

centuries of divisions to rest and to join Europe and North America in building a better future together.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 5:44 p.m. on March 26 in the Oval Office at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on March 27. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 26 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Statement on the Rescue of a United States Pilot in Serbia

March 27, 1999

I am pleased with the news that our pilot has been rescued successfully. I am tremendously proud of the skill and bravery of the pilot and of the courageous individuals who participated in the recovery.

As I have said from the outset, this military operation entails real risk. However, the continued brutality and repression of the Serb forces further underscores the necessity for NATO forces to persevere.

Our NATO operations will go forward as planned. I strongly support the decision of Secretary General Solana to move to a new phase of the air campaign, which will include a wider range of targets, including forces in the field.

Statement on the Death of Michael Aris

March 27, 1999

The First Lady and I were saddened to learn of the death of Dr. Michael Aris, a scholar of Tibetan and Himalayan Studies at Oxford University. We offer our sincere condolences to his wife, Aung San Suu Kyi, his sons, Alexander and Kim, and other family members.

Dr. Aris' perseverance and dedication to his wife and family and to the cause of human rights and democracy in Burma earned him the respect and admiration of citizens around the world. At this difficult time, I want to reaffirm to Michael's family and to all the people of Burma that the United States will keep working for the day when all who have

been separated and sent into exile by the denial of human rights in Burma are reunited with their families and when Burma is reunited with the family of freedom.

Remarks on Departure for Camp David, Maryland, and an Exchange With Reporters

March 28, 1999

NATO Airstrikes

The President. Good afternoon. All Americans can be very proud of the skill and bravery of the American servicemen involved in the rescue operation yesterday in Kosovo. Indeed, we can be proud of all of our men and women in uniform who are involved in the NATO mission.

From the outset, I have said to the American people that this military operation entails real risks. But the continued brutality and repression of the Serb forces further underscores the need for NATO to persevere. I strongly support Secretary General Solana's decision yesterday to move to a new phase in our planned air campaign, with a broader range of targets including air defenses, military and security targets, and forces in the field.

In the last 24 hours, I have been in close contact with key NATO allies, including Prime Minister Blair, President Chirac, Chancellor Schroeder, and Prime Minister D'Alema. All of them share our determination to respond strongly to Mr. Milosevic's continuing campaign of inhumane and violence against the Kosovar Albanian people. That is what we intend to do.

Thank you very much.

Q. Has the bombing made things worse, sir?

Q. Sir, is the allied bombing driving the atrocities, sir?

The President. Absolutely not.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:15 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to NATO Secretary General Javier Solana; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; President Jacques Chirac of France; Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder of Germany; Prime Minister Massimo D'Alema of Italy;

and President Slobodan Milosevic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro).

**Remarks on the Unveiling of a
Portrait of Former Secretary of State
Warren M. Christopher**

March 30, 1999

Thank you very much, Secretary Albright, Chris, Marie, other members of the Cabinet who are here, Secretary Rubin, Secretary Shalala. We thank very much Tunky Riley and Hattie Babbitt for being here. And we're glad that Tom and Oya are here and past and present officials of the State Department, other distinguished guests.

I would like to begin by saying that it is ironic, but perhaps appropriate, that we are unveiling the portrait of this truly wonderful, distinguished American who did so much to bring peace to Bosnia at a time when we are engaged in a struggle for peace in Kosovo. I hope you'll just let me say a word about that.

The NATO military operation is continuing today against an expanded range of targets, including Serbian forces on the ground in Kosovo. The allies are united in our outrage over President Milosevic's atrocities against innocent people. We are determined to stay with our policy. As President Chirac said yesterday, what is happening today must strengthen our resolution.

Countries from throughout the Balkans, from Greece to Turkey to Romania to Bulgaria, are helping us to meet the mounting humanitarian crisis. We are all dealing today with the same horrible pattern of conduct we saw in Bosnia. We saw that conduct resume in 1998 in Kosovo, when a quarter of a million innocent people were driven from their homes. We saw it escalate in January and February of this year, as Serbian forces, in violation of the agreement the President had made last October, moved from village to village and atrocity to atrocity while their leaders pretended to negotiate for peace in France.

Now it is clear that as the Kosovar leaders were saying yes to peace, Mr. Milosevic was planning a new campaign of expulsions and executions in Kosovo. He started carrying out

that plan as the talks ended, increasing our sense of urgency that the airstrikes NATO had threatened for some time must begin.

Now, lamentably, we have credible reports that his troops are singling out for murder the moderate Kosovar leaders who supported a peaceful solution. Refugees are streaming out, clearly shaken by what they have seen. Altogether, since the conflict started last year, more than half a million people have been forced from their homes.

If there was ever any doubt about what is at stake in Kosovo, Mr. Milosevic is certainly erasing it by his actions. They are the culmination of more than a decade of using ethnic and religious hatred as a justification for uprooting and murdering completely innocent, peaceful civilians to pave Mr. Milosevic's path to absolute power.

The NATO air campaign is designed to raise the price of that policy. Today, he faces the mounting cost of his continued aggression. For a sustained period, he will see that his military will be seriously diminished, key military infrastructure destroyed, the prospect of international support for Serbia's claim to Kosovo increasingly jeopardized.

We must remain steady and determined, with the will to see this through.

I can't think of anyone whose life and career and personality those words—"steady, determined, the will to see this through"—I can't think of anyone those words apply better to than Warren Christopher. No one worked harder than he did to bring an end to the bloody war in Bosnia. No one worked harder than he did to galvanize the unity in our NATO alliance that has allowed us to act with resolve today and gave us the vision to take on new members and new missions in the aftermath of the cold war.

It took time to forge a just peace in Bosnia, because Chris and his team were persistent and prevailed. We must be as persistent today as we were then in pursuit of peace.

He was our first post-cold-war Secretary of State, our first chief diplomat in over 50 years who faced, as Madeleine recently said, the challenge of defining our foreign policy in a world without a single, overriding threat to our security. But he saw that, as did I, as a great opportunity. He was determined