

manders and our troops; they're doing very well here, thanks to you. And we're enjoying it, and we appreciate it.

President Goncz. I can even say that it is symbolic. Four or five years ago, I think it would have been unthinkable to meet here with the President of the United States of America either in Washington or in Budapest, the least unthinkable to be able to meet in a small Hungarian village. In addition to the fact that on such an important occasion, your presence here as well as your personal presence, Mr. President, shows the commitment of the United States to ensure the people in the region.

It is a moral obligation to ask because this—we defend the same values, and we have common interests. It is a great pleasure for me that we have this meeting and that we are part of this great operation. This is a Partnership For Peace in the genuine sense of the word. And—it's a lot more than what we have done—and this is also an opportunity for us to get accustomed to each other the way—[*inaudible*].

Thank you, Mr. President.

NATO

Q. Mr. President, do you think this kind of cooperation with Hungary will accelerate Hungary's admittance into NATO as a full-scale member?

The President. Well, as you know, we believe that NATO should be expanded and inevitably will be. And this is the sort of cooperation that I think shows you what can happen in a very positive way with this sort of partnership. I'm very pleased with it, and I think all of our American—and especially our military commanders have been very impressed by what's happened so far.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:40 a.m. in the Headquarters of the Air Base. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks to American Troops at Tuzla Airfield, Bosnia-Herzegovina

January 13, 1996

The President. General Nash; Sergeant Major Tilley; the men and women of Task Force Eagle; the 1st Armored Division; the 3d Infantry Division; the 3d Battalion of the Three-Two-Five Parachute Infantry Regiment; the Air Force 4100th Provisional Group; the legendary Red Horse engineers; the Navy Seabees; and all the veterans of the Tuzla mud: I am proud to stand with you today on dry ground. I come with a simple message: Your country is very proud of you. I'm glad to be joined here today by General Shalikashvili; by General Joulwan; our Ambassador to the United Nations, Madeleine Albright; and a very distinguished delegation from the United States Congress. They're standing over there to my left and to your right. I hope you will make them feel welcome. They are here to support you.

We know that you are the best trained, best equipped, best prepared fighters in the world. Time and again, you have stood down aggression. Time and again you have triumphed in war. But to Bosnia you came on a mission of peace, a mission for heroes. We thank you for defending our Nation's values and our Nation's interests. We thank you for helping the Bosnian people. Men and women of Operation Joint Endeavor, we thank you here for being warriors for peace.

When I last saw many of you in Baumholder, the headquarters of the 1st Armored Division in Germany, your Humvees were a little cleaner, your BDU's a little greener. But to me, seeing you here in the field, doing the jobs you were trained for so well, you have never looked better.

Soon I will have a chance to be briefed again by your commanders, Admiral Smith and General Nash. On behalf of a grateful nation, I want to tell everyone what I know they are going to tell me from our already brief conversations. We know that in less than a month and despite terrible weather, 7,000 of our Nation's finest fighters, the first

wave of a force to be 20,000-strong, have set up camp in Bosnia. We know you fought rain and floods to bridge the Sava River in our biggest military river crossing since 1945. We know that in only 2 weeks, more than 2,000 vehicles—M1's, Bradleys, Humvees and more—have rolled across the waters and rumbled into town. We know you have secured your base of operations and established base camps throughout your sector.

I just came from Outpost Lima, manned by the Charlie Rock Company of the 3d Battalion. I saw for myself that the "Third Herd" and everyone else at the outpost are doing a great job in what might be called less than great conditions.

You took an airfield that had no lights or navigational equipment, turned it around and opened it for business 24 hours a day, at least when the fog permits. You've strung nearly 5 miles of phone and cable wire to build a massive modern communications network.

You're working with soldiers from more than two dozen other nations, and I have met some of their leaders here today. Among them are former adversaries who are now our friends—Polish and Czech combat battalions, Hungarian engineering corps, soldiers from the Baltic States, an entire Russian brigade—and, of course, the Nordic brigade that has been here for some time now. From the ashes of war in Bosnia, you and they together are raising the torch of a new undivided Europe. Step by steady step, you are making history here in Bosnia. Don't you ever forget that, even when this extraordinary mission may seem routine.

I am told that some of you have compared life here with the Bill Murray movie "Groundhog Day," where the same day keeps repeating itself over and over and over again. I'm also told that there are really only two kinds of weather conditions here in Tuzla. When it snows, the mud freezes, and when it rains, the mud thaws. Even the dining hall apparently is in on the act, dishing out the same food every morning and night.

Just remember this: The military promised you square meals. And when you get your eggs each morning, you know the military has kept its commitment to you. I see you laughing about that, and I want you to be

able to laugh. I hope you'll be laughing tomorrow morning at breakfast.

But I am very serious when I tell you that your mission is anything but routine. There has never been anything quite like it before. The Bosnian people have chosen peace, but they cannot do it alone. You and our allies must give them the confidence they need to follow the rules they have agreed to. We have a strong interest here in seeing peace take hold. The people of Bosnia have suffered so much; Europe's stability, so crucial to our own, has been threatened; and we all want a safer, better world for our children.

The Bosnian people are exhausted by war. You can give them the strength they need for peace. This mission requires your strength and your skill, separating former enemies, avoiding the dangers of mines, making sure the cease-fire holds, creating a stable environment. From the days on your feet in the rain and the snow to the nights you must sleep in your Bradleys, this mission requires your strength, your skills, your determination.

The people around you know you are prepared, heavily armed, ready to meet any threat to your safety. They know that our J-STARS aircraft are patrolling high above the clouds, tracking the smallest movement; that out in the Adriatic the Navy and the Marine Corps are ready to project power at a moment's notice; that just above the treetops, the Army's Apache gunships are scouring the ground below; and that our Special Forces are here, there, and everywhere.

I have said it before and I will say it again: You can see from this operation that America looks out for its own. I know the burden of our leadership weighs heavily on you and your loved ones back home. Just as your commanders and I are committed to protecting your safety, so we are working to help your families, to keep them informed and in touch with you, to help them with the things that matter most, like day care and health care and paying the bills. The pride your families have in you is shared by Americans all across our Nation. We look at you all and we look at all you're doing here, confident, compassionate, disciplined, and strong, and we see in you the best our country has to offer.

Before I left Washington to be with you, I signed an Executive order that creates a new campaign medal. It's called the Armed Forces Service Medal. It will be awarded to all those who serve our Nation in significant noncombat military missions, such as peace-keeping. I am pleased to announce that as participants in Operation Joint Endeavor, each of you will receive America's newest military honor.

As you move around the world—excuse me, as you move ahead with your mission, I ask you, too, to keep this in mind: Around the world people look to America not just because of our size and strength but because of what we stand for and what we're willing to stand against. And though it imposes extra burdens on us, people trust us to help them share in the blessings of peace. We can't be everywhere, and even you can't do everything. But where we can make a difference, where our values and our interests are at stake, we must act. Here, where our values and interests so clearly are at stake, you are acting on America's behalf.

All the people of Bosnia are looking to America, and so we look to you, the men and women of our Armed Forces. Here our Nation, through you, can make a difference between a war that starts again and a peace that takes hold. From the highest commander to the newest recruit, that difference lies in your hands.

You give America power and strength. And you are giving Bosnia a new day of peace. Always be proud of what you are doing here. Your country and your Commander in Chief are immensely proud of you.

God bless you all, and God bless the United States of America. Thank you.

As part of our family outreach, I'd like to ask Colonel Neal Patton to come up here. Colonel Patton, where are you?

I flew into Aviano, Italy, this morning at 6 o'clock, and there were a huge number of young children there and a lot of family members. Colonel Patton's wife gave me a hug and said, "You sent my husband to Tuzla. So I expect you, Mr. President, to personally deliver his birthday present." Here it is, Colonel. Happy birthday.

Col. Neal Patton. Sir, thank you very much. That's really something. Thank you.

The President. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:18 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Maj. Gen. William L. Nash, USA, Commanding General, 1st Armored Division; Adm. Leighton Smith, USN, Commander in Chief, Allied Forces Southern Europe; and Sgt. Maj. Jack Tilley, USA, 1st Armored Division.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With President Alija Izetbegovic of Bosnia-Herzegovina at Tuzla Airfield

January 13, 1996

President's Visit

Q. Mr. Izetbegovic, can you tell us what it means for the President of the United States to be here in Bosnia?

President Izetbegovic. In President Clinton we see a great friend to Bosnia-Herzegovina. We wish him here a warm welcome. And of course, we see the opportunity that we have discussions on several important issues, issues relating to IFOR forces and especially the United States of America in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Q. Mr. President, was it worth all the effort to make the logistical nightmare of making this visit?

President Clinton. Absolutely. First of all, the most important thing for me was to come and see our troops and to tell them that I support them, the American people support them, and we appreciate what they're doing here, and to get a briefing about what's going well and what still needs work.

And the opportunity to meet with President Izetbegovic and the other members of his government I think is quite important because we still have a lot of work to do. And quite over and above the IFOR obligation, we've got a lot of work to do to rebuild Bosnia economically. And I want to do what I can to aid that.

And of course, I've got Mr. Bob Gallucci, one of our most able diplomats; he helped to unravel our problem, our North Korea problem. So I figured if he did that, he could certainly figure out how we're going to help