and I'm determined not to blow the greatest chance America has ever had to build the future of our dreams for our children. And I know there are differences, and I'm going to go vote based on what I think is right.”

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:15 p.m. at Trump Towers. In his remarks, he referred to event co-chairs LaDane Williamson, Ed Bergassi, and Kevin and Lisa McGovern; James R. McManus, district leader, McManus Midtown Democratic Association; and Representative Towns' wife, Gwendolyn.