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CREATOR: Margaret M. Suntum (SUNTUM_M) (WHO)

CREATION DATE/TIME: 23-APR-1999 18:01:22.94

SUBJECT: remarks at NATO Commemorative Ceremony

TO: Nanda Chitre (CHITRE_N) Autoforward to: Remote Address
READ: NOT READ

TO: Julie B. Goldberg (GOLDBERG_JB) Autoforward to: Remote Address
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TO: Megan C. Moloney (MOLONEY_M) Autoforward to: Remote Address
READ: NOT READ

TO: Elizabeth R. Newman (NEWMAN_E) Autoforward to: Remote Address
READ: NOT READ

TO: Ellen E. Olcott (OLCOTT_E) (WHO)
READ: NOT READ

TO: Jason H. Schechter (SCHECHTER_J) Autoforward to: Remote Address
READ: NOT READ

TO: Richard Socarides (SOCARIDES_R) Autoforward to: Remote Address
READ: NOT READ

TO: Natalie S. Wozniak (WOZNIAK_N) (NSC)
READ: NOT READ

TO: remote addressee (msuntum@who.eop.gov@inet)
READ: NOT READ

TO: Remote Addressee (sarah.e.gegenheimer@eop@lngtwy@eopmrx)
READ: NOT READ

TEXT:
see attached

===== ATTACHMENT 1 =====

ATT CREATION TIME/DATE: 23-APR-1999 18:00:00.00

ATT BODYPART TYPE: p

ATT CREATOR: Margaret M. Suntum

TEXT:

WPC

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h#THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release`@(#8April 23, 1999

REMARKS BY PRESIDENT CLINTON

AND SECRETARY GENERAL SOLANA
AT NATO COMMEMORATIVE CEREMONY

"Mellon Auditorium
"Washington. D.C. 3333

1:10 P.M. EDT

SECRETARY GENERAL SOLANA: Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, 50 years ago, here, in Washington, North America and Europe launched a visionary project, a t Atlantic community of nations. For 50 years, this community has provided for the security of its members, protecting its nations against any form of aggression or intimidation.

But NATO has never been only about defense. This Alliance has always sought to promote peace in our countries and across the EurAtlantic area. And whenever new opportunities to build lasting peace and stability have arisen, NATO has seized them.

Over the past decade, those efforts have brought dramatic rewards. Today, NATO is at the center of a new EurAtlantic security architecture as a source of its stability and a source of peace. NATO has extended the hand of friendship to many nations. Former adversaries have become friends. Friends have become partners. Partners become full members of the Alliance.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, to the strength of our unity and of our resolve. Nor is it a mere coincidence that NATO's most significant achievements rest on and proceed from this unity and determination.

NATO fully intends to stand firm in the face of the indescribable human suffering and massive violations of human

rights in Kosovo. The Atlantic Alliance has made it plain that it will not merely mouth platitudes about common values, but that it is prepared to defend them whenever they are threatened. Our Alliance has principles, and the courage to act upon them.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, we have every reason to be proud. When great problems have called for great decisions, we have made them. The founding fathers of this Alliance would be proud of what we have done, and what we are doing. Fifty years after its creation, the Atlantic Alliance continues to demonstrate that, for us, values have meaning.

Even half a century after its founding, NATO remains a community that faces up to challenge. And this is the central message of our anniversary summit a message that will reinforce the many messages that this historic meeting will generate a message worthy of our Atlantic community.

Thank you very much. (Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: Mr. Secretary General, leaders of NATO, 50 other distinguished foreign guests, my fellow Americans. It is a profound honor for the United States to welcome NATO back to Washington for its 50th anniversary, an occasion to honor NATO's past, to reaffirm its present mission in Kosovo, to envision its future.

In 1949, in his acceptance speech for the Nobel Prize, the American novelist, William Faulkner, acknowledged the fear of nuclear holocaust that then gripped the world. But he declared firmly that humanity will not merely endure, it will prevail. In that same year, 12 nations came here to pledge to vindicate that faith. They were North Americans and Europeans, determined to build a new Europe on the ruins of the old through a mutual commitment to each other's security and freedom.

In this auditorium, the French Foreign Minister, Robert Schuman, said that NATO's fundamental aim was not to win a war that would, after all, leave Europe ravaged, but to avoid such a war and I quote "by becoming, together, stronger."

nough to
safeguard the peace." He was right. No member of NATO has ever
been
called upon to fire a shot in anger to defend an ally from
attack.

The American Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, said
that NATO would "free t
he minds of men in many nations from a
haunting sense of insecurity, and enable
them to work and plan
with confidence in the future." And he was right. NATO
bought
time for the Marshall Plan. It encouraged allies to pool their
militar
y and economic strength, instead of pitting it against
their neighbors.

The Prime Minister of Canada, Lester Pearson, predicted
that the NATO Pact'
s achievement would "extend beyond the time of
emergency which gave it birth, o
r the geographical area which it
now includes." And he, too, was right. NATO
gave hope to West
Germany, and confidence to Greece and Turkey. Ultimately, NA
TO
helped break the grip of the Cold War. Yesterday, Europe,
divided by an arb
itrary line on one side, free people living
in fear of aggression; on the othe
r, people living in tyranny who
wanted to be free. Today, thanks in no small m
easure to NATO,
most of Europe is free, and at peace.

Today we are joined by the leaders of Poland, Hungary
and the Czech Republi
c, whose descent into darkness helped to
spark NATO's creation. Today they are
a part of NATO, pledged to
defend what was too long denied to them.

So we say to Prime Minister Orban, President Havel,
President Kwasniewski:
Welcome to NATO, welcome home to the
community of freedom. (Applause.)

As we look to the future, we know that for the first
time in history we hav
e a chance to build a Europe truly
undivided, peaceful and free. But we know t
here are challenges
to that vision in the fragility of new democracies; in the
proliferation of deadly weapons and terrorism; and surely, in the
awful specte
r of ethnic cleansing in Southeast Europe, where Mr.
Milosevic, first in Croati
a and Slovenia, then in Bosnia, now in

Kosovo, has inflamed ancient hatreds to gain and maintain his power. He is bent on dehumanizing, indeed, destroying a whole people and their culture, and in the process, driving his own people to deep levels of distress.

We're in Kosovo because we want to replace ethnic cleansing with tolerance and decency, violence with security, disintegration with restoration, isolation with integration into the rest of the region and the continent. We want Southeastern Europe to travel the same road as Western Europe half a century ago, and Central Europe a decade ago.

But we are fundamentally there because the Alliance will not have meaning in the 21st century if it permits the slaughter of innocence on its doorstep. This is not a question of territorial conquest or political domination, but standing for the values that made NATO possible in the first place.

This is the mission of NATO at the age of 50, on the edge of a new century determined to reach forward into the future with a united continent, with a collective defense, remaining open to new members from the Baltics to the Black Sea, remaining committed to work with partners for peace and progress, including Russia and the Ukraine, and others who are willing to work for the values and the future we dream of. This is the kind of alliance we come to this summit to reaffirm and to build for the future.

Almost 100 years ago, President Theodore Roosevelt said something that could well be applied to a united Europe and to our united Transatlantic alliance today. Of America's coming of age in the world, he said, "We have no choice as to whether we will play a great part in the world. That has been determined for us by fate, by the march of events. The only question is whether we will play it well or ill."

Our nations played our part well after World War II, from the Berlin Airlift to the founding of NATO, to the restoration of hope and confidence in Western

Europe. We played
it well after the Cold War, from the reunification of Germa
ny to
the enlargement of NATO, to the support we have offered
democratic, open
government in Russia and Ukraine, and the reachout we have done to other partne
rs for peace. We played it well
when we joined together to end the slaughter i
n Bosnia.

Now, we rise, as we must, to this new and fundamental
challenge to the peac
e and humanity of Europe. Our message is
clear: Peace and humanity will preva
il in Kosovo. The refugees
will go home. They will have security. They will
have their
selfgovernment. The last European dictatorship of the 20th
century
will not destroy Europe's longawaited chance to live at
least together in peace
and freedom.

Thank you very much. (Applause.)

8)END` (#>1:22 P.M. EDT===== END ATTACHMENT 1 =====