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to return home. Let us do our part for all the innocent people whose lives have been shattered by this conflict. And let us give our thanks to our men and women in uniform who are risking their lives today for our ideals, our interests, and their lives.

Let us keep in our prayers the three brave American servicemen now being held without justification in Belgrade that they may return to us soon. Let us do what we can, and what we must, for peace to prevail. And let us stay the course until it does.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 5:05 p.m. on April 2 in the Oval Office at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on April 3. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 5 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. In his remarks, the President referred to President Slobodan Milosevic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro); and the three U.S. Army infantrymen in custody in Serbia: Staff Sgt. Andrew A. Ramirez, Staff Sgt. Christopher J. Stone, and Specialist Steven M. Gonzales.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on the Decision To Send Certain United States Forces to Macedonia and Albania

April 3, 1999

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Since I reported to the Congress on March 25, 1999, under section 8115 of the Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 1999 (Public Law 105–262), there have been dramatic and very serious developments in Kosovo and the region, particularly Macedonia and Albania. Belgrade's sustained and accelerating repression and ethnic cleansing in Kosovo has created a humanitarian crisis of staggering dimensions. Estimates are that more than 800,000 Kosovars have been displaced from their homes and villages, with large concentrations in Albania, Macedonia, and Montenegro, and with the numbers rising dramatically every day. Throughout Kosovo, Serb forces have burned villages. Homes throughout the region have been looted and are smoldering. In Pristina, Kosovars are being forced into rail cars and shipped to the Macedonian border.

As the refugee flow out of Kosovo has surged, the limited ability of Albania and Macedonia to deal with the situation has been overwhelmed. The international organizations engaged in refugee assistance do not currently have in the region the ability and resources to deal with a refugee crisis of this magnitude. Unless adequate care can be provided for these refugees, a humanitarian disaster of immense proportions will result. In addition to the human suffering involved, such a disaster carries with it the very real possibility of destabilizing the governments and societies of Albania and Macedonia. This disaster could have the effect of spreading violence in the region that NATO is determined to prevent.

In the light of these disturbing events, I have directed that additional U.S. forces be deployed to Albania and Macedonia in order to support disaster relief by, among other activities, delivering food and essentials, constructing shelter, providing coordination and assisting in onward movement, and when necessary, providing protection for relief supplies and refugees. In regard to the elements of section 815(a)(1)–(8), I am providing the following information.

1 & 2. *National Security Interests.* I hereby certify that the deployment of additional forces to Albania and Macedonia as described above is necessary in the national security interests of the United States. These actions will provide additional forces to aid in the relief efforts supporting Kosovar refugees. They also will contribute to the overall effort to stabilize this region that has historically been a tinderbox, thereby helping to preserve peace and security in the region.

3. *Numbers.* The number of U.S. personnel who will be deployed for these purposes cannot be definitively provided at this time, since planning for the deployment is ongoing. I would anticipate, at a minimum, a deployment of 1,000 personnel. It can be anticipated that headquarters elements, air crews, airlift control elements, selected transport and rotary wing aircraft, security personnel, civil affairs and psychological operations personnel, medical and engineer forces, and logistics support forces may become involved in the operation. These forces

will operate under U.S. and NATO operational control. I will ensure that the Congress is informed in a timely manner about deployments described in this report when the information is available.

4. *Mission/Objectives.* As stated above and in my report to the Congress of March 25, the overall objective of our efforts with our allies is to maintain stability in the region and prevent a humanitarian disaster resulting from the ongoing offensive against the people of Kosovo. The specific military mission of the forces deployed as described in this report would be to support disaster relief operations to aid in the care and protection of Kosovar refugees and to provide for their own security.

5. *Schedule.* At this point, it is not possible to determine how long these deployments to Albania and Macedonia in response to this dire need will be required. This will be affected by how long Belgrade continues its campaign of ethnic cleansing and how long beyond the cessation of that campaign it will take before the Kosovar refugees will be able to return to their homes or resettle elsewhere. Circumstances permitting, it will be our objective to transfer responsibility for the refugees to other organizations such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees as soon as possible.

6. *Exit Strategy.* The duration of the requirement for a U.S. military presence in Albania and Macedonia for these purposes will depend on the course of events, and in particular, on Belgrade's conduct on the ground in Kosovo. So long as Belgrade forces the Kosovar refugees to remain dispossessed, and the enormity of the situation continues to overwhelm the ability of Albania, Macedonia, and the international relief community to deal with the situation, it is likely that U.S. forces deployed for these purposes will be required. Nevertheless, as stated above, it will be our objective to transfer responsibility for the refugees to other organizations as soon as the emergency has subsided. In addition, we are working with our European partners to provide temporary asylum to some of the refugees in third countries.

7. *Costs.* The costs of the deployment described in this notice will be paid initially from FY99 Defense appropriations, including the provision of defense commodities and services directed pursuant to Presidential Determination 99–20 of March 31, 1999. An estimate of likely costs for these deployments is being prepared, and I will ensure that it is provided to the Congress as soon as it is available.

8. *Effect on Morale, Retention and Readiness.* In the first instance, these deployments will have a positive effect on morale, retention and readiness because they will demonstrate the commitment of the necessary resources to those aspects of operations relating to response to the worsening conditions brought by the refugee crisis in the area.

United States forces participating in these operations, as well as U.S. forces deployed for other purposes in the region are dedicated professionals serving with great pride and enthusiasm. Given the importance of these activities, particularly in humanitarian terms, we anticipate that U.S. forces would maintain the highest morale and effectiveness. It has been our experience that personnel serving in these types of operations manifest great pride and satisfaction in demonstrating America's capacity to ensure care and protection for people in need.

However, we recognize that even deployments for the best of reasons increase the periods of separation from family and add other burdens to military service.

The Department of Defense has underway extensive and effective programs to do what is necessary to manage personnel and other resources so as to reduce these problems. As with any operational deployment, the effects on readiness are mixed. In these operations, U.S. forces will be conducting one of the missions they have been trained to perform, which will provide an unparalleled opportunity to apply their skills in a unique environment. We believe that this will contribute significantly to a high state of morale and readiness.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 5.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on the Decision To Send Certain United States Forces to Macedonia and Albania

April 4, 1999

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Further to my report to the Congress of March 25 and April 3, 1999, under section 8115 of the Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 1999 (Public Law 105–262), this report is to inform you of my decision to deploy additional U.S. forces to Albania in support of ongoing NATO air operations to reduce the capacity of the Serbian military and security forces to conduct offensive operations.

In particular, rotary wing, artillery, and tactical missile systems will be deployed to establish a deep strike task force in Albania to enhance NATO's ability to conduct effective air operations in Kosovo as part of the current NATO mission. In regard to the elements of section 8115(a)(1)–(8), I am providing the following to supplement information provided on these elements in my reports of March 25 and April 3, 1999.

1 & 2. *National Security Interests.* I hereby certify that the deployment of additional forces to Albania as described above is necessary in the national security interests of the United States. This deployment will provide additional specialized forces to reduce the capacity of the Serbian military and security forces to continue repression and ethnic cleansing and to deter the threat to regional peace and security.

3. *Numbers.* I anticipate that a substantial deep strike task force, comprised of rotary wing, artillery, and tactical missile systems, together with supporting and security elements, will be deployed to Albania for these purposes. There is not at this time a definitive number of U.S. military personnel who will be deployed as part of this task force, but I anticipate that, at a minimum, approximately 2,000 will be required. I will ensure that the Congress is informed in a timely manner about the deployment described in this report when the information is available.

4. *Mission/Objectives.* The overall objective of our efforts with our allies in the region has been detailed in my previous reports of March 25 and April 3, 1999. The specific military mission of the strike task force deployed to Albania will be to support ongoing NATO air operations to reduce the capacity of the Serbian military and security forces to conduct offensive operations. The ground force component is for the support and security of the deep strike elements. Their mission does not include any planned deployment of ground troops into the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

5. *Schedule.* Although it is not possible at this time to determine how long NATO operations will need to continue, we are determined to sustain this effort along with our allies as long as necessary to meet our objectives.

6. *Exit Strategy.* The duration of the requirement for this strike task force deployment to Albania will depend on the course of events, and in particular, on Belgarde's reaction to NATO operations.

7. *Costs.* The costs of the deployment covered by this notice, like the costs of the U.S. contribution to NATO air operations, will be paid initially from FY99 Defense Operations and Maintenance appropriations. An estimate of likely costs for these deployments is being prepared, and I will ensure that it is provided to the Congress as soon as it is available.

8. *Effect on Morale, Retention and Readiness.* In addition to the specific points I made on these matters in my reports of March 25 and April 3, I would only underscore and express my deep gratitude for the great pride, courage, professionalism, and enthusiasm of the men and women of our Armed Forces who are carrying out this critical mission.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 5.