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RECORD ID: 9904495
RECEIVED: 11 JUN 99 13

TO: PRESIDENT

FROM: UNKNOWN

DOC DATE: 26 MAR 99
SOURCE REF:

KEYWORDS: PUBLIC STATEMENTS
MEDIA

KOSOVO

PERSONS:

SUBJECT: POTUS RADIO ADDRESS ON KOSOVO 26 MAR

ACTION: NOTED BY PRESIDENT

DUE DATE: 17 JUN 99 STATUS: C

STAFF OFFICER: NONE

LOGREF:

FILES: PA

NSCP:

CODES:

D O C U M E N T D I S T R I B U T I O N

FOR ACTION

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ACTION DATA SUMMARY REPORT

RECORD ID: 9904495

DOC ACTION OFFICER

CAO ASSIGNED ACTION REQUIRED

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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN

3-26-99

3/26/99 1:40 pm

'99 MAR 26 PM 2:01

PRESIDENT WILLIAM JEFFERSON CLINTON

RADIO ADDRESS ON KOSOVO

THE WHITE HOUSE

MARCH 26, 1999

Good morning. Three days ago, I decided the US should join our NATO allies in military air strikes, to bring peace to Kosovo.

In my address to the nation last Wednesday, I explained why we have taken this step. To save the lives of innocent civilians in Kosovo from a brutal military offensive. To defuse a powder keg at the heart of Europe that has exploded twice before in this century with catastrophic results. To prevent a wider war we would have to confront later, only at far greater risk and cost. To stand with our ^{NATO} allies for peace.

Our military operation has been underway for several nights. In this time, Serb troops have continued attacks on unarmed men, women and children. That is all the more reason for us to stay the course. We must and we will continue until Serbia's leader, Slobodan Milosevic, accepts peace ... or we have seriously damaged his capacity to make war.

As always, America's military men and women are performing with courage and skill. Their strength comes from rigorous training, state of the art weaponry, and hard-won experience in this part of the world.

This is the same brave and tested force that brought stability to Bosnia after four years of vicious war. I am confident they will once again rise to the task.

Some of them are fighter pilots. Some are mechanics, technicians, air traffic controllers and base personnel.

Every time I visit our troops around the world, I am struck by their professionalism ... their quiet, unassuming determination. They will say, "this is the job I was trained to do." They don't see themselves as heroes, but we surely do.

I have also been deeply impressed by the solidarity of NATO's purpose. All 19 NATO nations are providing support – from Norway to Turkey, from England to ~~AGLFC to LAM~~ Italy, including our three new allies from central ~~P, H, CR~~ Europe.

And we should remember the courage of the Kosovar people today, still exposed to violence and brutality.

Many Americans have heard the story of a young Kosovar girl trying to stay in touch with a friend in America by email, as a Serb attack began in her village.

A few days ago, she wrote, “at the moment, just from my balcony, I can see people running with suitcases and I can hear some gunshots. A village just a few hundred meters from my home is all surrounded. As long as I have electricity, I will continue writing to you ... I am trying to keep myself as calm as possible. My younger brother, who is nine, is sleeping now. I wish I will not have to stop his dreams.”

We asked the people of Kosovo to accept peace, and they did. We promised we would stick by them if they did the right thing, and they did. We cannot let them down now.

Americans have learned the hard way that our home is not that far from Europe. Through two world wars and a long cold war, we saw that it was a short step from a small brush fire to an inferno -- especially in the tinderbox of the Balkans. The time to put out a fire is before ^{it} ~~is~~ spreads and burns down the neighborhood. By acting now, we are taking a strong step toward a goal that has always been in America's national interest: a peaceful, united and democratic Europe.

For America, I believe there is no greater calling than being a peacemaker. But sometimes you have to fight in order to end the fighting. ~~Sometimes you have to stand up to wage peace.~~

Let me end by repeating how proud all Americans are of the men and women risking their lives to protect ~~them~~ peace in the Balkans. Our prayers are with ~~our brave men and women in uniform.~~ And our prayers are with all the people of the Balkans, searching for the strength to put centuries of division to rest, and to join ~~the rest of the world~~ in building a better future. Thanks for listening.

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