

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:40 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. A part of the question-and-answer session could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With European Community Leaders

May 7, 1993

Bosnia

Q. Mr. President, what makes you so confident that you're going to get a consensus, and a consensus for what? Air strikes? Lifting the arms embargo?

The President. First of all, I think I should receive a report from Mr. Christopher before I make a final comment on that. The Secretary is coming home, and we're going to meet. We're going to meet with our principals, and we're all going to compare notes. I want to get a good personal briefing from Senator Nunn and Senator Lugar and any of the other Senators who want to talk to me who went on that trip.

I just have the feeling based on my conversations in the last week and the reports I've been getting that we can reach a common policy, particularly in light of the events of the last 2 days. And we'll just see how we do and go forward.

Q. Mr. President, do you feel that you could reach a common policy that would not include military force if the allies are resistant to that but a policy that could still be successful and that wouldn't undermine your authority?

The President. I think we have to turn up the heat and keep the pressure on. You know what our policy has been, what we've been pushing. I think I shouldn't say more until after I see Secretary Christopher.

Q. Mr. President, how does Belgrade's action yesterday change the equation, if at all?

The President. It's hard to say. It was welcome if it's real and if it can be followed through on. But I have to get an intelligence report on what the practical impact of that is. That's one of the things we'll be discussing. Our weekends the last few weeks have been given over to these kinds of matters,

and I expect tomorrow morning I'll talk about it quite a bit.

Q. While the deliberations are going on, won't the Serbs be simply confirming their hold on all this land and killing more people? How do you—

The President. We'll have to wait, and we'll have to see. But that will obviously, at least for me, it will affect how I view this and what I will do.

Q. Is it strange to have Milosevic on your side?

The President. Is it strange to what?

Q. To have Milosevic on your side?

The President. Yes, it's an unusual feeling. And I hope he'll stay there.

[At this point, one group of reporters left the room, and another group entered.]

Q. Mr. President, do you expect the Europeans to come along now and support the use of force in Bosnia?

The President. Well, I think that we have to take stronger steps. We have to keep turning the pressure up. I think that obviously some of what has been done is having an effect, even though the so-called assembly did not approve the Vance-Owen plan the Serb leaders seem to be in favor of.

I'm going to discuss that with the Prime Minister and with President Delors, and then we're going to talk tomorrow among ourselves. My Secretary of State is just coming home now, and after that I'll have more to say.

Q. Mr. President, do you find Mr. Milosevic's actions and the sanctions against the Bosnian Serbs encouraging?

The President. Yes, I hope it's real. I haven't had time to be advised about the practical impact of it in the short run, but perhaps it will have a psychological impact. I would think these fights between the Serbs and the Bosnia Muslims and the Croats, they go back so many centuries, they have such powerful roots that it may be that it's more difficult for the people on the ground to make a change in their policy than for the leaders. And so I think it may be that over the next several days some change can be effected on the ground. And if it is a genuine effort by Mr. Milosevic, then of course I

would be quite happy about that, and we'll see what we can do with it.

NOTE: The exchange began at 10:40 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

The President's News Conference With European Community Leaders May 7, 1992

President Clinton. Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. We have just completed our first meeting of the leaders of the United States and the European Community. I would like to offer a warm welcome to Washington and the White House to Prime Minister Rasmussen and to President Delors.

I had the pleasure of meeting with President Delors earlier, in March, and I'm delighted now to have the opportunity to see the Prime Minister of Denmark and the leader of the EC. Before I comment on some elements of the meeting, I want to describe first the attitude of this administration toward the European Community.

It often seems to be the case that there is a great deal of focus, understandably, on some of the trade disputes that divide us rather than the bonds which unite us. It's useful to recall that our common ground is far, far wider than the areas of disagreement. The United States has long been a strong proponent of European unity and the importance of our transatlantic ties. Thirty-one years ago, President Kennedy made a statement that I believe holds as true today as it did then. He said, "We see in Europe a partner with whom we could deal on the basis of full equality in all the great and burdensome tasks of building and defending a community of free nations." That same vision guides this administration.

The European Community is our largest single trade and investment partner. Our relationships with Europe are directly responsible for an inordinate number of American jobs, and if we cultivate that relationship properly and grow our trade and investment, it will mean more economic opportunities for the American people.

Even more important perhaps is our shared commitment to democratic values, to the protection of basic human rights, and to our collective responsibility to assist others who aspire to those values in their own society. We fully support Europe's efforts toward further integration, and we will work with the European Community to achieve our common goals.

We believe a strong and united European Community as a key partner in the pressing problems around the world is very much in the interests of the United States. I want our partnership to be effective in finding solutions to the problems that we face together and to those few problems which continue to divide us.

Today we agreed to provide leadership to assure a successful conclusion to the Uruguay round. A new GATT agreement could spark economic recovery in Europe and create waves of growth around the world. I have worked quite hard on this in the last several weeks. Just a few days ago I met with the Finance Ministers and the Central Bankers from the G-7 countries. And I said to them what I said today to Prime Minister Rasmussen and what I reiterated to President Delors: The United States wants a successful GATT round, and we are prepared to take a lot of trouble to get it done. We agreed that we would do that. My guests and I are committed to wrapping up these negotiations by the end of the year. We directed our negotiators to proceed urgently with other trading partners to restore momentum to the negotiations. Our aim is to have tangible progress to report when Prime Minister Miyazawa hosts us in Tokyo in July.

We also reviewed the continuing tragedy in the Balkans. We agreed to work closely to avert further aggression against innocent populations. I've already answered some questions about this today, and I think I will let my guests make their statements before we make further comments.

We discussed our common efforts to support democratic reform in Russia, Ukraine, and the other newly independent states of the former Soviet Union. The results of the referendum in Russia clearly indicate sup-