

think they will conclude that it was a truly tragic accident, that a series of very bad mistakes were made, and a tragic accident occurred.

I also, frankly—after Mr. Pickering made his important but difficult journey there, I noted that the reports, the contents of the report, were highlighted in Chinese news for 2 or 3 days thereafter, which I took to be quite a positive sign, actually.

So this is a difficult, painful period for them and for our relationship, but I'm not—I haven't given up on the WTO. I'd still like to see it finished this year. And I think we'll work through this.

Chancellor Schroeder. Last question.

Congressional Support for Reconstruction Funds

Q. Mr. President, your ability to keep your commitments on the aid to the region is dependent upon a Congress that has been very reluctant to come up with money. Do you anticipate difficulty there? And have you done anything to lay the groundwork with the Congress?

President Clinton. Well, yes and yes. Yes, I anticipate some difficulty; and yes, I've worked hard to lay the groundwork.

We have had lots of meetings on Kosovo, as you know, larger meetings with Congress. I have said all along that I thought that we had to participate in the long-term reconstruction, that I thought that we—just as in the peacekeeping—we can have a marginally more modest role in peacekeeping and reconstruction because we had a relatively larger role during the air campaign and paid a lot of the cost of that.

But we have—the Congress did give us funds, for example, in this supplemental, to help to pay for the relocation of the Kosovars' home and the attendant costs related to that. So I think that if we can make the case, that they will be willing to support it. And it's part of our responsibility.

You know, I just want to urge you to give us some time to come up with a plan for the short run, and then let the leaders in the region come up with a long-term plan and let us all sort of join together.

I think that our Congress and our taxpayers will be like most people—they want

to know what is the big picture; what is the long-term objective here; how does it relate to the interests of ordinary families in Germany and the United States, throughout Europe? And I think these are questions we'll be able to answer, and I think we'll get the support we need.

Do you want to take a European journalist question? Equal time here. [Laughter] You guys owe me one. [Laughter]

President's Visit to Slovenia

Q. Mr. President, you are going now to Slovenia. What's the purpose for the visit, and also the message of your visit in Slovenia?

President Clinton. Well, first of all, I'm going to Slovenia to highlight our partnership, our shared values, and our shared future. But I want the American people and the rest of the world to see a successful country in southeastern Europe that has done a good job of promoting democracy, of advancing prosperity, of working for integration in the region and with the rest of Europe.

They represent what I believe a whole region can become. So the Slovenians have been, in my view, very good citizens and good partners with all of us, and I have to highlight that. But I also want the trip to spark the imagination of others, both within the Balkans and beyond it, about the kind of future, the kind of societies we can build in all those countries if we work at it.

Thank you.

Q. Mr. President, take one more? Mr. President?

Chancellor Schroeder. One question for a European journalist. [Laughter]

Administration of Kosovo/Duration of U.S. Troop Involvement

Q. Thank you very much, Mr. Chancellor. Thank you, Mr. Chancellor.

Kosovo obviously now urgently needs an administration. How quickly do you think that can be facilitated via the OSCE or the European Union, and can the U.S. Americans contribute to that?

And now, one thing regarding President Clinton—6,000 soldiers on the ground; how long are they going to stay there for? How long will you want them to stay there? How

long will your Congress, which has actually taken a bit of a negative attitude, be able to maintain that period?

Chancellor Schroeder. Well, the question as to who's going to chair the civilian administration is a decision that lies in the field of the United Nations Secretary-General, and I think it would not be appropriate to give him advice from here. But he knows that we need a highly qualified person who links two things: firstly, the kind of political degree of skill and sensitivity and, on the other hand, experience with administration, somebody who—I think in economic terms, as well. All of those I think are the job profile descriptions. And I think the Secretary-General will very, very speedily pick and choose that kind of person who will then dominate the reorganization in the civilian sense.

President Clinton. One is, I agree entirely with what Chancellor Schroeder said about the person the United Nations should pick. I called the Secretary-General, and I said that I had no particular candidate and I did not care from what country the candidate came; that the most important thing was that we get someone who can do the job—someone with high energy, with organizing skills, with vision, with the ability to communicate.

It's a fascinating job; I'd give anything if I could do it. It's a wonderful job if you think about it. It's a very interesting job. But it's very important that we pick the right person. There will be no politics in this, nothing. So I made it clear: I don't care where the person is from; I just want the right person picked.

The second question you asked me is, how long could we stay? I hope we will stay until the objectives of the mission are completed. And I went out of my way, since I thought, and our military thought, in Bosnia we knew how long it would take, and we were wrong. I went out of my way not to make the same mistake twice and not to put a timetable on our involvement, but to say here are our objectives; when we've achieved our objectives, we'll get out.

Now, in Bosnia, we've gone way down, all of us have. You know, the military force in Bosnia is only about, I think, 30 percent, maybe 25 percent of what it was when we

first went in. But we are still there. And I personally believe, again, having a modest force there, if it avoids war, promotes peace and prosperity, it is much, much less expensive than letting these conflicts occur. So I hope we will stay until our mission is complete.

Thank you.

Q. This is my last shot. Are you going to take——

President Clinton. Your last shot?

Q. My last shot.

President Clinton. Why? You're not leaving us, are you? Where are you going?

Q. I'm going to "60 Minutes."

President Clinton. All right, you guilt me into doing it. If you ask me a lousy question, I'll never speak to you again. [*Laughter*] Go ahead—[*laughter*]—which would make you happy——

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

President Clinton. Anything for the farewell.

Slobodan Milosevic

Q. That's right. Sir, the last administration left you Saddam Hussein, and you have spent billions of dollars trying to keep Saddam Hussein contained. I understand that there are many covert things that you can't discuss, but can you assure the American people that you did not send their sons and daughters into harm's way just to leave Milosevic in power?

President Clinton. Well, first of all, I can ensure the American people that we sent our soldiers, our airmen, into harm's way to get the Kosovars home, to get the Serbs out of Kosovo, and to have—the Serbian forces, not the people, the Serbian forces out—and to have an international peacekeeping force. That's what I defined as our objectives, and we achieved them. And I thought they were worthy.

Now, I have, furthermore, said that I would be adamantly opposed to any reconstruction aid going to Serbia as long as Mr. Milosevic is in power. He has now been indicted by the International War Crimes Tribunal, and every day we see fresh evidence of mass killing and oppression taken under his guidance and with his orders. So, I think that is clear. And I can assure the American