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Folder Title:

POTUS Trip to Brussels, Belgium; Prague Czech Republic; Moscow, Russia; Kiev, Ukraine; Minsk, Belarus; and Geneva, Switzerland (January 8-16, 1994) [2]

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Original OA/ID Number:

3460

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Minsk, Belarus)

For Immediate ReleaseJanuary 15, 1994

PRESS BRIEFING
BY
MARK GEARAN

Hotel Planeta
Minsk, Belarus

5:15 P.M. (L)

MR. GEARAN: Good afternoon. My name is Mark Gearan. I'm the White House Communications Director. And we thought we might give you an assessment of where we thought the trip of the President stands at this point. We have miles to go before we sleep, literally, back in Washington, but several folks are preparing some assessments of the trip and what we thought we had accomplished and what our objectives were, that we thought at this point, anyway, it might be helpful for some of you.

Let me begin by saying that what we set out to do with the trip, what our objectives were and, indeed, what we felt we concluded at this point, anyway, in the trip. Before we even left from Washington, we realized that the President's trip comes at a really historic moment of opportunity in this post-Cold War period.

The President sought to come here on his visit to these cities and to these nations to affirm the importance to their leaders and, indeed, to the people of the transatlantic relationship that we want to affirm and reaffirm in instances so that global stability and prosperity with these new democracies are most important to us.

A lot of what the President spent time talking about in his various remarks was the importance of the political, economic and security interests and the ties among the Western nations. So when we left from Washington we sought to accomplish five principal objectives, and we're looking forward to those along this trip.

The first was -- and this is not in the order of the trip, necessarily, but a bit in what we sought out to do -- is to encourage continued reform in Russia so that they would avoid any return to the authoritarian or ultranationalism and aggressive foreign policy of the past.

Secondly, the President sought to reassert the centrality of what has been the world's most successful alliance, NATO, and to the security of the challenges that we face in this post-Cold War world, largely through the advancement of his initiative, the Partnership For Peace initiative that was endorsed by the NATO allies.

Third, we wanted to deepen our relations with the European Union in building on the cooperation that we had at the G-7, in the GATT Uruguay Round, and on the European Union's desire for stronger foreign and security policy roles.

Fourth, we wanted to draw the nations of Central and Eastern Europe into the community of Western democracies. And our trip to Prague and our visit with the four Visegrad leaders evidenced that.

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Finally, we wanted to proceed with measures to ensure the denuclearization efforts. The President's been working, obviously, on the initiatives we have and the agreement we had with Ukraine, Belarus here. So that is what we set out to do in the trip.

As we stand now, certainly the President gives a great deal of credit to his foreign policy team -- Secretary Christopher, who was very involved from the outset -- suggested the NATO summit and the activity there; Secretary Aspin; the President's National Security Advisor, Tony Lake; and the important work of our representative to the United Nations, Madeleine Albright; and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Shalikashvili who played key roles in the Central and European leaders' acceptance of our Partnership For Peace initiative.

In terms of the efforts in Russia and our efforts to encourage democracy and reform there, the President, as I said, wanted to go to urge and continue Russia down the path for democracy and free markets so that they would not revert to their past roles of the kind of authoritarian rule and aggressive foreign policy. His meetings with President Yeltsin -- as we have said previously in briefings and in the President's personal conversations with you -- have been very productive. They have really forged a very warm and genuine friendship. The State Dinner last evening at the Kremlin and the President and his family were allowed the hospitality to stay at the Kremlin, and they enjoyed that and the opportunity to visit more extensively with President Yeltsin.

The meetings that he had in Moscow, as we've said, allowed President Clinton to note to President Yeltsin his appreciation for all of the remarkable changes that have existed there. We also had the opportunity to stress the reform process in Russia and the benefits that have been derived from it. And, thirdly, I think in the TV show that many of you saw that the President did yesterday -- it was an opportunity for him and one of the things we did throughout the trip was for him to visit with people in the countries along the way; whether it was from the consumers in the Russian bread store to the pub and the restaurant in Prague to the stops in Brussels, he wanted to have an opportunity to meet and to visit with people more informally and some of those settings allowed for that.

What he has also said from his trip in Russia is that he was very appreciative for the other leaders that came, because one of the objectives we sought right from the beginning was to broaden the context that we had with other leaders in other political groups in Russia.

In terms of the NATO meeting, the important piece, of course, is what we'd observe is that the Central European and

Eastern Europeans and Russia showed their support for, and enthusiasm for it. And that as important to us. We worked very hard in the weeks preceding the trip to secure endorsement with our allies. And as I mentioned earlier, Ambassador Albright and General Shalikashvili's work was critical to the support from the leaders. We've spoken previously about the Partnership For Peace, which, again, the American-led initiative that we're very excited about.

The Partnership, in summary, of course, reflects our best judgment at this point in time about how to promote security and stability in Europe. It avoids, as we have said previously, drawing new and any hostile dividing lines in Europe. And we look forward now, as the invitations proceed, to go forth.

The European Union we spoke of when we were in Brussels and that important relationship that the President sought to really deepen and broaden when we were there to enhance the relationships and the relationships that we developed. And

□ indeed, the meanings that the President had he felt were productive as we move forward beyond G-7 and the initiatives there in GATT and the Uruguay Round.

We have spoken previously about our efforts in Prague. And the Partnership For Peace, of course, was important. We also wanted to develop the kinds of relationships with those leaders that will be important in the years to come. And we were gratified by their acceptance and enthusiasm for our partnership initiative.

Finally, the denuclearization of the former Soviet states, which we're obviously here for in Minsk. The President came to congratulate Belarus for their initiative and for their commitment to denuclearization and to dismantle their weapons along the lines of the Nonproliferation Treaty, and the assistance that he suggested here in his speech that I'm sure many of you saw.

Secondly, of course, in this regard was the three-part trilateral agreement with Russia and the Ukraine and the United States on the denuclearization in the Ukraine. So we believe as we move forward now that the things that we set out in the early part of the trip we feel gratified that we've advanced.

The President came here with a pretty strong agenda, both in the individual meetings that he had with leaders and in the bilateral and trilateral meetings and the NATO summit. He had a vision of what he wanted to do. And I think he showed in the variety of settings that he was placed in from the formal NATO meetings to the bilateral meetings to the casual meetings in the cities that we went to, the range of his capacity and his performance levels here.

So that's where we stand. I'd be happy to kind of take any questions.

Q How does the President feel he did? How do you think the President did --

MR. GEARAN: Well, ultimately --

Q in addition to being very gratified?

MR. GEARAN: Well, ultimately, I think you have to

judge the performance of what we've done by the results.

Q We can't tell the results yet.

MR. GEARAN: I would respectfully take some issue with that. I think the results are critical. The Partnership For Peace is a very important initiative. It was American-led. The nonproliferation --

Q the Partnership For Peace yet, Mark. I mean, how does -- all of these things still have to play out.

MR. GEARAN: I understand that.

Q I'm trying to find out how you folks feel about how the President did. Is he happy with what he has done here on foreign policy? I'd like to get some sort of expression like that from you, if you care to share it.

MR. GEARAN: That's a great question. I'd like to have the opportunity --

Q Why don't you hit it? (Laughter.)

MR. GEARAN: I'm kind of waiting for the opportunity to. This is just to -- our view is both in terms -- my point is in terms of the substance of what we achieved. That's one

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measure that I think is an important one. It's an objective standard, it's a quantifiable answer from the Partnership For Peace, to the other initiatives, to the trilateral agreements, to the agreements we had with President Yeltsin, to our meeting here. Those are objective, definable standards that I think are measurable successes of this trip.

Secondly, I think you saw an opportunity of the President on the world stage, interacting with important leaders that will be critical to American security in the years ahead. President Yeltsin, obviously, in the relationship that they enjoy are NATO allies, and the kind of force that the President went into the NATO meeting with, and really all of the initiatives coming out of the NATO meeting were American initiatives. And I think you've seen kind of the commentary that has come from that from our Allied leaders in terms of the force of personality of the President that he went into, and the energy and commitment that he brought into those meetings.

You've seen him previously in other settings like this at the G-7 meeting and at the APEC meeting. The President, by -- of his personality and his ability to forge friendships quickly and deeply to his enthusiasm for the initiatives that he has lead here I think combine to allow for an important first European trip, and the first of three this calendar year to really combine to have a very successful summit.

He has said in the past during the campaign and throughout his presidency that to be strong at home you have to be strong abroad. Many of you have heard that along the way. I think what you have as we stand on the final hours of our trip here is that -- a President who came and took advantage of -- many nations who are really thirsting for the kind of American leadership on initiatives in their countries -- that he was able to go into quickly to build upon and to move as we approach the 21st century.

Q Mark, some of this had the trappings of a political campaign. Why does he feel it necessary to come over to this part of the world and do things that you would do if you were running for office?

MR. GEARAN: I think the trip was very heavily laden with opportunities for important diplomatic initiatives. I think certainly the bulk of the time that he spent was in either the NATO meetings or bilateral meetings or individual one-on-one sessions informally with people that really allowed for the kind of range of accomplishments that I've suggested previously.

He very much wanted to have informal sessions with people, whether it was a jam session in Prague or a dinner with the President there, to stopping by a coffee shop in Brussels where he has a chance to mix and to visit with people to really take the pulse of people in the countries. He had those kinds of opportunities. I think the television studio speech and set of remarks yesterday was certainly something that he -- we have used during the campaign and into his presidency. But it is a very good format for him to have the kind of exchange of ideas and to learn quickly what is on the minds of people.

Finally, and arguably most importantly, in this respect that the personal involvement of the President from the early preparation that he had on this trip to his personal performance in these sessions and the initiatives that he led really show the -- reflect what people are reaching out for in the countries that we visited and the people. And that is for strong American leadership in order to prepare us as we move towards the next century.

Q Mark, is there anything that didn't go swimmingly well and the President thinks he needs a little more ☐ work that he discovered on this trip that he feels he ought to apply himself to, perhaps?

MR. GEARAN: I guess fundamentally one would have to observe the context in which the President started the trip following his mother's death and obviously coming into that with the kind of fatigue and -- was difficult for him. He quickly immersed himself into the trip and into the preparations for it.

I think he recognizes that when an American President speaks away from home, he speaks for the entire country. And he spent a great deal of time in advance of the meetings preparing for them. That would be the obvious --

Q Mark, what about Bosnia? There clearly seem to be tensions left after all that was said and done, and an initiative that was not an American initiative, a British and French one passed. What effect do you think that --

MR. GEARAN: I think the sum total, certainly, will have been a good and productive session at NATO where they were able to, in the kind of sessions they had, the combination of the formal session and then the dinner, the working dinner, that really allowed for the leaders to speak through clearly and frankly where they see this going.

This is going to be an issue that we will continue to deal with and monitor. But I think the meeting comes out with

a resolve to -- and an assessment of where we stand and where the individual leaders stand. I think that was important, certainly, for the President and for the leaders.

Q Would you please tell us what should we expect from tomorrow's meeting in Geneva?

MR. GEARAN: We can handle that at the side, and Mike McCurry from the State Department might want to go into it briefly. I wanted to just summarize the trip, then we can go forth from there.

Q On the trip, what's the President's enthusiasm about his renewed contacts and rapport with Yeltsin, somewhat moderated by the background against which this visit played in Moscow -- the tumultuous opening of the Parliament that some people think does not really augur well for the future of reforms in that country.

MR. GEARAN: I think the President came away from his meetings with President Yeltsin feeling that he was very much on top of his job, that he felt that he had a team in place that really had a defined strategy of what they want to accomplish. That it is a group of people that are not unduly deterred or distracted by the political opposition, that they have definable goals, where they see their country going. And he was impressed with their enthusiasm and commitment to their plan. So that was the combination of both the meetings that he had, as well as other Cabinet members, Secretary Christopher and Secretary Bentsen, who had ancillary meetings with their counterparts.

Secretary Bentsen remarked in our briefing that it was certainly one of the best economic teams that he has seen in place. And, of course, that would be critical for the kind of reforms that will have to ensue.

Q When we get back to the United States, how will this focus now on international affairs play out? Are we going to hear more of this, or will we move right into health care?

MR. GEARAN: -- at home, there are important initiatives that the President is anxious to return to. Obviously, we'll be having the State of the Union Address on January 25th, where he will outline agenda for the year. In

□ advance of that, you will also have an opportunity on the anniversary of his inaugural to make remarks.

But our work plan for the year is an important one and a full one, from the passage of the crime bill when we return to, obviously, then, the serious work that will have to be done on health care reform.

The President has stated previously this is our number one domestic priority. He's anxious to get it done this year, and we'll be devoting the kind of resources and energy that the administration will bring to bear to assure enactment of them.

Another key initiative that we're going to be working on very hard next year is welfare reform. So we have a great deal to go back to that awaits our return. In terms of the trip, certainly, as I said earlier, that as the President has said, to be strong at home you have to be strong abroad. And as

we prepare to leave this part of our trip here, I think the successes that we've realized to date will allow for him to return home, fortified with that kind of -- those achievements that we have had here from Brussels to Prague, to Moscow to Minsk -- those kinds of things allow him to return back home.

Q In a speaking sense, will he be including that in speeches, or will he -- like in a summation to the American people, or any events or anything? Or just back to domestic?

MR. GEARAN: It is never "just back to domestic." What the President has made very clear to -- it's 4:30 p.m. If you want to make Air Force One, you have to leave in another five minutes.

Let me go back to this, because this is important. What the President has said repeatedly, of course, is that the distinction between foreign policy and domestic policy is an artificial one in the sense that the issues frequently get joined.

What you saw here on this trip, especially the kinds of issues that we dealt with here, that distinction is not real in the world that we live in today -- the kinds of issues that the NATO allied leaders dealt with, the kind of economic reforms that we talked about in Prague and in Moscow and in Minsk. Indeed, the economic security of Europe and with the formulation of the European Union combined to reinforce, I believe, this point, that that distinction is less important than it might have been in previous years. That's how he approaches his job back home. That's how he approached coming here on this trip.

Q Can you see any parallels in the USA --supposed to what the leaders of Russia and Belarus? I mean, that the USA has made all the stakes -- put in all the stakes on Boris Yeltsin. And here in Belarus put in all the stakes on Shushkevich. So is the State Department and the White House ready to change the stakes or to broaden the cycle in Russia and in Belarus, or not?

MR. GEARAN: Well, I think the combination of events in the schedule would evidence certainly that the President -- what we just said previously about President Yeltsin and his support for the kind of reforms and, indeed, the appreciation that he has for the kinds of reforms that he has led here. But also more broadly, the reforms that are going on here. A lot of his message in Moscow and here is -- to the kind of reforms, economic reforms and political reforms and security reforms, outlined in the President's speech today, that he has advanced.

He took the opportunity, in several countries we have, as we did when we went to the G-7, to meet with other younger, in some instances, political leaders from a variety of ☐ different groups to kind of expand the contacts and to expand his message beyond --

Q And in Belarus? Shushkevich and -- well, maybe some other leaders.

MR. GEARAN: He met with the leaders here and with members of the party here. This was a briefer stop, obviously, by time allowances that we had in so many other countries we visited. We had -- my point was a more broader point in terms of

Moscow.

Q Was there anything that was particularly disappointing that didn't go the way that you expected it to? Were you left with a bad taste in any way?

MR. GEARAN: My sense was the most disappointing element was the lack of sleep that many of you have endured. But I think by judging the standards of what we set out to do in those five points that I outlined in the beginning, combined with the personal force -- magnitude and personal force that the President brought in his stops, I think would have to allow for a summation of the trip as having been a very successful one.

Sleep deficit remains, and we will burden you with that through Sunday night.

Q By visiting Kuropaty, is he being critical of the current government? I mean, he's meeting with the reformers out there who have been here, had to stand in the mud and the ice because they weren't allowed at these other ceremonies. Or is it -- how does that play out, the kind of the clash of meeting with the current government and the reformers later on?

MR. GEARAN: Well, I think what it plays out is the President had said before he left that he thought it would be important to remember the victims of past Stalinist terror. There was an issue that remained in terms of the schedule of that. He has spent a great deal of his time here in the bilateral meetings and his speech to press for the kind of reforms; that's the broader message that he wanted to send here. And he was certainly aware of the sensitivities that existed, but also was very anxious to make that stop as he did.

Q not trying to drive a wedge in between these two, he's just trying to encourage these other reformers that he's meeting with now?

MR. GEARAN: I don't think I can really add to what the President said in his remarks here.

END

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

January 16, 1994

INTERVIEW OF THE PRESIDENT
BY PRINT REPORTERSAboard Air Force One
En Route to Washington, D.C., from Geneva, Switzerland

2:58 P.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Are you all exhausted?

Q Yes.

Q Aren't you?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I really just -- I really just wanted to say that I'm -- I think we had a good trip, and I'm sorry I put you through so much. You must be tired. I know I am. But I think it was really a good trip. And I appreciate how much work was done on it.

I thought we might just talk for a few minutes about it kind of in a wrap-up fashion. But before we do, I wanted to say that after I got back on the plane, I called Prime Minister Rabin and President Mubarak to report on my meeting with Assad. And I attempted to call but was unsuccessful in reaching King Fahd. I'm going to talk to him probably tomorrow morning -- just to tell them what had gone on in the meeting and what the statement was, and get their sense of what was going to happen. Rabin had watched it live.

Q What?

THE PRESIDENT: Rabin had watched it live. And I couldn't tell whether Mubarak did or not. I think he did, but we had kind of a staticy connection, so I couldn't be sure. But everybody seemed to be pretty positive about it.

Anyway, looking back over the trip, I can say without any hesitation that it certainly met all of our objectives when we went on the trip. Everything that we hoped would happen did. And I think there were basically three big elements to it.

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The first was the prospect of really uniting Europe for the first time since nations have been on the landscape there. I'm very encouraged by the initial reaction to the Partnership For Peace -- all the Central and Eastern European countries and the Visegrad nations have said they want to join -- Russia, Ukraine expressed an interest. We've now heard some interest from Romania. So I'm feeling quite good about that. Even the Swiss said they wanted to think about whether there was some way they could support it even if they didn't join given their historic neutrality. So I feel very good about it.

And the second important thing, of course, was the nuclear breakthrough, the agreement with Ukraine following the agreement that had been reached earlier in the year with Belarus and Kazakhstan -- not having our nuclear weapons targeted at anybody; not having their nuclear weapons targeted at us. It's a really important next step. And we also had some important discussions with the Russians about going in and making sure that START I is completely ratified and implemented and that START II is ratified and implemented and that we keep thinking about what further steps there ought to be. So this was a very good meeting in the trip in that respect.

And then the third aspect of the trip was the whole new -- toward not only uniting Europe economically and politically but kind of a getting growth back into the system. I met with the leaders of the European Union. We talked about how to implement the GATT agreement and how to follow up on it; how important it was to get the growth rates up in Europe again; how important it was to open new markets in Eastern Europe and states of the former Soviet Union. And then, of course, we went to -- I talked about economics with in Prague and then spent a lot of time dealing with it in Russia. And I must say, even though they've had a really tough time, I think they're on the verge of having some good things happen economically.

For all the criticism of the pace of reform in Russia, one of the little known facts about it is that in terms of privatizing companies, Russia's actually running ahead of the pace of the other former communist --. There's some other problems they have to deal with -- their inflation problems and just having a legal framework that will attract more investment. But I feel quite good about that. And I feel -- just from my experience in Moscow, I really think that while there are, as you would imagine, uncertainties among the people there because of all the hardships and the difficulty of sort of visualizing the future, I think there's a lot of emotion to the old -- to the idea that the people ought to rule the country. I didn't get much sense in anybody that they wanted a more authoritarian government. I thought -- think they like the fact that the voters are in the driver's seat, even though they're still trying
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to come to grips with exactly what that means and how to translate it into policies.

So I would say on grounds that building a united Europe in terms of security, where all the neighbors agree to respect one another's borders, moving to continually reduce the nuclear threat to the world and supporting economic and political reform in Europe and the former communist countries, this was a very, very successful trip.

before we did the Middle East thing today, which -- I went to this meeting hoping that we could get a signal from President Assad that was clear and unmistakable -- that he was ready to make a complete peace. Today -- the first time he had ever explicitly said he wanted an end to the hostilities with Israel -- willing to make peace with Israel as opposed to saying something like peace in the Middle East; and that peace to him meant normal peaceful relations, which is a general term that encompasses trade, tourism and travel, and embassies. So that was very significant. That sends a very clear signal now back to the Israelis.

He also said that he didn't want just Syria alone to be

resolved, he wanted to see the Jordanian peace completed, and he wanted to the Lebanese peace completed. And he said something that everybody wanted to hear in the Middle East, which is that he wanted Lebanon to be an independent country with a peace with Israel. So I was quite pleased with that.

So -- from now on the question of the differences between Syria and the United States, which we spent about an hour on today, spent a significant portion of our meeting on it, because I was -- I thought it was important that neither one of us be under any illusions about the differences that are still there; and because I think it's important in this peace negotiation that we both have absolute credibility with each other. So I thought -- we thought we had to spend some time on it.

We agreed to try to get beyond sort of a general and accusatory level by letting the Secretary of State and the Foreign Minister of Syria develop a process to specifically identify these things that trouble the United States so much, and to give them a chance to specifically identify things about our policy toward them or the Middle East in general that trouble them, and to try to set in motion a process for working through it; because every report I've gotten over the years, encounters -- I've spent a lot of time talking to westerners because of the Middle East issue -- things always stop, in my judgment, at a level that is too general, where people are charging and counter-charging and there's no real effort to lay the kind of factual basis that has to be laid -- really argue that people should change their policies.

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So I feel pretty good about it.

Q Were you satisfied, sir, that there was no Syrian involvement or complicity in the Pan Am 103 bombing --

THE PRESIDENT: I can tell you -- first I raised that, and he raised it again. I can tell you that we have absolutely no evidence of it, and that he flatly denied it. And he reminded us and me that there -- that a Syrian was killed on Pan Am 103 who was the only son of a woman from his home area. And he said it was a -- he characterized it as a cruel and senseless thing -- had no point killing all those students. And he said this is an issue I will never close or never consider closed. If you ever have any evidence that any Syrian is involved, you just let me know and we will take the appropriate action.

Q Back on Russia. What were you told about that Mr. Gaidar was going to resign? Who told you that -- and how serious do you think it is?

THE PRESIDENT: All the days kind of run together. Yeltsin told me that -- here's how he characterized it. I wasn't quite sure exactly how to -- he told me that he thought there was a strong possibility that Gaidar would decide that he needed to devote all of his time to leading the party that he took into the duma and building his political strength both in the parliament and out of the country, and that he was concerned about building it up politically and making it effective in the duma.

He said -- the reason, you see, you say when -- I'm trying to remember. I think it was sometime during the first day as opposed to the second day's conversations that he said it. But I'm sorry I can't remember when.

Q What are your impressions of Assad?

THE PRESIDENT: Let me answer the question. He also went out of his way to tell me, though, he said -- we don't want -- we are not going to reverse our reform course, and we don't want to slow it down, but we do want to cushion the impact of it better. We want to have a better sense of how it affects people. And he said we also want to try to demonstrate the successes more clearly. We want to be able to show people that this has been done. And in that connection -- and you know what he asked? He was very pleased with a lot of the initiatives that I told we've worked on, like we were working to get the G-7 to make sure that the countries that buy oil from Russia, for example, and buy energy from Russia pay for it in a timely fashion, so they can use that money to help them build their country. That's a big deal to them. He was interested in getting his next IMF money in a timely fashion. He was interested in making sure that the accumulated debt, ones he's making payments on, can be

rescheduled. In other words, he wanted us -- didn't want to slow down reform. He wanted to make it work better, and he wanted to make sure that they had some strategies for cushioning the impact on ordinary people. He also said that he would keep a team that was reform oriented -- that it would be a good, competent team.

Gaidar left the government once before and the reforms didn't stop. So the only thing I encouraged him to do was to -- I said, you've proved your commitment to democracy, you've stayed with this reform; you've still got some tough decisions to make. I told him, I said I contacted the G-7 before I came up here. We want to help cushion the impact of reform and we want to help make sure that the people of Russia know what you're doing to help the economy. And if you're going to keep on the reform path, it'll be easier for us to do that, because then we'll be able to make sure that the IMF and the World Bank support you as well as these individual countries.

So I was -- I found it to be a satisfactory conversation. You know he's in some -- the political situation over there is not free of difficulty. I mean, you just only have to look at the makeup of the lower house of the parliament to draw that conclusion. But I think he'll try to hang in there -- mostly because -- mostly because if you look at the go-slower approach, and you look at Ukraine and you see they're in worse shape than Russia.

And one of the things -- and let me just say that this is something I didn't even talk about on the trip -- but one of the things I want to spend a lot more time doing when I get back and have our people try to be helpful on is trying to dissect what we mean by reform, because there are at least three big elements to it. There's the privatization of government-owned companies, which Russia is doing very, very well -- better than anybody else. There's the management of fiscal and monetary policy, which means -- you've got to keep inflation down at a reasonable level to get private investment, which means you can't just keep on printing money to pay for subsidies --. They're having trouble with that, although they're doing better than they were last year. Then the third area is making sure you've got the infrastructure, if I could use that much -- word, that will attract investment from outside the country and will permit the markets to work. That means you've got to have a system of laws relating to private property, contracts, bankruptcy --unambiguous taxation laws, that sort of stuff.

If you look at Czechoslovakia, which is the most -- I mean, the Czech Republic, which is the most successful of the former communist -- they're behind Russia on privatization but ahead on the infrastructure. So the one thing that I think we need to focus on is now that they've got a constitutional democracy, and all of them, even the ones who want to slow down reform, want

more investment -- this is interesting -- they all want more investment. They want -- even the ones that think, well, reform has gone too fast, they might be -- they might be for the first time in a real position now to write some of the laws in such a way that will attract a lot more investment.

For example, if you want to make an energy investment in Russia, you may not care what the rate of privatization of small companies is, but you do want to know if you put the money in there; and who you're investing with; is your investment good; what do you in case of breach of contract; what are your tax obligations if you make money. Just clear, simple, straightforward stuff that we take for granted that I think they now have to a little more work on.

Q How concerned was Yeltsin about the rise of ultranationalist sentiment? And did you give him any counsel on how to alleviate those feelings of humiliation?

THE PRESIDENT: Well -- let me see how I should answer that. I don't want to talk in great detail about our conversation. I think -- because I think he should be able to answer that. I don't want to read his mind for you. I think that he believes that more of the voters knew -- know about some of the positions taken by the ultranationalists, including Zhirinovsky, the more likely they will be to pull away from them. And he believes that the promises which were made by the ultranationalists could not reasonably be expected to be kept. So I think that his view is -- what he needs to do is try to do the best he can with his job turning things around, show some successes, and that that's the best way to dampen them down.

One thing I did say to him was that -- just following the campaign from afar, as we all did, that the ultranationalists seemed in some ways -- in some ways the communists did, too -- to lay too much of an uncontested claim to the feelings of national pride. That is, that the reformers, we all know, didn't run in a coherent bloc and didn't present a coherent message. And as the democrats know in the United States -- I kicked -- on purpose because he's talked about this -- it's sort of like that the problems that the democrats had for the last 20 years winning the presidency. You could say, here's a problem and here's my four-point solution to the problem; but if all you get is a good government vote, that's never going to be a majority, especially when people are hurting.

So the only counsel I gave him was that -- that Yeltsin cut through all the traditional barriers when he stood up on that tank. Or even earlier when he became Gorbachev's successor. He embodied the change and the pride of Russia. You didn't have to choose. You saw the pride of Russia and the change in --. And by his actions he did that.

And what I suggested to him was that his group, they needed to find spokespersons and they needed to find ways of saying what they were about that also says we're pro-worker, we're pro-

family, we're anti-crime, and we're bringing the pride of this nation back. And our plan will -- because I think to be fair to them, their task has been so daunting; that they would naturally become absorbed in the overwhelming burdens of just doing the details of it. These other guys were never in government, you know, They had the freedom of just going out and making speeches. And the only the thing I cautioned to Yeltsin, I said, look, I saw the democrats in America get killed for years because they go out there and they talk about problem x, y, and z and have a four-point program for every one. And they might be right, but if it didn't resonate with a larger concern for the voters, it could never be translated into a national mandate.

And I think that -- and I think -- we had a great conversation about it, and I think he was interested in it, because he understands that that's how he got to be President in the first place -- change and pride.

Q You don't think he's emotional enough?

THE PRESIDENT: I think he's deeply emotional enough. But in the last election, keep in mind, he put all of his prestige and effort into passing the constitution. And he prevailed. So a lot of people voted for Boris Yeltsin and his constitution and also voted for the communist candidate, the agrarian candidate, Zhirinovsky and his crowd. That's the point I'm trying to make. And he needs to win the overlap. He can't let them win the overlap if he's going to govern the country and move it forward.

Q How about Assad, what are your impressions?

THE PRESIDENT: Smart. Very tough.

Q What is that?

THE PRESIDENT: He's very smart and very tough and has a very clear view of what he thinks has happened in the Middle East in the last 25 years and what he thinks ought to happen. On the other hand, I think that he has reached a conclusion that it is in the interest of his people, his administration and his legacy to make a meaningful and lasting peace. I believe that.

Q talk about moving his troops out of Lebanon at all?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, he said, first of all, that he thought that -- he agreed with me that there ought to be a peace in Lebanon -- agreeing -- agreement that operated was developed in parallel with the Syrian track, and that the end of it ought to

be a fully independent Lebanon and consistent with the Taif Accords, which -- therefore, the inevitable answer is yes.

Q Did he ask you if there was peace between Israel and Syria if would commit -- equipment -- to commit U.S. troops in the Golan Heights in order to keep the peace?

THE PRESIDENT: He did not ask it just like that. What he did say was -- he said that there needed to be mutual security guarantees, that Israel's security is not all that was at stake, that Damascus was closer to the Golan than Tel Aviv or Jerusalem, and that artillery could go up the hill quite nicely. That's what he said -- he said, we're not talking about rifles here. He said, rifles -- all the advantage goes to the people on top of the Golan. When you're talking about artillery, it's a mixed

bag. He did not -- that. What he said was that he -- that both sides would need security assurances.

Q commit our troops if there was a serious peace agreement --

THE PRESIDENT: And I said to him, and what our country has said repeatedly for years now, is that, obviously, if both sides made an agreement and both sides wanted this, we would have to give it serious consideration. That's something I would have to talk to the Congress about, do other things -- but I couldn't make any kind of commitment, particularly in the absence of an expressed decision by Israel and Syria -- we would certainly give it consideration.

Q You certainly think you pushed the momentum on this.

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, yes, I think it's forward now. We've pushed it forward. It's clearly the biggest step forward since September 13th. Maybe in some ways a bigger one because we all knew -- we all knew on September 13th that in the end the only way to hold this thing together was to get the rest of it done.

Q Did you bring up the issue of the Syrian control of Hezbollah and other terrorist groups that are operating through Syrian-controlled Lebanon in attacks upon Israel?

THE PRESIDENT: I brought up Hezbollah, the Jibril group, and the PKK specifically, as I said in my press conference that I did. I did. And he gave his view that he stated many times --. He stated his position; I restated mine. I said, look, we're not going to resolve this today, and I don't -- but we can't have normal relations between the two of us as opposed to what's going on in the Middle East until they are resolved. And so I suggested that we give the Secretary of State and the Syrian Foreign Minister the opportunity to develop a mechanism to try to honestly and openly deal with these issues and let us bring our

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concerns and real specificity to them, let them respond and see if we can work through it.

Q What was the real highlight of your trip? What will be the thing that you truly remember -- sentimentally, emotionally, spiritually?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, the sentimental highlight was walking across the bridge in Prague for the first time in 24 years with Havel -- this enormous sense of pride I had in the freedom that he had brought to the country and what I remembered from all the young people when I was there in Czechoslovakia 24 years ago, how deeply anti-communists were -- they were 24 years ago. Desperately they wanted to be free. And just walking across the bridge with me this guy who had gone to prison for his beliefs and who so completely represented the best of his culture -- you know, was the President of the country; and then we walked across the bridge, and then had dinner in that little pub with the couple that I stayed with 24 years ago. That was the sentimental highlight. The emotional highlight was going into that cathedral that has just been resanctified, that Stalin tore down and turned into a public restroom, and being invited by the priest to light a candle for my mother. Those are just personal things, you know.

Q Any disappointments?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I still think we've got to -- I wouldn't all it a disappointment because to be disappointed you have to -- it has to fall short of your expectations. But I think we've got some work to do within NATO in defining this whole area of -- you know, out of area missions. Is NATO going to have a military mission beyond protecting the security of its members and the Partnership For Peace.

I am -- I'm more convinced than I was when I went there that the Partnership For Peace is the right idea at this time and that we're giving Europe a chance to have a different history than it's past, and it's enormously significant.

But we don't have -- the NATO -- NATO was never organized or set up for out-of-area missions. They've done a terrific job with the airlift. I talked to some of our personnel today in Switzerland who were working with the airlift. They've done a great job -- the mechanics of the embargo. When you really think -- it was never conceived that NATO would use force in any way, even in a very limited way, outside it's -- guaranteeing the security of its members. And I just think that not only in terms of Bosnia, but just generally, that whole thing has to really be thought through.

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Q Just a last question. Did you expect it to take off, the whole question of partnership like it did? And, two, who thought of the idea first? Was this an NSC -- got to go there with something positive?

THE PRESIDENT: The answer -- the first question is, I didn't know what to expect. But it's taken off; it's exceeded my expectations. I mean, I just knew how passionately I felt that it was the right approach. And I knew that I had to work through in my own mind -- sort of, it was one of those things that the more I thought about it, the stronger I felt about it. It's not something, as you all know, that just knocks you off your feet once you hear about it. You've got -- we all know that. But the more I thought about it, the stronger I felt about it. And I think what's happened was there began to be a consensus in Europe that this was what made sense, that we had to try for a better future, not just a better division than we had before the Cold War, but a future without division; and that if we could do it in a way that would permit us if circumstances turned against that dream to still do the responsible thing by those that clearly were part of the West that wanted to be part of, then we ought to do it.

Tony would have to answer the other question in terms of the label and all that. But it was an American idea. We started by consulting all the allies; we realized that there was -- there were a whole range of reasons that -- for reservations for expanding membership. And then there were some who had some question about whether NATO had any role at all. And we talked through what our objectives were independent of NATO: What would you like to have happen in Europe in 10 years? What is it we're trying to get done? And then all of our folks went back together and came back with that idea. I have no idea who thought of it, who labeled it or who -- I got it through the NSC; and I talked -- and State and Defense. We all talked it through before I got there, because it was essentially a military training and planning concept. And I'm sure somebody knows the answer to your question, but I don't.

Q I'm sure that it was -- a synthesis --

THE PRESIDENT: I think it's something they just sort of came to. Our process worked.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

3:32 P.M. EST

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Geneva, Switzerland)

BACKGROUND BRIEFING
BY
SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL

January 16, 1994

The Intercontinental Hotel
Geneva, Switzerland

5:12 P.M. (L)

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Due to popular demand, I will start out with a little bit of perspective. You didn't hear me say that. I will keep it very brief, because we want to have a chance to sort of go with your questions.

I think what is significant from the standpoint of people like us that have been involved in this process for a long time is that there are a number of elements in President Assad's statement that he has simply not said before. The commitment to the end of the conflict stated as explicitly as it was; the commitment to peace with Israel, stated explicitly; and the use of the phrase "normal peaceful relations" all represent the use of language and terminology that has not been used before. And, obviously, many of you who have been involved in reporting on this issue for a long time know that words take on a certain meaning, especially if they're used or they're not used. And so, from that standpoint, I think we have seen new ground broken, at least in terms of the terminology. And I find that, I think, to be important.

You want to add anything?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Just for the record, I'm told by the timekeepers that the meeting lasted for four hours and 30 minutes -- or four hours and 26 minutes -- followed by a 50-minute one-on-one, with just President Clinton, President Assad and their interpreters.

Q Fifteen or fifty?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Five, zero - 50 minutes. And the President was very pleased that his stamina outlasted the stamina both of his Secretary of State and his National Security Advisor. (Laughter.)

Q Did the President or the discussions talk specifically about what "normal peaceful relations" meant? Was there a discussion of trade, open borders, diplomatic relations? Any indication from Assad that he was willing in principle to sign a peace treaty? Anything specific?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I'm not sure that

he talked about seeds of peace, but I'll let my colleague answer the rest. (Laughter.)

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, as the President said, he wasn't going to get into the details of the exchanges that we have had. And so we're not going to go beyond what he said in that regard, either.

Q You are saying that for the first time, Assad has used the phrase "normal meaningful relationship" --

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SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Peaceful

Q Peaceful, right. Now, the President doesn't want to give us the details. We're asking you, did Assad give the President any of the specific details that you well know Israel insists on -- its definition of meaningful peace? Did he tell the President specifically what that kind of normal relationship meant in his mind?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: He certainly conveyed to us that he -- to use language that he used out there -- understands the requirements of peace, understands the broad elements of peace, and I really don't want to take it farther than that.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: But I would just emphasize in terms of what he said publicly, that he said that he was ready to respond to the requirements.

Q What about -- the President said that he raised some specific concerns relating to terrorism. Did he get a commitment from Assad that Assad would do something about those American concerns and a commitment in return that they would be dropped from the terrorism list? Was there anything -- was that specifically discussed?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, no, not that specifically, because, in fact, what I think you may have heard them say is that this is clearly an area of difference between us. And there is no meeting of the minds on that, but there was a recognition that the way to try to deal with something like this that is a difference in our relations and it is an impediment to the development of good relations is, in fact, to develop a mechanism that would allow us to follow up and see if we could overcome those differences.

Q President Assad was pretty inaudible here. I'd like to check something. Did he say, "I'm ready for normal relations," or did he only imply he would be ready once -- Syrian conditions for global peace are fulfilled?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I believe if you look at his statement -- and there should be copies of it -- he talked about his -- what you could call his vision of peace, which included "normal peaceful relations" were the words he used. There were two other elements that I would draw your attention to if you didn't hear clearly the statement, which was that he talked about ending the Arab-Israeli conflict and he talked about a comprehensive peace with Israel.

Q Are there any mechanisms set up like the one that you set up for the bilateral relations? Are there any

mechanisms now that you expect to develop for dealing with the definition of "normal peaceful relations"? Is there anything different about the way that that process is going to be conducted?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: You're going to have, beginning within a week's time, a more flexible format for the negotiations. You're going to have heads of delegations meeting in an environment that, by definition, is going to be less structured, less rigid than you had before. This is one of the things that was agreed in December.

And, obviously, in that kind of a context, they will be able to explore everything. They'll have more of an opportunity to probe ideas, to try out ideas and not be in a position where they have to present only what would amount to a kind of set peace presentation. So I think that that will allow them to get not only at the issue that you're raising, but obviously to the other issues as well.

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Q As you know, one of the problems has been who goes, first PLO or -- and he talks about comprehensive and that he doesn't want any separate peace. Now, it's been to his advantage in the past to try to talk -- separate peace. And he has not encouraged the separate peace of the PLO and the Israelis. Did he make any pledges that he would encourage or at least -- that he'd stop encouraging the 10 groups in Damascus who have been opposing that, that he would support it? He did not say a single word in support of the PLO. As a matter of fact, he seemed to still be rather tough on the fact that there shall be no separate deals.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I think the one thing he said very clearly again to us is that even though they didn't favor the Israeli-PLO agreement, the way it was done in particular they had made it very clear that they would not oppose it, and they have stuck to that position of not opposing it.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Let me just add one thing there. I don't know whether you noticed that the GCC states met with Syria and Egypt and Damascus a few days ago, and they issued a joint communique which included a Syrian signature on that communique which endorsed the Israel-PLO agreement as a first step towards a comprehensive solution. That is a new position on the Syrian part.

Q Did he tell the President that he saw that as a first step, that the PLO thing was a first step?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I can't say that he did not say it that way. He has made it clear that he sees what has gone on between the Israelis and the Palestinians as something that represents what is to be done in the interim period.

Q In the past, the Syrian position has been that there should be -- still is, apparently -- that there should not be final peace agreements with any of the parties until Syria, too, is ready to do it? That's what Syria has meant historically by a comprehensive peace. President Clinton today said he understood there could not be a lasting peace without Syria. Does Syria still object to others signing final agreements until Syria, too, is ready? And what's the United States' position on

that?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Let me do the United States' position on it first, then I'll tell you what we heard. Our position has been, as you heard the President say, one, that we favor a comprehensive peace settlement, because we do see that as being something that is more likely to endure. At the same time, we think progress should be made where it can be made. And we would obviously like to see that progress codified in some way. And so, our position is, in the end you want a comprehensive peace settlement, but you want to produce progress wherever it can be produced and in whatever form in which it can be produced, and we see that contributing to moving towards that ultimate objective.

We did not hear from him today anything that was specific on what you said. In other words, he did not make the statement you said, but I can't tell you that that reflects one thing or another, he didn't describe things in that terminology.

Q I'd just like to follow up on Saul's question. Okay, so Syria is still saying that it is not going to oppose this. What about the Palestinian elements that are opposing it? Are the Syrians telling you they're going to rein those elements in? Are they making any more commitments on that score than they have in the past? And did you say to them, we think you need to do more to make sure that this agreement gets all the support it needs between Israel and the PLO?

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SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: We have had many discussions prior to today in which we've emphasized the importance of implementation of the Israel-Palestinian Declaration of Principles, and that the sooner it gets implemented the better it's going to be from our standpoint in terms of promoting the process as a whole, consistent with what I was saying before about making progress wherever you can, that that actually contributes to achieving a comprehensive peace settlement. So we've made that point many times before. We've said that those groups that oppose it are really not working towards, in our view, towards the objective of a comprehensive peace settlement.

We did not have a discussion, again, specifically that went beyond that today. We had -- while the meeting was, itself, four hours and 26 minutes -- is that what you said -- the fact is we covered an awful lot of ground. We spent a lot of time talking about the peace process. We spent a lot of time talking about some of the bilateral issues. We spent a lot of time talking about other parts of the region. And we didn't get into all of -- at least into some of these areas at least from that perspective.

So I can't say, in answer to your question, that on that particular issue we heard anything particularly differently, but we also didn't have an extended discussion precisely on that point.

Q on Pan Am 103, please? Terrorists and Pan Am 103. Do you want it in writing?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: We got the question. It's a problem of -- getting the answer is a little more complicated. (Laughter.)

Q Repeat the question.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Pan AM 103 did come up and the President made very clear that this was a very serious issue for the United States and it was absolutely essential that Libya, Gadhafi give up those two people who were charged with doing it, and that that was an absolute requirement of the United States.

Q When Assad had a chance to really state what he meant by normal peaceful relations, he dodged it. Why did he do that?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, it's a question of definition whether he dodged your question. I thought he actually came at it the back way. But the words that I write down that I thought were interesting was that he ended up by saying, yes, I will respond to the requirements. And so I think that he has broken new ground today in the way that he talked about his vision of peace, an honorable peace in which he referred to his role directly as making peace with Israel. I believe that is the first time he has done that. And he talked about a vision of normal peaceful relations with Israel.

So to expect him to go beyond that at his point I think is perhaps unrealistic. He, in the past, has been extremely reluctant to do any of those things, spell any of those things out. The fact that he did so today I think is an important first step. Obviously, this process is going to continue and the negotiations will continue, and hopefully his vision of peace will become fuller and clearer to you all as we go along.

Q The big question is, which comes first? Does Assad get specific, or the Syrians get specific about the kind of peace? Do the Israelis get specific about how much withdrawal?

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You say it was unrealistic for Assad to be any more specific. What would you as the U.S. as the honest broker expect now? Do you expect Israel to be specific in the negotiations about withdrawal? What is the next step that you think should be taken in breaking that deadlock?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I think you ought to look at it from a couple of different levels. One, the question that Wolf asked of my colleague was, did he try to dodge it, and my colleague's response is, he talked about meeting the requirements of peace.

He also, you may recall, didn't just talk about peace with Israel for the first time, he also referred to it as a strategic choice, that Syria had made a strategic choice for peace with Israel. And I think he obviously is involved in a negotiation just as the Israelis on their side are involved in the negotiation. They will be making judgments, the two of them, when they resume those talks about how they want to try to get it -- cracking the nut of these complex of issues of withdrawal, of peace and of security. And they'll be in a different negotiating format which allows them more flexibility, we believe, to try out ideas. So that's the next step.

Q Yes, but you're satisfied -- the U.S. apparently thinks that that is as much as you could expect at

this point from Assad to make what you consider to be a major new statement, that it would be unrealistic to expect specificity. I'm asking you if you think it is now realistic for Israel to be specific about the kind of withdrawal it should engage in?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I think that -- obviously when you're involved, each side is going to have to determine how best to approach the negotiations. They'll make their judgment about what the other side is saying, both in terms of its content and in terms of its level of specificity. And I would suspect that in that light, judgments will be made that reflect what they think is equivalent to a parallel.

Q What is the practical significance then for the process of these statements that you think is so significant?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, I think the practical significance --

Q Repeat the question.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: The question? The question was, what's the practical significance of these statements that we think are so significant? All I was doing was repeating the question. I didn't even give an answer. Do you want to give the answer? (Laughter.)

Q How about you guys take a break?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: How about us guys take a break? That's possible. We have to move on. The practical significance is that clearly, many in Israel for a long time have wanted to hear President Assad and the Syrians say certain things about peace with Israel. They've heard abstract statements about peace, but they've rarely, if ever, heard --

Q But that's --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, strategic choice for peace with Israel? Is that not qualitatively different than something that they've heard before? Well, and the use of normal peaceful --

Q No, we're beating up Barry, not you guys.
(Laughter.)

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SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: The use of normal peaceful relations? What you're doing is you're -- there is an Israeli public that has looked at Syria and wanted to know what kinds of intentions Syria had vis a vis Israel with regard to peace. Not having heard certain statements before, like, for example, strategic choice for peace with Israel, normal peaceful relations. I would assume that those are the kinds of statements in conjunction with the language on ending the Arab-Israeli conflict. I would assume that those kinds of statements take things to a new level, at least in terms of what the Israelis have heard from the Syrians and they'll make their own judgments about what to make of it.

Q Did your discussions with the Israelis before this --

Q choreography now expect a statement by

Israel that is something new?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Let's do the follow-up, and I heard your question.

Q Did your discussions with the Israelis before the meeting today lead you to believe that they would find this significant in terms of public opinion and their strategy and attitude towards further negotiations?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I would just refer you to the front page of the International Herald Tribune yesterday, an article by Clyde Haberman in which I think the headline is what the Israelis are waiting to hear is the word "normal."

Q What are the Syrians waiting to hear from Israel? Without reading The Herald Tribune. (Laughter.)

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: We were asked about the practical impact. There is going to be a negotiation at heads of delegation level in a matter of days or the beginning of next week, and this creates the environment in which they will be able to sit down and begin their negotiations again.

Bear in mind, though, there has not been a Syrian-Israeli negotiation since last August -- September. And the practical impact of this is to kick those negotiations off in a much more positive environment.

Q What I'm asking is, is there now in this choreography a statement with magic words that will come out of Israel?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: That's something -- There is an art -- that I have to adhere to, so I'm going to try to do it and then my colleague will correct it because I, undoubtedly will not get it right.

There are some administration officials who will be going down from here to brief Prime Minister Rabin. And obviously that is part of the preparation, as my colleague was saying, for how you create an environment to give the negotiations that will begin in a more flexible format more of a push.

Q When do they start -- these streamlined talks?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: We haven't made a final determination, but it will probably be either the end of this week or the beginning of next.

Q What kind of message do you think what happened here today will send to the Palestinians? Those talks have been stalled, the Israeli-PLO talks, over the border issues and the size of Jericho. Do you think this will send an important message to them?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, I would hope that it would send them a message of general encouragement that, in fact, the process along with the resumption of negotiations on this track and some of the other tracks that there is an environment that is likely to make it more likely to make

progress; and that's the sort of thing that perhaps should be encouraging to them.

Q What's the mood music of this meeting? What was the chemistry between Assad and Clinton?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I think it was -- I think they had a positive meeting. The discussions, I think, were characterized by -- I think they themselves said it -- a good atmosphere and there was real openness. I think there was an interest, as the President said, in creating an element of trust and confidence that will make it possible to move things forward. That doesn't mean the disagreements necessarily disappear, obviously, but it means that you're creating a context in which you're trying to deal with those agreements in a way that we think will be productive from the standpoint of peace.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Let me just add one thing. I think it is accurate to characterize the President as fully engaged with President Assad, and that there was also a common sense of the historic moment that both of them had about his being a year, as both of them said, in which breakthroughs in the peace process can be achieved.

Q If Syria now shares the U.S. goals in the peace process of a truly comprehensive peace and normal relations, what were their goals before?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, one has not -- to begin with, one has never heard them talk about normal peaceful relations as a goal before. So, I mean, they obviously are explaining in greater detail what some of their goals for the process are. Comprehensive peace is something that has been their goal for a long time -- that's the way they described it. But they have not used this kind of a terminology to talk about their vision of peace, and their vision is which would provide for, as President Assad said, normal, peaceful relations, a genuine peace -- language where he also talked about, in a sense, they fought with honor; now they need to make peace with honor and negotiate with honor.

Q How do the new bilateral talks work? And as good negotiators, did you supply the Syrians with a kind of a timetable to solve those bilateral questions?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No, we have just -- the two foreign ministers will work out the shape of this mechanism and also the timing of when it will get underway.

I would say -- unless we're told otherwise -- since a couple of these officials do have to move on quickly, how about we take two more questions and that's it.

Q You were talking before about the magic word in the international Herald Tribune, but the word there isn't "normal peaceful relations," it's normalization. And that is the word that Assad balked at using. Would you care to address that issue?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I think the question highlights that in the Middle East there is a tendency to dissect every word that is used. And in doing that, when a word appears that you haven't seen before that gets to the heart of something like normalization, I think that's important.

That's what we're noting. The words "normal peaceful relations" convey something that haven't been conveyed before.

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Q But you wouldn't argue that it's the same, would you?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I mean, obviously, I think our view of normal peaceful relations would be the same as normalization. We would not draw a distinction between those two terms.

Q Did Assad respond on Pan Am 103? Did he say anything --

Q We've had, over the last two years, with every start of the new round of peace talks, almost every time we've had peace talks we've had more and more violence in south Lebanon. And that's hardly conducive for peace talks and for pushing them forward. Has south Lebanon come up in this summit and what have they decided to do to rein in all the various parties there?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: South Lebanon, per se, did not come up. Lebanon as a whole did come up. The issue of Taif did come up. But south Lebanon did not.

I think that was two questions.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END5:41 P.M. (L)

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Prague, Geneva)

For Immediate Release

January 16, 1994

PRESS CONFERENCE BY PRESIDENT CLINTON
AND PRESIDENT ASSAD

Intercontinental Hotel
Prague, Geneva

4:15 P.M. (L)

PRESIDENT ASSAD: At the conclusion of the important and constructive talks which were conducted today between President Clinton and myself, I wish to express my deep satisfaction for what these talks have effected in terms of the United States' determination to do all it can in order to bring the peace process to its desired objective, the objective of establishing the just and comprehensive peace in the region through the implementation of the U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242, 338, and 425 as well as the principle of land for peace.

In this respect, I appreciate the fact that not withstanding the great importance that President Clinton attaches to the internal affairs of his country, he has attached a special importance as a full partner and honest intermediary to helping the parties reach a comprehensive peace that is in the interest not only of the peoples of the region, but also the people of the world at large.

Today's meeting between President Clinton and myself came to crown a number of exchanges and telephone communications between us over the last year. I hope that our meeting today will contribute to the realization of the aspirations of the peoples in the region, mainly that this new year will be the year of achieving the just and comprehensive peace which puts an end to the tragedies of violence and wars endured by them for several decades.

During our meeting I had the opportunity to stress to President Clinton Syria's firm commitment to the principles and bases of the peace process, and our strong conviction that peace cannot be genuine and lasting unless it was comprehensive and based on the principles of international legitimacy and justice. This means endeavoring to reach a just solution on all tracks.

Historical evidence, both past and present, have proved that separate peace and partial solutions were not conducive to the establishment of real peace in the region. In this regard, I would like to express my satisfaction that President Clinton himself has committed to the objective of comprehensive peace.

On this basis, we have agreed to work together for the successful efforts aimed at putting an end to the Arab-

Israeli conflict and at reaching a genuine and comprehensive peace that enables the peoples of the region to focus on the development, progress and prosperity.

This meeting has also provided us with the opportunity to exchange views over a number of issues including those related to bilateral relations between our countries. We have agreed that the noble objective toward which we are working requires a qualitative move in these relations. We have also discussed questions related to the regional situation as well as ☐ all matters that might constructively contribute to the achievement of security and stability in the Middle East.

Syria seeks a just and comprehensive peace with Israel as a strategic choice that secures Arab rights, ends the Israeli occupation, and enables all peoples in the region to live in peace, security and dignity. In honor we fought; in honor we negotiate; and in honor we shall make peace. We want an honorable peace for our people and for the hundreds of thousands who paid their lives in defense of the countries and the rights.

There is hardly a home in Syria in which there is no martyr who had fallen in defense of his country, nation and of Arab pride. For the sake of all those, for our sons daughters and families, we want the peace of the brave a genuine peace which can survive and last, a peace which secures the interests of each side and renders to all the rights. If the leaders of Israel have sufficient courage to respond to this kind of peace, the new era of security and stability in which normal peaceful relations among all shall dawn anew. (Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLINTON: I believe you could tell from that statement that I have just completed a constructive and encouraging meeting with President Assad.

From the first days of my administration, the achievement of a comprehensive peace between Israel and its Arab neighbors, based on Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 and the principle of territory for peace has been one of my highest foreign policy objectives.

In pursuit of that priority, I have always viewed Syria's involvement as critical. That is why, from the outset of our administration, I have engaged President Assad in a regular correspondence by telephone and letter, and why I'm now pleased to have had this opportunity to hear personally President Assad's views about how best to make this a year of breakthroughs on all fronts.

During our meeting I told President Assad that I was personally committed to the objective of a comprehensive and secure peace that would produce genuine reconciliation among the peoples of the Middle East. I told him of my view that the agreement between Israel and the PLO constituted an important first step by establishing an agreed basis for resolving the Palestinian problem. I also told him that I believe Syria is the key to the achievement of an enduring and comprehensive peace that finally will put an end to the conflict between Israel and her Arab neighbors.

President Assad, as you have just heard, shares this objective: not just an end to war, but the establishment of real and comprehensive peace with Israel that will ensure normal,

peaceful relations among good neighbors.

Crucial decisions will have to be made by Syria and Israel if this common objective is to be achieved. That is why President Assad has called for a peace of the brave. And it is why I join him now in endorsing that appeal. Accordingly, we pledged today to work together in order to bring the negotiations that started in Madrid over two years ago to a prompt and successful conclusion.

Critical issues remain to be resolved, especially the questions relating to withdrawal to peace and security -- excuse me -- the question of relating withdrawal to peace and security.

But as a result of our conversation today, I am confident that we laid the foundations for real progress in the negotiations between heads of delegation that will begin again next week in Washington.

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President Assad and I also discussed the state of relations between the United States and Syria, and agreed on the desirability of improving them. This requires honestly addressing the problems in our relationship. Accordingly, we've instructed the Secretary of State and the Syrian Foreign Minister to establish a mechanism to address these issues in detail and openly.

For too long, the Middle East has been denied the benefits of peace. And yet, it is within our power to create the conditions that will enable Israeli and Arab, Muslim, Christian and Jew to live together in peace. Today's meeting was an important step toward fulfilling that vision. We have a lot of work to do, but we are closer to our goal.

Thank you. (Applause.)

Q Mr. President, do you feel that you have a firm commitment from President Assad to normalize relations with Israel? And by that I mean open borders, free trade and diplomatic relations.

PRESIDENT CLINTON: The short answer is yes. I believe that President Assad has made a clear, forthright and very important statement on normal, peaceful relations.

Now, in order to achieve those relations, a peace agreement has to be negotiated in good faith and carried out. So -- but this is an important statement; the first time that there has been a clear expression that there will be a possibility of that sort of relationship.

Q Mr. President, it has proven that separate agreements were unsuccessful. And the proof is the Lebanonese accords and the Jericho accords. Don't you think that we need a very clear commitment on a comprehensive peace? Then regarding the implementation of U.N. resolutions, regarding Iraq, U.N. resolutions were implemented. But as far as Lebanon and Resolution 425, until now the Security Council resolution as not implemented despite the American approval. So how can this situation be improved? How can we get the commitment to implement these resolutions?

Thank you, sir.

PRESIDENT CLINTON: First of all, as to the specifics of implementation, that will be part of the process of negotiation. But let me answer the first and more important question, I think.

I think all the parties in this process recognize that it cannot succeed unless all the tracks are brought to a successful conclusion. That is, I think even -- President Assad was very eloquent in our meeting today about the question of Lebanon -- and Jordan, for that matter -- in saying that even Syria, if it were fully satisfied with its differences with Israel, that they could be worked out, that there still would have to be a comprehensive peace in which the issues affecting Lebanon, issues affecting Jordan, and the issues relating to the PLO would, in addition to the Syrian issues, would all be resolved. We are all committed to that.

Q This is a question for President Assad. Mr. President, President Clinton is the fourth President that you're now meeting. Do you think you can afford to wait for a fifth one, or have you decided to sign peace now? (Laughter.)

PRESIDENT CLINTON: I'm glad you got that question.

Could you repeat the question in Arabic, please?

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Q No, I cannot repeat the question in -- (Laughter.) In English. Mr. Assad, President Clinton is the fifth -- fourth American President you're meeting now. Do you think you can afford to wait for a fifth one, or have you decided to sign peace now?

PRESIDENT ASSAD: Yes, we are ready to sign peace now. (Laughter.)

Q President Clinton, beyond the broad assurances that you and President Assad have spoken of here about the willingness to seek peace and to negotiate it, do you have, sir, as a result of these meetings, any of the kinds of specific, detailed concessions, or a sense of willingness to make concessions that might make a successful negotiation possible? And, if so, can you tell us in what areas they are?

PRESIDENT CLINTON: Well, as you know, I have a very strong conviction that the specifics of this agreement will have to be negotiated by the parties themselves. And even though I have in my mind several things, I think that it is very important that those of us who are trying to facilitate these discussions not discuss the details of them. The parties are going to have to work that out.

Let me say that an indication has been given here by the very important statement that President Assad has already made, stating clearly that it is time to end the conflict with Israel, make peace with Israel, that the can peace be -- should lead to normal and peaceful relations. I would hope that this would provoke a positive response in Israel and that then the parties would get together and work these details out. That is not for the United States to dictate.

Q Mr. Clinton, despite the peace negotiations,

ever since the Madrid Conference, Israel continues with its policy of settlements in the occupied Arab countries. Although Syria has signed the Nonproliferation Treaty and has been asking for years for the denuclearization of the Middle East as a region, Israel refuses, in fact, to sign and ratify this Nonproliferation Treaty and is still accumulating and amassing weapons. Don't you think, sir, that such practices go counter to the concept of peace for which you are striving? Thank you.

PRESIDENT CLINTON: First, sir, I believe the question of settlements in disputed areas is one of the things that clearly will have to be resolved in connection with this peace process, consistent with United Nations resolutions and the concept of territory for peace. I said that in my opening statement, I expect that to be worked through.

Secondly, on the question of weapons, I believe the best chance we have to stop the spread of weapons of mass destruction that include not only nuclear, but also biological and chemical weapons, and, indeed, to slow the sophisticated conventional arms race in the Middle East is to finish this peace process successfully. I think, that is, as a practical matter, the only way to do it -- and the United States will work as hard as we can toward that objective.

Q President Assad, are you clearly stating unequivocally today that in exchange for a full Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights Syria would be prepared to establish normal diplomatic relations with Israel, including open borders, including tourism, the same kind of peace treaty that Israel established with Egypt?

PRESIDENT ASSAD: As we all know, especially the United States of America and President Clinton, we are endeavoring for a comprehensive peace in order for it to be lasting, in order for it to be just. In this context, we are striving for the achievement of true peace which guarantees the
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rights of all, a stable life for all. Here lies the interests of the peoples in the region and the peoples of the world.

Myself and President Clinton completely agreed on these issues, the requirements for peace. We will respond to these requirements. And you know, of course, this will hinge on the discussions and the peace negotiations and not to be solved in a press conference.

Q The U.S.A. is a partner and an honest intermediary. Syria responded favorably in order to achieve this peace process in the interest of the world. Yet, the U.S.A. is still treating Syria in a different manner, different from the manner in which it treats Israel, especially in terms of financial and military aid. How would you explain this, sir?

PRESIDENT CLINTON: Well, as we have made clear, we have had differences over the years with Syria over a number of issues, including our differences over questions relating to certain groups -- the PKK, the Hezbollah, the Jebril group and others -- other issues. We talked about these differences for about an hour today without any view toward trying to resolve them.

We agreed on two things, and I think this is very important. One is that if we can maintain one another's

confidence working toward a peaceful solution in the Middle East, that that will do a great deal for our bilateral relations and for a better future. And the second is that we needed to have a process that had integrity, established by the Secretary of State and the Syrian Foreign Minister, that would go beyond public exchanges to a very specific delineation of the differences between us and an honest effort to resolve them or to make progress on them.

So, sir, I think the best answer to your question is that -- that we think that the progress perhaps can be made. We've set up a mechanism to deal honestly with the differences between us, and we believe maintaining each other's confidence by good faith and effort in the Middle East peace process is the most important thing we can do at this moment in our history.

MS. MYERS: We'll take one more.

Q Mr. President, the subject is so close to your heart, but you evaded answering whether you felt that Israel should sign the Nonproliferation Treaty. But my real question is, did you discuss and set a timetable for Israeli and Syrian troops to come out of Lebanon?

PRESIDENT CLINTON: We did not have any discussions today about the details of any phase of the Middle East peace process because the other parties are not here present, and it would not have been an appropriate thing to do.

Q (Inaudible) --

PRESIDENT CLINTON: Excuse me. I got one of those helpful little hints from one of my staff members down here. I apologize to interrupt you. I want to be perfectly forthright, because I don't want to leave a false impression that might be adversely interpreted against President Assad.

We did discuss the importance of having the Lebanese peace process go on parallel to the Israeli-Syrian process. I reaffirmed my support for the Taif Accords, and President Assad agreed that there should be a successful conclusion of the peace process which left Lebanon free and independent as a nation. So there was no difference between us on the objective. And I didn't want anything I said to be read unfairly against him on that score. We actually, I think, reached complete meeting of the minds. (Laughter.)

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Q In my view, on the 15th of September at the White House, you called for a bigger Syrian role in the peace process and you -- on His Excellency President Assad to play a personal role in forging ahead a breakthrough in the peace process. Now that you've met President Assad face-to-face for the first time, what is your impression of President Assad and how do you view his personal role in achieving that breakthrough?

PRESIDENT CLINTON: Well, first of all, I had heard a lot about President Assad's legendary stamina in these meetings. (Laughter.) And when we called a break four hours and 20 minutes into our meeting, I can tell you that his reputation does not exceed the reality; he deserves every bit of it.

Secondly, we had the opportunity -- because we did talk for so long, we had the opportunity to exchange not only our

views about the issues in play at present, but also I had the opportunity to learn President Assad's perspective over a period exceeding 20 years now on some of these issues. And it reinforced my belief as expressed in September that there would be no comprehensive peace in the Middle East unless he were willing to take a leadership role; and that he has decided to take the risks that all these leaders, if they really want peace, are going to have to take.

And so I guess I would have to say that that is the most important thing to me, the thing that was most impressive. I believe that he is committed to trying to work through this as quickly as possible. And I think others will see that commitment and will respond in an appropriate way.

Q President Clinton, peace is an international issue, the U.S. administration is striving seriously to achieve peace. It is an international need, it's a need for the USA and Syria and Israel. One wonders why the peace process tumbles every now and then. And how will the U.S. administration, as the major sponsor of the peace process, tackle obstacles bound to face us in the future? Thank you.

PRESIDENT CLINTON: First of all, I think it tumbles every now and then because it's difficult to do. If it were easy to do it would have been done before. The parties have been at odds for a long time. There is a lot of mistrust to overcome. There are a lot of details to be worked out. And whenever there is any ambiguity at all or uncertainty, then that is likely to lead to other problems down the road. So there are lots of reasons why it happens.

What the United States is trying to do is to take advantage of what I think is an appropriate moment in history when you have leaders committed to getting this done -- leaders who understand that the interests of their people will be served over the long run by comprehensive peace -- and so what we can do, I think, is to try to keep the process going, keep the trust level up among the parties, try to be an honest broker and work through the problems. And when these difficulties do arise, as they have, as you implied, in the aftermath of the PLO-Israel Accord, to try to help work through them as quickly as possible and get things back on track.

Thank you very much.

END4:44 P.M. (L)

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

BACKGROUND BRIEFING
BY
SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS

January 5, 1994

The Briefing Room

3:26 P.M. EST

MS. MYERS: In a moment we're going to begin a BACKGROUND BRIEFING by two senior White House officials. The purpose of this briefing is to provide somewhat of an overview of the trip. I just want to emphasize, before we get going here, that the President and the foreign policy team has spent a great deal of time over the past several months preparing for this trip. It is something that we have been in consultation with the allies on, something that we've discussed at great length both internally and with the allies working out the details of both the policies and the specific sites along the way.

The President, as you know, has spent a good deal of time both prior to this week and certainly this week -- on Monday he had several meetings with his foreign policy team to discuss both the overview of the trip and the NATO and EU portions. Last night he met with some outside experts on both Europe and Russia. Today he had --

Q Who was that --

MS. MYERS: We'll get back to that. Today he had a lengthy meeting on Russia, as well as a lunch with columnists from various newspapers and magazines.

Q Make any news?

MS. MYERS: Pardon me? Make any news? You'll have to wait until tomorrow to find out -- actually, one of the wires was represented, so I'm sure there will be something on that shortly.

Q That's not fair. (Laughter.)

MS. MYERS: Tomorrow the President will go to Milwaukee, where he will address the broader themes of the trip in the first of three speeches that will look at the overall sort of goals and objectives of the trip. Overall, the President's going to focus on the challenges and opportunities in Europe on this trip -- specifically, to reestablish our ties to Europe through NATO and the EU; to reach out to Eastern and Central Europe through the Partnership For Peace; to continue to work on denuclearization issues in both Russia and the Ukraine; to reaffirm our support for the continued democratic and market economic reforms in Russia during our stops there; and finally, to continue to develop an overall policy towards Europe that integrates strategic economic and security

concerns.

Finally, there will be one more round of briefings on Friday. At 10:30 a.m. on Friday morning, the President will meet with a bipartisan group of congressional leaders to discuss the upcoming trip. Following that meeting, Secretaries Christopher, Aspin and Bentsen will be in the Briefing Room here for sound and camera to talk about the overall trip. And I think probably on Friday afternoon, we'll do one final briefing on Russia.

So, without further adieu, I give you the senior administration officials.

Q What time do you think the briefing will be at?

MS. MYERS: Probably 11:45 a.m., something like that.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Some of you have heard this before and at the risk of boring you by agreeing with other senior administration officials, let me first talk about how the President sees the context of the trip and what's at stake here.

Over the next months and years, several very important decisions are being made in Europe and in the western world -- Russia's fate; that of the other NIS states; whether the really extraordinary progress toward democracy and free markets that we've seen in Central and Eastern Europe will continue and those countries will feel they can look West with hope rather than East with fear; whether NATO will be as central to post-Cold War European security concerns as it was during the Cold War, and a big question for those of us in the West, in the established Western democracies; whether our governments and societies will have the courage to risk change, especially at a time of serious domestic economic and social stress --- more in Europe than here, but here, too; whether we will have the courage risk change domestically in creating jobs, labor flexibility, but also internationally, and the two obviously are part of the same problem in continuing to lower barriers to trade, to open markets. And in the European context, in particular, to integrate the new and aspiring democracies of Europe's East rather than to throw up new barriers -- not just military barriers, but protectionist barriers. Not an easy thing to do when everybody has troubles at home -- to be open to the world. And all of these choices play into each other, and they set the framework for the trip.

Now, one eight-day Presidential trip to Europe is not going to determine the outcome. And the outcome lies primarily with the citizens of the societies affected. But the President believes that in the course of this trip, he can articulate his concept of what the new post-Cold War security challenges are and a strategy for dealing with them in broad terms, but also in some quite specific proposals. All of them could come under the word of "integrating." During the Cold War, the security problem, to be crass about it, was to keep the bad guys out of Western Europe. Now it is to expand the circle of democracies and market economies to embrace the former communist states; integrating in the largest sense of the word, the question of NATO's openness, but the openness of Western markets, the openness of Western political systems and vice-versa, of course.

So let me say, just very briefly, how each of the stops, before we get to the former Soviet Union, plays into this broad agenda. First, the President will begin in Brussels next Sunday with his first speech about Europe. He's spoken very courageously, I think, about Russia at the very beginning of the administration. But this will be the first speech he has addressed to the subject of

U.S.-European relations aside from the very critical relationship with Russia which, in my opinion, is the single most important aspect of European security, including the security of Western Europe and Central Europe.

So we think this is an important occasion for him to lay out the overall framework for his concept of U.S.-European relations after the Cold War, the new security challenges and the American role in them.

The NATO summit will probably get the most attention, at least before he gets to Moscow, and it's the occasion for the trip, as you know. The challenge for the NATO Summit is to open NATO to new democracies in Europe's east in ways that delivers quite concrete security benefits, but also important political benefits, not least demonstrating to the electorates that reform pays in terms of acceptance by the West, and can address the security vacuum they perceive, that they're not being left in a no-man's land, nobody much cares about them, between the West and Russia without fueling anti-Western fires in Russia that could make the Central Europeans and all the rest of us less secure in the long run.

That's not an easy balancing act, but we think we've found the right formula, the best available formula for addressing it, which is the creation of a Partnership For Peace, which as you know, will get NATO's relations with the militaries of the former communist states out seminar rooms, onto the field actually doing things together.

I won't go into all the details of -- a subject close to my heart, all the mechanics, but that's not what you're interested in here. The important thing is the political, the various political spinoffs of this -- what it can do to promote democracy, to promote the kind of networking among militaries of East and West, but also to provide a framework in which the militaries of some of the former communist states would feel comfortable cooperating with each other, not just with those of the West.

We're not going to change their attitudes overnight, but we think this can be part of a process that will affect how militaries in these countries think about their role in a democratic society, and also come to think of each other, as well as the militaries of the West as partners rather than potential adversaries, much as NATO did for France, Germany, et cetera, et cetera. We're going to do this without drawing any formal new dividing lines in Europe. And as some of you have heard other administration officials say, what we want to do now is ensure security and stability for all of Europe. And if you just move the Iron Curtain a few hundred kilometers each, you're not likely to do that.

And our concern is not just with the Russian reaction, which has received most press attention, but the tensions and apprehensions that would be aroused in all the countries that didn't think they were on a fast track to membership if we either identified now who we expect to be NATO members, or by some kind of wink and nod implied who we expect to be NATO members in the first tranche.

But I do want to make very, very clear that excited as we are about the partnership for its own sake, we don't see it as the end of the road. We want it to go like gangbusters and to evolve and be an active, serious cooperative venture. But we are not saying to the Central and East European states, including those in the former Soviet Union, this is it for you -- we're going to make the most we can of the partnership, but this is it. It's the beginning of a

dynamic and evolutionary process that we hope will lead to full NATO membership for some people. We don't know exactly when or who, and if we did think we could guess, it would be unwise to say so now. But we really mean this as part of a dynamic process.

Now, after the NATO Summit, the President will go to a summit with the European Union. He does that every six months, as the European Union changes its presidency every six months. But this will be the first one since the Uruguay round was completed and since the Maastricht Treaty was ratified and the European Community started calling itself a union. It's a wonderful opportunity to set the post-Uruguay Round trade agenda, including market access for Eastern and Central Europe -- when I say Eastern Europe, I mean Russia as well, so including Eastern and Central Europe market access, which is all part of the integrating process. But also it's a time to address the desire of the European Union members for a stronger foreign policy role, which is something we're very open to and we have specific ideas how we can make clear that we are open to this.

After he leaves Brussels, he will go to Prague for a meeting -- it's not a bilateral meeting with the Czech government, it's a meeting with the leaders of the Visegrad states: Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia -- something that's never happened before and that we are really very excited about. He will obviously talk to them about the opportunities the Partnership offers to them, and how they can take it and make it something really very interesting to them and interesting to their electorates, which is not unimportant to politicians. But also talk about the American role in their political and economic transition. These are the countries that have probably come farthest of the -- certainly come farthest of the former communist states. None of them feel that their democratic and market evolution is secure. All of them want -- there are specific things they want, but even more than the specifics, they want certainty of a sustained Western, including American, engagement, which they frankly had doubts about since the heady days after the Berlin Wall first came down. And we have some very specific ideas -- none of which is going to be a headline grabber -- but we think altogether will demonstrate that we mean to be engaged in a more imaginative way, not only by bringing them closer to NATO in an evolutionary process that can lead to membership, but in their political and economic transformations.

And after that, we go on to Moscow and Minsk.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Good afternoon, pleased to be with you. Let me just make a few comments about the President's trip to Moscow and then about his trip to Minsk, which follows. And I would open by saying, which you already know, this is the third meeting that the President is going to be having with President Yeltsin, will have had since April of last year. You remember in Vancouver they met for two-and-a-half days and, I think fair to say, established a new relationship between the United States and Russia -- a broad relationship based on economic cooperation; a security partnership in foreign policy cooperation. They then met briefly in Tokyo during the summit when President Yeltsin came for the G-7 plus one. There was a separate bilateral where they continued those discussions.

This meeting is in many ways an outgrowth of those two meetings, because we certainly want -- the President wants to reaffirm the partnership he is developing with President Yeltsin. But it also takes place after a very turbulent and historic four or five last months in Russia where we saw the constitutional challenge in September, the siege of the parliament in October, and the

elections in December which, in effect, closed the door on the Soviet Union. So, the constitution in the Soviet parliament passed into history.

We are at a very interesting juncture now in Russian history. If you look at the events of the past few years in a longer term perspective from December 25, 1991, the day the Soviet Union dissolved, until December 12 of '93, there was, in essence, a two-year power struggle between reformers and those who were not interested in reform. And to be very simplistic about it, the reformers won that power struggle. But the reformers who did so now face a considerable number of challenges as they look towards the future. And that is the setting in Moscow that the President will experience when he gets there next week.

And a key question for us, of course, is how will the United States -- how should the United States respond in this relationship, in this partnership to the challenges facing the Russian government? And let me just cite for you a couple of major themes as I see them for the President's trip. I will then -- I would then like to review some of the major issues that he'll be dealing with, and then I'll run over the schedule very briefly.

I think it's for us very clear that the first objective that the President has is to clearly, publicly articulate the continuity in U.S. policy towards Russia. And that policy is unequivocal support for Russian reform in all of its dimensions for Russia reformers, including the leading personification of reform, Boris Yeltsin. We are not in the position of sitting on a fence waiting for events to unfold. We are clearly taking the position that history is with those in Russia who want to create a democratic society and some form of a market economy. That is very much in the American interest that that happen. It has all sorts of implications for security in Europe, as my colleague has mentioned, and also for our own situation here at home in terms of our defense spending and the security of the American people as we look towards the future. So the President since he came into office has taken a very clear view of events in Russia and of our relationship to them and he continues to do that. And I'm sure that in his opportunities in his press conference, but more importantly in his speech to the Russian people, that will take place on the second day of the visit he will make that point very strongly.

I think the President will also want to reaffirm the foundations or the new pillars of the U.S.-Russian relationship --and I'll get into that in a minute -- in all of its dimensions. And third, he will want to reach out to a broad cross-section of the Russian public. This will be his first visit to Russia as President. He has an opportunity to meet people he has not met before, obviously, and he will take advantage of that opportunity.

The goal here is to build very strong lines of support, certainly to the Russian government but also to reformers outside of Moscow. And we're hoping that there will be a number of people in from the provinces -- governors, members of the new duma and the new Federation Council, which will, in fact, be meeting the week that the President arrives.

Let me cite for you four principal issues that I think will dominate the substantive discussions between the United States and Russia at this summit. First is, of course, the whole set of economic issues that since Vancouver have been at the very heart of this relationship. The President feels very strongly that the lessons of this election are -- the Russian election -- are that

Russian economic reform must continue. It must continue firmly and it must be very aggressively pursued.

Along with that, however, the President I think since the day after the election has been articulating a complementary view, and that is along with the continuation of reform the Russian government should seek to develop a comprehensive cushion, if you will, to protect the Russian people through this very, very difficult transition period. I think the President made those comments when he was on the road the first two days after election. It's very clearly what Boris Yeltsin wants to do, and he has said so in public and he's said so privately to us. And the President will want to listen to President Yeltsin and hear his view of how Russian economic reform will proceed. He will certainly want to discuss with President Yeltsin how the United States and the G-7 and the west in general can respond to that vision. And here I'm talking about a continuation of the programs that have been put in place, most notably in Tokyo last July, the \$28 billion support program for macroeconomic stabilization, but also to discuss how the United States and other countries and the international financial institutions can play a greater role in trying to help the Russian government provide for the basic social protection of the population as they undergo this historic transformation process.

Two other economic issues will be very important in Moscow. The first of them is, of course, the bilateral programs of support that the President put in place in Vancouver. And here the President will, in effect, be reporting to President Yeltsin on the progress that the United States has made in support of Russian reform. You remember in Vancouver the President announced a \$1.6 billion program of support. He will report to President Yeltsin on how that has been implemented, how much of the money has been obligated, where it has gone, and in a fairly detailed fashion. And I think we'll be glad to share with all of you next week in Moscow the details of that program as well.

In addition, as you know, the Congress passed a \$2.5 billion program of support for Russia and other NIS reform in September. And the President will want to give President Yeltsin a view as to how that money will be spent in 1994.

The third economic issue is perhaps the most important for the long term. And my colleague touched on it in remarks about East and Central Europe, and that is how can we in the West find a way to support reform long-term. The answer, we think very clearly, is through private trade and investment; is through an economic engagement between our two countries, because ultimately what American and Japanese and European corporations are able to do in the way of investing and trading in Russia is far more important than what the IMF and World Bank can do or what the United States or any other number of western governments can do. That is a long-term process. There are a number of barriers in place to trade on both sides. And the President will want to emphasize that issue with President Yeltsin.

The second major issue that will come up is, of course, Partnership For Peace. This is a proposal that unifies the President's trip to Europe, as my colleague mentioned. We look forward to Russian participation in the Partnership For Peace, and we fully expect that that will happen.

The third major issue will be a discussion of foreign policy issues. And here, I think the United States again has been able to make considerable progress in our dialogue with the Russians

on how we cooperate on foreign policy issues. We are cosponsoring the Middle East peace process. We have been a very close partner of Russia in discussing the events in Bosnia and how the world should confront the problems in Bosnia.

We have had, as well, a close dialogue on the issues in Russia's so-called "near abroad." And here, I think the President and President Yeltsin will discuss a number of specific issues of concern to the United States. I would just mention one, for illustrative purposes. The United States believes very strongly that Russian troops should be withdrawn from Estonia and from Latvia. We believe this is the intention of the Russian government. We are not an intermediary in the negotiations among these countries, but we are trying to help behind the scenes as a friendly partner to all of the countries concerned, and I think we'll want to have a very indepth discussion of that issue in Moscow.

The fourth issue, of course, is denuclearization. This, in many respects, along with economic assistance reform is the number one foreign policy priority of the administration in the former Soviet Union. We have made considerable progress.

The Belarussians have acceded to the Nonproliferation Treaty. They will become a nonnuclear state. President Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan in late December when Vice President Gore was visiting announced his intention to accede to the NPT. We are now engaged in very complex and very important negotiations with the Russians and Ukrainians to see if we can make similar progress with Ukraine. That will obviously be an issue of great importance at the Moscow summit.

Having laid out those general themes and general issues, let me just take you briefly through the schedule. The President arrives, I think as you know, from Prague on the evening of the 12th of January. There are no events scheduled that evening. He's got two days of meetings and four substantive encounters with President Yeltsin.

On the first day, they will begin with a one-on-one in the Kremlin. That's Thursday morning, January 13th. I think that will be on broad themes of our relationship and particularly sensitive issues in the relationship. That is followed by a larger meeting on economic issues. They'll cover the issues that I just listed for you.

That evening, President Yeltsin will be hosting a small dinner for the President and a number of his advisors. And I suspect they'll have important discussions on foreign policy and other issues at that meeting.

And the following day, Friday the 14th, there will be an expanded meeting on security issues and military-to-military issues. The President will, of course, be doing more than just having his official meetings in Moscow. He intends to have a meeting with the Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church, Aleksiy II. They have not met before. We had hoped that they could meet earlier this year, but the Patriarch had to leave the United States early on one of his prior trips. The President is looking forward to that. The President will also visit the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier -- I think most of you know that -- just outside the Kremlin gates.

These two events, I think -- we hope will show the deep respect that we as a country have for Russia and for the Russian people. The church is a very important institution in Russian life. And, as you know, the great patriotic war -- the Second World War --

is also a defining event in recent history in Russia. And so the President very much wanted to do those two events.

In addition, the President is hosting a reception late Thursday afternoon, early Thursday evening, for between 100 and 150 leading Russians from politics, from the arts and from other fields. This is an attempt on our part to reach out to people that maybe we normally do not encounter in our government work, people who are influential in Russia and who are distinguished in Russian society, and people from beyond Moscow. As I mentioned, the Duma and Federation Council will be meeting. There will be people from the Far East, from Southern Russia, from the Urals, from Siberia in Moscow, and it's a good opportunity for the President to meet them. So he intends to do that.

I would say one of the most important events of the trip, finally, will be the speech that the President intends to give to the Russian people. That's scheduled for late Friday afternoon.

Let me just say a word about Minsk very briefly. The President will travel to Belarus, to its capital, Minsk, on Saturday the 15th. He'll be spending most of the day there. And the President is going to Minsk for two reasons. First, obviously, we are very pleased that Belarus has decided to denuclearize, to become a nonnuclear state. And we think that it is important to continue to support the Belarussians in that process. It is a long-term process. It's costly for them to dismantle and destroy the nuclear missiles, weapons and to remove them, transport them to Russia. And we are assisting in that process through Nunn-Lugar legislation.

Second, there is a real battle underway in Belarus for the future. And the battle, in essence, is similar to the battle that we've seen in Russia over the last two years. And, very generally, it's between those in the parliament and in the government and society who want a democratic, economic, reform future for the country, and those who do not. Chairman Stanislav Shushkevich, who is the Chairman of the Belarussian Supreme Soviet, is the leading reformer. The President knows him. They met here at the White House in July. The President has enormous respect for him. And I think that in his visit to Minsk, the President will want to speak about the importance of democratization and the importance of people in Belarus deciding that their future lies -- as it does we think with Russia and Ukraine and the other states -- with democracy. So that's a very important theme of that trip.

Those are general comments. I think my colleague and I would be very glad to take your questions.

Q I understand that Russia has finally paid up on their agricultural credit arrearages for '93 and that now USDA Secretary Espy sees them as creditworthy. But with Russia and certain people in the administration not wanting to have a commodities link to this summit, do you anticipate any discussion of new credit that would be available in early -- in a year for Russia, or would you expect Russia to make a symbolic payment of their Russia GSM 102 credit payments that's due in January during this summit?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Just a brief response, then a brief footnote. The issue is whether or not the United States will want to get into the business of commodity credit extension towards Russia for their purchase of our agricultural commodities. I believe that the United States put forward roughly \$5 billion worth of such credits in a two-year period between '90 and '92. Over the last year Russia had been in default, and so the program, by law, had

to stop. It is true that Russia has now made up those payments and is fully in compliance with the law, so it is theoretically possible for us to think about the extension for credits for commodity exports -- commodity sales.

At this time, the Russians have not asked us for any such commodity credit extensions. And so I don't believe it will be an issue in Moscow.

Q Is there any danger that the President going there, that it might make Yeltsin look too beholden to the West, with the rise of nationalism that Zhirinovskiy might play on this and make this an issue?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: President Clinton was invited by President Yeltsin to visit Russia, so I don't believe that's a problem at all. And I would just say that I think certainly the United States feels -- and I think the Russian government does, too -- that this process of integration, of integrating Russia into the West economically and politically and, indeed, in a security sense -- the Partnership for Peace -- is the most critical element in building a peaceful relationship for the Russians over the future. So we feel very good about this relationship. We think it's in the interest of our country. I think President Yeltsin feels the same.

Q How does the President finesse the Zhirinovskiy problem? Isn't there going to be a great deal of tension to his not meeting with Mr. Zhirinovskiy during his visit to Moscow?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, as I said, the President's going to meet with a broad cross-section of leaders. There are no plans to meet with Mr. Zhirinovskiy.

Q How do you -- what kind of things do you have in mind in helping the Russians with the social protections aspect that you talked about? And can you square the circle between yourself and Strobe Talbott? There seems to be some question about whether the administration is still as gung-ho on economic reform or whether there's going to be more emphasis on --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, let me take the second part first. The administration is unified and has been unified in this issue, and there's no disagreement in the administration. The President has set the tone on this issue, and everyone in the administration agrees with the position -- at least those at the senior levels. We believe that the lesson of the election is two-fold.

First, it's very important that Russian reform continue -- Russian reform in the person of privatization of state industries, price liberalization, macroeconomic stabilization. Without that, we're very much afraid that the situation -- the economic situation -- will deteriorate. And so that is a strongly felt view within the administration. But secondly, we would like to try as best as we can to work inside the G-7 and with the international financial institutions to see if all of us can expand our efforts, or enhance the effectiveness of our efforts, to help the Russians build a cushion to protect their population.

Now, I would say first that's a Russian job. The Russians have to define what it is they want to do. They've got to decide how they're going to do it. And at that point, I think the West, led by the United States, will be very eager to talk to them about what it is that we can do to respond to those developments.

But it really wouldn't be appropriate for us, I think, to go out and design a social safety net for Russia.

That's why the President's major focus on this issue in Moscow is going to be to listen -- to listen to what President Yeltsin intends to do. I think what the President will be willing to say is that we will commit ourselves to help this process work, because we understand how important it is for the future of reform.

Q Can I follow up on that, please? But does the administration want the IMF and the World Bank to ease the conditions under which it will provide loans to Russia, because the Vice President, in his trip, seemed to be complaining that the IMF and the World Bank were being too tough.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: What we want is -- let me just take you through very briefly so as not to bore everybody again, the two pillars of our economic policy. We want the IMF and the World Bank, the G-7 to continue their programs of macroeconomic support for the Russian government. That is terribly important -- I would say even critical -- for any possibility that reform is going to succeed. And that is what we have told the IMF and the World Bank.

In addition to that, we think there are ways that the IMF and the World Bank and the United States can be more effective in conveying assistance to Russia, perhaps in some fields be more energetic -- all of us. And certainly, I think the President and Vice President have both spoken to the need to be creative. I think both of them have used the word to be sensitive to what the message of the elections was -- and that is that people are hurting during the transition. So, what we have done over the last couple of weeks is sit down privately within the administration and try to think of ways to do that.

Let me give you an illustrative example. We have not gone to the Russians with ideas in having gone to the G-7. But we have already instituted a privatization fund at the Tokyo summit last year. It's a G-7 fund. The United States is contributing \$125 million to set up a large enterprise fund that will lend money to the large state enterprises that want to privatize that will help them through the perils of the transition process, and importantly, that will help the cities and the regions in which these enterprises are located to also adjust to privatization; because, as you know, the way Soviet economics worked, health care, education were all tied to the enterprise. That is going to be a process of devolution of powers and of responsibilities in the Russian economic system because of these great changes.

Perhaps the World Bank can contribute more to this effort. Perhaps the United States and its Western partners can contribute more. We do not yet have any firm view as to what might happen. The first thing that has to happen is we have to listen to the Russians, see what the Russian government wants to do. The second thing is to build an effective program of Western support, and the President is determined to do that.

Q What is there on this trip to reward, if you would, the Visegrad states for the relatively greater progress they have made toward democracy and market economies with the understanding that the Partnership For Peace is not what they were looking for, not completely --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, it's not all they

were looking for, certainly. You're quite right about that. Some specific things, but as I said at the outset, none of the individual things we have there is a headline-grabber. I think a sense that the West is open to them and is opening in a continuing and evolutionary process to them can be portrayed by them quite legitimately as a success and a reward, to put it crassly, for reform. That means closer cooperation, practical cooperation with NATO. That means continuing improved access to Western markets. That means a sense of sustained American, as well as West European engagement in their economic and political transformation.

I see the perplexity in your face and I understand it, because it all sounds sort of nebulous and fuzzy. Their situation is very different from that of Russia, simply because they are so much farther along. In some things, though they are similar. What my colleague was saying about the lesson of the Russian election, in a less dramatic way it's dangerous to make comparisons, because the situations are so different. But there is a similar lesson from the Polish election. The Polish economy is a major success story. They applied shock therapy early, it worked. It's the fastest-growing economy in Europe, in the world, possibly; certainly in Europe. And the people don't feel -- "Joe Sixpack" doesn't feel he's necessarily benefiting from it, as the results of the election showed.

Our suggestion in Poland is exactly as in Russia, that the answer is not to slow down shock therapy, but that we need to be more creative in helping them devise means of helping communities and the society in general adjust.

Probably what we can do most for them is helping them attract American investment as well as market access, simply because their economic situation is different. They would be the first to tell you that the West doesn't have the solution to their problems, that it lies with them -- and they're proud of the fact that it does lie with them. They don't want lectures about how to become a democracy, they are democracies. They know there are threats to that. So what we can offer is a sense of sustained engagement and on an evolutionary basis, opening to the West in ways that will not prematurely draw new lines in Europe.

One thing I --

Q Let me rephrase it. What do you have to convince them that they're not once again playing second, third or fourth fiddle -- they're just not as important as Russia, because that's who this trip appears to be focused on, to the exclusion, almost, of the Visegrad states?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, that's an extraordinary impression, since the Visegrad meeting is the first time any American president has done anything of the sort. Now, the press can decide if the NATO meeting is the most important event on the trip, or Russia is the most important event on the trip, but that's honestly not the way we see it. In some ways, we see the -- it's silly to compare -- but there are ways in which the Visegrad meeting is the most exciting aspect of those of us planning these meetings simply because it is something different and innovative and they recognize it as such. It's also a mark of our support for cooperation among them and we have some specific ideas for how we can facilitate cooperation among them.

One thing we have to make clear is that this isn't an effort to sort of re-ghettoize them, to push them into free trade and security arrangements with each other, but it's a way to facilitate

their integration with the West; the more they demonstrate, they can cooperate with each other, the more welcome they will be in the West.

But let me make one more remark about how this trip ties together. My colleague and I have both been focusing on what the West can and should be doing to contribute to and help the democratic and economic reform process in Central and Eastern Europe all the way through Russia and beyond. That is not instead of a revitalization of the traditional transatlantic partnership; it is the way to revitalize the traditional partnership, which has always been based on a partnership to ensure security in Europe. We have an opportunity here to move beyond the Cold War demands on our economy, on our society, and ensure a Europe in which those kinds of lines don't need to be drawn.

But we can demonstrate to the Central Europeans that we are there with them for the long haul of their political and economic transformation and that in the process of doing what outsiders can do to help, which is not everything but is more than I think many have realized, we can through the Partnership For Peace -- and I want to be careful of how I say this, because we do not think Russia is going to turn out badly -- but to put ourselves in a position where if it should through these active programs of military cooperation, we would be more in a position to draw new dividing lines should that become necessary, which we do not expect to happen. But we don't want to do anything that would make it more likely that that should happen.

Q are finding out -- at least some of the NIS have different priorities. For example, they want to talk about new threats -- the kind of work being done right now at the Pentagon. You didn't talk at all about that one.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No, I didn't. But I think -- I'm glad you raised that, because that's something that I think is very interesting. This NATO summit is going to launch a NATO project on proliferation, not to try to duplicate what's being done elsewhere but to look in in a very serious way to what NATO's unique or special contribution can be, not only to preventing proliferation but also to counter proliferation. And that's not throwing in the towel on nonproliferation; it could contribute to nonproliferation by demonstrating that proliferation doesn't pay. The game's not worth a candle.

Now, the reason I didn't mention it is that all this NATO summit is going to do is launch a NATO program, which tends to make people's eyes cross, rather than have a decision to announce. But in fact, it gets NATO into a very important new area, which could be relevant to the security of its own territory. And I think that nicely balances what we're doing to make NATO more relevant to security in the East. It's all part of updating NATO to the post-Cold War world.

Q Could I ask about Russia for a second? You remember in Vancouver Yeltsin made a big point of asking for permanent MFN status and for promises that the U.S. won't use its nuclear submarines to snoop around the coasts of Russia. What progress have you made on those two issues? What will you be able to tell him when you get there?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: There are a number of issues that came up in Vancouver of that type. Let me just try to deliver a report card on how we've done. President Yeltsin asked, or stated his opinion, that COCOM was discriminatory against Russia. And as you know, the United States is leading the way with its

western partners to do away with COCOM, to create a new institution in which Russia would be a member, an institution not directed against Russia, but in which Russia would help involve itself with the West in fighting the problem of proliferation.

Second, President Yeltsin asked that the United States take away from its books, from our laws, 60 to 70 statutes, regulations and laws from the Cold War period that discriminated against Russia as a "communist country." The President wrote a bill. He lobbied for the bill in the Congress. He had the support of both parties in the Congress for that effort, and that bill passed in November.

President Yeltsin was also interested, as you said, in Jackson-Vanik. Right now Russia has received, at least for the last couple of years, annual waivers from the Clinton administration and the Bush administration before it to provide MFN. This is an issue, frankly, that we are still studying. There are a number of options before the President. He has not made a decision.

President Yeltsin also asked for a quick disbursement of U.S. aid -- I mentioned that before we did it -- 100 percent obligated, a vast majority of the funds actually expended on the ground in Russia. So, I think that our --

Q are, in fact, projects that are being built out of that \$1.6 billion or are being done?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Absolutely. Yes, \$1.6 billion. One hundred percent of the money is obligated. You understand that term of art.

Q Yes, it means you've agreed to do something. It doesn't mean anything is done --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: And as I said, we'll tell you next week that the vast majority of the funds have been expended in Russia -- money spent on projects in Russia. And we'll give you -- in fact, what we'll do next week if you'd like is run through each of the projects, if you have that kind of patience or interest and go through them. It's a good record.

Q Are any of those projects viable enough for the President to see them? Did you find anything that he's going to --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Interestingly enough, most of the projects are outside of Moscow and by design -- by design because that's where the Russian people are. That's reform is occurring, not just in the capital city. He is -- we are hoping that he'll be able to visit a project that has received U.S. aid. We're still working that out. But let me just continue the list.

Q What will that be?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: We don't know yet. We're still working that out. But let me just continue the list -- President Yeltsin also asked for an enterprise fund. He wanted a mechanism from the United States to help create small businesses. The enterprise fund has been created. It has started. It is physically opening its doors in Moscow a week after next. They discussed at Vancouver the opening of a G-7 office in Moscow to help make more rational G-7 assistance to Russia and to organize it and to make it more aggressive. That office is opening again next week. The President will announce the name of the American who will head it

and of a German deputy director.

We also at Vancouver talked about this large enterprise fund. That is also underway. And so I think as you look back at Vancouver, it really was a case of the President making a number of commitments, and I believe he's fulfilled almost all of them.

Q Submarines?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Yes, I believe as a result of the instance that took place just before Vancouver, I believe that our military has been in touch with the Russian military, and we're quite confident that kind of incident will not recur.

Q On foreign policy, can you please explain whether the U.S. is at all concerned by a rising nationalist trend in Russia's foreign policy? And whether this is at all worrisome, specifically remarks by Kozyrev, both before and after the election, that seem reminiscent of what he said in Stockholm in December of '92 -- moves to put Russian peacekeepers in the "near abroad"; certainly a sense that if the United States isn't going to pay to provide for what is perceived as Russia's own security, that Russia will have to do it themselves? I mean, is the President bringing any message of concern or will he be asking President Yeltsin for any assurances in this regard?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, as I mentioned before, the United States is very interested in having the best possible cooperation and the best possible ongoing dialogue with the Russians on foreign policy issues. Terribly important for Russia's neighbors, and terribly important for our ability in the United Nations and the Middle East, to name two areas, in order for us to achieve our own objectives. I think I would say that the record of Russian foreign policy since December 25, 1991, has been in marked contrast to the foreign policy of the Soviet Union, its predecessor.

For the most part we have cooperated very well with the Russians. We have had our disagreements, which are to be expected, but we have, including recently in the last four or five months. What we will emphasize in our discussions with the Russian government is that Russia, obviously, like all countries, must be a good neighbor; that Russia must respect the borders of its neighbors, the territorial integrity, the sovereignty of its neighbors. Russia has indicated its interest in withdrawing its troops from the Baltics. We think that's very important. We hope very much it happens. It will be a very good demonstration of Russia's commitment of the principles that I just listed. And we think it will happen, but it will -- it will be a subject of discussion in Moscow.

You mentioned peacekeeping. A very complicated issue. And it's easy to confuse, say, the Baltics, where the troops are not wanted, where the Estonia and Latvian governments want them out --and we have a lot of sympathy with that -- with, for instance, Tajikistan, a member of the Commonwealth of Independent States, that has invited the Russian government, the Kazakh government, the Kyrgyz government and the Uzbek government to station troops on the Tajik-Afghan border. That was done via international consent, through the consent, sovereign consent, of the government of Tajikistan -- a very different situation than the situation in the Baltic states, one in which we are not inclined to protest, obviously. In fact, we would even say that the multinational force on the Tajik-Afghan border, has been a stabilizing force on that border. So I think we all have to be careful about generalizations about Russian foreign policy.

There are conflicts in between Georgia and Nagorno-Karabakh, to name two, that are very difficult conflicts. They will also come up in the discussions in Moscow.

Q One more question about the aid programs. The President has spoken about the need to have things that will show the Russian people that there are actually tangible benefits of reform. This is the first we've heard about these projects on the ground that are actually up and running. Is that they're just so small and their effects are so marginal that it's not worth --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: It's the biggest country in the world. It's 11 time zones across. We are going to be spending, what, from '93 to '94 a couple of billion dollars in a country of 175 million people. We are not doing -- we are not committing some of the mistakes that were made maybe in the '50s and '60s by a lot of countries who were not building visible dams, for instance, were not building airports. We're investing in people. What we're doing with our money is we're putting \$225 million into privatizing firms over three years. We're putting \$300 million into the creation of small business through the enterprise fund; another \$125 million into the large enterprise fund. We're going to be putting a substantial amount of money, \$160 million, to construct 5,000 housing units for Russian military officers as an incentive for the withdrawal from the Baltic states. We'll be spending roughly \$200 million over a number of years on democratization programs. We're going to bring 25,000 Russians and Ukrainians and Armenians to this country for college, university and post-grad studies.

So a lot of the money goes for this type of thing. A lot of it is not in bricks and mortars -- some of it is -- but a lot of it is not. A lot of it's in people; it's in the transition process. And if you will, it's somewhat invisible. You're not going to see the money that goes to pay for somebody from Smolensk to study at Indiana University for four years. You're not going to see the money -- at least it's not going to be on the street -- that privatized a firm in Vladivostok. But that is going to produce the kind of change that we think will lead to a reformed future. And we think investing in people is the most important thing. But we can try to make the money visible. We'll try to do it with you next week when we unveil some of these numbers.

Q Where do you say that they have cooperated on Bosnia? And when do you think Russia will join the Partnership For Peace?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I expect that Russia will join the Partnership for Peace very soon. But I think first --

Q Will they discuss it --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, I think first there needs to be the NATO summit and then President Clinton and President Yeltsin need to discuss the concept, and then I would expect that Russia would follow very shortly thereafter.

Q he's indicated that?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: We've had -- obviously we've had discussions with the Russian government. We've received very good indications that they want to join, they want to participate, and they favor the concept. As to Bosnia, my colleague's the expert on Bosnia, not me. I would just say we

haven't always seen eye to eye with the Russians, but we've had a good dialogue, which is in marked contrast to the U.S.-Soviet period in foreign policy.

Q Haven't they really been supporters of the Serbs alone --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No, that's an oversimplification. They have historic ties, obviously, with the Serbs. There's a great deal of sympathy in this country historically for the Serbs, who are an admirable people, which is not the same thing as support for the present government of Serbia.

If you notice, every time there has been a western proposal for a Security Council resolution, the Russian government has supported it. These are very, very hard issues in which the right is almost never entirely one side. On almost all the issues once I make up my mind I'm certain I'm right, but I could give you a good case on both sides of the issues. They're extraordinarily hard issues. We talk about them; we agonize about them internally, each of us. We talk about them within this government. We talk about them with our allies, and we talk about them with the Russians. And at the end of the day, we have worked out an agreement among all the permanent members of the Security Council -- the West Europeans, the Russians and the Chinese acquiescence -- but with active Russian participation.

We have, as you know, a special envoy in the talks as do the Russians -- Deputy Foreign Minister Churkin. The relationship has been constructive, which does not mean we've agreed on every detail, but that these are hard issues on which honorable men can disagree. But the relationship has been very constructive.

Q When he finishes at NATO and goes on to Prague and the Partnership For Peace looks a little more definite, will President Clinton ask those countries, which have been very vocal saying they want NATO membership, to withdraw their formal applications? Does he think that they have to take a step back now from that?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I don't think so. I'm not sure there's a way of applying for NATO membership. They've announced that they would like NATO membership. What they want to say about their desire for NATO membership is absolutely up to them. I'm not going to pretend that they're going to stop wanting -- in fact, none of them is asking for NATO membership now, what they want is to be identified as in the fast lane, as the favored candidates, with some assurance that if they do the right things, they will get in regardless of what is happening elsewhere in Europe. I don't think they're going to change that view. What I do think is that as they come to understand what the partnership can do for them, they will be more enthusiastic about that, which does not mean they will stop wanting full membership.

And we haven't been able to do the kind of sales job that I think is easy to do, because NATO is still working out the details. The partnership is not an American creature. And that's one reason Madeleine Albright and General Shalikashvili are going off to Central Europe at the end of this week, because now we're finally in a position to talk about some of the details. And, as I've had conversations with senior officials -- including some very senior officials from some of those countries -- when you can sit down with them one on one and talk about what's in it for them, they don't say, "Okay, you've convinced me. This is better than NATO membership."

They say, "Yeah, I didn't realize there was so much in it here. We can make something of this."

Q When they ask to be part of the partnership, there's this list of things that they have to certify that they will work towards, is that right?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Yeah, it's a little bit more complicated than that. NATO does not pass judgment on anybody who wants to join the partnership. People would have to sign what's called a framework document which will have some political as well as military commitments. The political commitments -- some of them are reaffirming U.N. and CSCE commitments. Others are to work toward civilian control of the military and transparency in military budgets.

Q Do they have to pledge to a timetable on those things?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No. absolutely not.

Q All they have to do is to they believe that those are good things to have.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: But then they would file -- if you want to get into the mechanics -- something we call a commitment document which would be two-part. The first part is what resources they can make available -- military units, medical units, bases, infrastructure, et cetera. The second part is what steps they plan to take over a time -- not overnight -- but progressively to increase civilian control of the military. And they're not starting from ground zero, but to increase civilian control of the military and to increase transparency of military budgets. NATO does not pass judgment on those.

Q Will NATO monitor as time passes whether they are meeting this --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: We'll discuss it as time passes, and they can discuss what they think, frankly, about our -- NATO members now go through something a defense review process, where we all critique each other's defense planning. The partnership will itself be an evolutionary thing, but there will be an opportunity in NATO committees at NATO headquarters that are there and at the planning cell at Mons to review partners' programs and for them to say what they think about what we're contributing to the partnership.

Q But could NATO ever vote to kick someone out of the partnership because they haven't made sufficient progress?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: That is not provided for, no. That is not provided for. We want the partnership to be a means of influence, but there are no prior criteria for joining the partnership except --

Q criteria for kicking someone out who had failed to meet the timetables --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No. Nor is there a criterion for kicking anybody out of NATO.

Q But the invitation comes from NATO, doesn't it?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: The invitation comes

from NATO to all states that participate in the North Atlantic Cooperation Council, which means all former Warsaw Pact states, including all former Soviet republics, and for instance, to the European neutrals who now participate in the NACC ad hoc working group peacekeeping and countries like Sweden, Finland, Austria, Switzerland -- know a lot about peacekeeping. They have a lot to teach the rest of us. And they are -- I don't know that any of them have made a firm decision to join, but there's a lot of interest among the neutral countries. And they like the idea of being able to say how they ensure civilian control to the military. They think this can be a two-way dialogue, and so do we.

Q made public those commitment documents? In other words, is this a way to get the new democracies to commit in public to a series of steps to enhance their democracy?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I don't know if they'll officially be made public any more than NATO documents are officially being made public. But they'll be available to all other participants in the partnership. So there will be very wide distribution. When we talk about, for instance, transparency of military budgets, it's not just so a country's electorate will know how its tax money is being spent on the military, but so a country's neighbors will know and will have an opportunity to critique that just as they can critique our military budgets and planning.

Q In your discussions, have the results of the Russian election made those Eastern Europeans either more enthusiastic about the Partnership For Peace or more anxious to get clear assurances of their pass to full membership?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Both. And it varies, of course, with individuals. Some Central Europeans -- and some of them have been quite vocal about it -- say this proves that the Russians are going to be a threat again. This is a window of opportunity. Seize it now when you can. Take us into full membership. Other very senior Central European leaders have said to us in private, yes, we very much want a security link with NATO. We want NATO membership in the not too-far-distant future. But we see, and the Russian elections have made us see even more vividly, our own stake in not doing it in a way that would destabilize Russia. And so maybe the partnership is the best thing to do for now. But there are different opinions within these societies, just as there are in this one.

Q (inaudible) -- it seems that the French are finding out step by step that a somewhat more decisive position would make sense. Is the President arriving in Brussels with some kind of new Bosnia initiative taking advantage of that moving situation as far as -- (inaudible) -- are concerned, because there had been -- (inaudible) --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Actually, I would quarrel with the second half of that. I have never seen the French as a stumbling block in Bosnia. They have been the largest single contributor to UMPROFOR and the country most -- one of the country's most willing to consider being more assertive in using UMPROFOR's full mandate. No, we are not planning, so far as I know, and I think I would know, any new initiative on Bosnia. That's not what this summit is about.

Q -- (inaudible) --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Very much so.

Absolutely. Yes.

Q Sounded like you are perhaps anticipating in Russia next week quite possibly signing or announce some kind of intent to join the Partnership For Peace.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: That's up to the Russians to decide. I meant to indicate that it's our very strong feeling that they are positive about it, and they will elect to participate very shortly.

Q Are you hoping the would do this next week while the President --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: It's up to the Russians to decide that question, not us. But we think it will happen.

Q What's the latest on a possible Kravchuk visit to Moscow to meet with the President?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I've got nothing for you on it. What

Q Is it under consideration?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I can say is that we are involved in very important and complex negotiations. You all know where we want to end up -- that is, we want a decision by Ukraine and Russia to complete the process of denuclearization. But I really can't comment on anything beyond that.

Q You said in the last couple of weeks the U.S. had been talking about ways to create this cushion for Russian society. Can you share with us what thinking, specific thinking there is for socially-targeted programs for pensioners, for example, and government workers?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, I gave you an illustrative example of an existing program that could be expanded -- the G-7's privatization fund. We do have a number of ideas under consideration. But it wouldn't be really fair to share with you since we haven't adequately shared it with all of my superiors, and we haven't shared it with our allies or the Russians. Once we complete that process, we'll come back to you guys.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

4:26 P.M. EST

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Brussels, Belgium)

BACKGROUND BRIEFING
BY
SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS

January 9, 1994

The Conrad Hotel
Brussels, Belgium

8:40 P.M. (L)

MR. GEARAN: The President arrived, having slept on Air Force One for five hours, to begin his day here. He arrived in Brussels, having spent time, as you know, in Arkansas, and has been then discussing with all of us informally the services that were held for his mother. Many of his friends from around the country, his college roommates, friends and colleagues from around the country came into Hot Springs for the services. And he greatly appreciates certainly the outpouring of sympathy that has been extended to him from across the country and, indeed, across the world.

His return here to Brussels -- as he mentioned, he was here initially as a Governor, and returned several times in the interim. In our stop before we arrived here, the impromptu stop -- he had been here in 1989 for the National Governors Association, leading a delegation of 10 governors -- had stayed in the area of the cafe that he went to and wanted to stop by for an impromptu cup of coffee.

Upon arrival, he met alone at Laeken Castle for nearly 30 minutes with King Albert II. According to Belgian protocol, all meetings with the King are held in strictest confidence and discussions are never divulged in public -- something we may want to continue when we return back to the States.

The bilateral meeting that he had was attended by Secretary Christopher; the Chief of Staff Mack McLarty; and Tony Lake, the National Security Advisor. They discussed the Partnership For Peace, the combined joint task force, the European economic integration in Zaire. The President and the Prime Minister then met separately for 15 minutes or so, although the topics they discussed were generally the same.

The President was able to rest for a couple of hours this afternoon before reviewing his speech that he reviewed with Tony Lake and others. And I think he would believe that after another good night's sleep this evening he is anxious to join the NATO meetings with our other 16 allies tomorrow.

We will now get right into both tomorrow and an overview of today's events with my colleague.

Q Is this on the record?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No, this is, once again, your friendly Senior Administration Official.

Q Why?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Because that's the only name I know to answer to after all these months.

If you -- maybe another -- Helen, for you another ground rule also, which is that if you agree with what I say and think it makes sense, that's what the President believes; and if you don't agree with what I say, it's sleep deficit and you can throw it away.

Let me say something first very -- I'll be very brief -- about the speech. It was laying out not only a preview of the NATO Summit, but the general theme for the trip as a whole. And that is a vision of a new security in Europe. This is a moment of extraordinary strategic challenge and opportunity. And as the President said, he believes we need to move towards a new security in Europe.

As he said, the old security was based on a defense of our bloc against their bloc. The new security seeks the military and economic and democratic integration of all Europe. And the speech laid out in those three areas practical ways to work towards that integration.

Let me pick up a bit of an argument I was having with a friend afterwards. It is much easier to achieve a consensus about the old security than it is about the new security. It's much easier to summon people to the ramparts against a clear central danger, as during the Cold War, than it is to lead them down the avenues of integration, as must be done in the post-Cold War era. But the President will try, and he has laid out a vision for doing so.

It's really wrong, also, it seems to me, to speak only of this as a time of opportunities, because if we fail to pursue that vision of integration, then we will face very real new dangers in Europe over the coming years. A Europe that is redivided and insecure, a Europe that has failed to seize the economic opportunities before it, and a Europe in which the democratic tide to the East has started to ebb rather than flow. So you will hear repeatedly the President call on the Europeans and on Americans and on our friends to the East to pursue this vision of integration.

As in the Partnership For Peace, we will be preparing for dangers while we try to seize opportunities. Or, to paraphrase the President, we must prepare for the worst to try to build for the best.

Let me say something very quickly about the schedule for tomorrow and the issues that will be discussed, and then my colleague will talk about the economic side and the prospects for economic growth and integration.

Tomorrow's events will begin with a meeting between the President and NATO Secretary General Woerner. He will then meet with our military commanders in Europe. And then the formal proceedings of the NATO summit will begin. There will be three

working sessions at NATO headquarters Monday morning, Monday afternoon and again on Tuesday morning. And there will be two more informal discussions that will take place during lunch and again over dinner. And at the end of the summit on Tuesday morning, then the President will hold a press conference at NATO Headquarters.

During the course of the discussions -- and I've talked to many of you about the substance of this at length, and I won't repeat it here -- but the general issues that will be raised all as a part of trying to adapt NATO to the new strategic landscape in post-Cold War Europe will be, first of all, to launch the Partnership For Peace -- and we can talk about that a little bit more later if you wish -- secondly, to take steps within NATO to support the development of a European security and defense identity in a way that reaffirms NATO as the linchpin of current and future European security; third, through the creation of combined joint task forces to create more flexible military structures for potential post-Cold War missions and to create, then finally, a new framework within NATO to help counter the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

My colleague is here -- and again, since you've heard me, many of you so often, on the Partnership now -- who could talk more about that as we get into your questions. But first, my colleague on economic opportunities before us.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Thank you. I think I'm older than you -- I get to be more senior than he does because I'm older. (Laughter.)

The President, of course --

Q Is this on background or on the record?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Oh, this is background. I think the same rules apply. It's just I was referring to my age. (Laughter.)

The President, on Tuesday, of course, meets with the leaders of the European Union. Much of that discussion -- certainly not all, but much of it will be on the economic issues we face, including trade. As you know, we worked together with the European Union to reach a market access agreement in Tokyo, and then, of course the successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round. But we had the implementation process coming, which is critical. It involves everything from market access in goods to market access in services.

Now I have an hour and a half on services. I know Bob Novak wanted me to do that tonight, and so I'm going to do that. You'll have to sit here and listen to every word I have to say about that. (Laughter.)

But that is part of the three -- the triad the President talked about tonight. It's political and it's military and it's economic. And they are mutually interdependent, and it's the way in which the President has talked about since his American University speech on February 26th of last year, how we're going to meet the third great challenge this century, which is in the post-Cold War world. It's not just economic or not just military or not just political, it's all three. And you heard that theme again tonight, which I think is not only visionary but also critically important.

It's not just the -- as my colleague said quite eloquently, not just the opportunities we have, it's all the responsibilities each of us have -- the United States taking the leadership, but also the European Community or Union, and the Japanese coming along with us to take their share of the responsibilities we meet this challenge of the post-Cold War world.

And so trade and economics obviously plays a vital part of this. The follow-up to the Uruguay Round is a critical part of that situation. And so his meetings on Tuesday with President Delors and others will help to push that forward.

Q How close is the U.S. to an agreement with Ukraine on the withdrawal of their nuclear weapons?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: We have made, over the recent weeks, a great deal of progress -- and, indeed, over the last few days. We are not quite there yet. This is a tremendously important issue for obvious reasons. And we want to be very careful that we do not allow ourselves to be driven by any artificial deadline into achieving less than the most complete and best agreement possible. And we will not do so.

So as I said, I think we are almost there. There remains time to get it done, and we will have to see what happens.

Q And is it still a possibility it could be done to allow the initialing of some kind of agreement either in Moscow or in Kiev if the President stops --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: It's possible, but we will have to see how we go over the next day or so.

Q Are you waiting to hear back from them? Are you now in the position of waiting to hear back?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: It's, as you know, a three-way negotiation and messages are passing on all parts of the triangle.

Q Is a London report of a deal of we give \$12 billion and in return we get enriched uranium -- is that the way it's going?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Without my blackboard here, it's very hard to describe it, because there are -- when you look at the finances involved, there are different aspects to it -- some private money being paid for uranium; some government underwriting of the deal; some financial transactions between Russia and Ukraine. It's very complicated. And what I'd rather do is wait and see when and if we get a deal to talk you through it then.

Q How close is NATO to ordering air strikes in Bosnia?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: This is a very serious situation. The NATO warning against the strangulation of Sarajevo remains very real. We have been in touch with the Serbian government and other parties to encourage them to understand the seriousness of the situation. I don't anticipate

that there would be any action within the next few days. But we have reminded the parties of the seriousness of the moment.

Q Is this a warning that you've given them in the past 24 hours?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: It's been an existing warning all along. And we are reminding them that that warning remains alive.

Q Has the U.S. made a judgment whether the Serbs have transgressed, have gone past the limits set forth by NATO in August? Has the U.S. come to a conclusion?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: If you look at the pattern of fighting around Sarajevo and of the artillery action against Sarajevo, it's tended to come in spikes -- increases and then diminishing again and then a lower period and then another spike. We have clearly, in the recent days, seen a number of those spikes. I would note that the situation there now is still not as grave as it was at the time of the warning. But we are watching to see if this is simply another spike or something worse.

Q Isn't that gamesmanship? I mean, how long does it go on? Every time you give a warning, they lower --deescalate for a while.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, the other part of that is to proceed with efforts to encourage a settlement that can put an end to that pattern, and that the European Union is working on with our support. And I think you will see in the communique a strong, serious statement about Bosnia.

Q With all due respect, why should they listen or respect any of these warnings? Why should a new warning from us or NATO have any relevance to the Serbian government, given the track record of the past few months?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, if you look at, again, as I just said, the pattern of behavior in the past, there has been a response when we have reminded them of the seriousness of the situation. I should also note that I believe, based on reports I just got, that the airfield in Sarajevo has now reopened.

Q As I understand it, as you well know, what happens is you issue a warning and then they stop and then the warning abates and they do it again. That's been going on, as your office has been telling us, for sometime. I understand that the French have specifically asked for air strikes, and that the Dutch Foreign Minister suggested air strikes, and that others in the Community -- in NATO -- have suggested air strikes and that the United States has been opposed. Is that true?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I'm not aware of a formal request by another government at the summit.

Q How about an informal one?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Informal also. I'm not aware of a request at the summit tomorrow to take such an action.

Q not have the summit and not in Brussels -- such requests were made?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Not that I'm aware of.

Q Under the U.N. agreement, could fuel rods supplied by the United States be used in Chernobyl? Under the Ukrainian -- any sort of Ukrainian deal?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Let me reserve that until we have any deal, if we do, to talk about.

Q Is this now a matter of President Kravchuk getting an agreement from his Parliament or parliamentary leaders -- is that all that's left that's left to do?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No, I think this is issue among -- discussion among all three still. That would not be accurate.

Q When you say you expect no action over the next couple of days, does that mean you expect no decision by NATO on air strikes? Is that what you mean?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I don't want to rule out a decision, although I'm not aware of one that is about to be made because let's see what happens. A fair question.

Q Back to the Ukraine for just a moment. If you reach an agreement, does it have to go back to Parliament again? In other words, are you back in the same situation where you seem to have reached an agreement and Parliament can spike it again? What would an agreement need?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Again, let me save that for when and if we have an agreement. As you know, there are elections in late March, in fact, for a new Parliament in Ukraine. And we can talk about when it becomes, and if it becomes relevant.

Okay? Good. Thanks very much.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END9:00 P.M. (L)

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Brussels, Belgium)

For Immediate Release

January 11, 1994

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
IN STATEMENT WITH EU LEADERS

News Conference Theatre
EU Headquarters
Brussels, Belgium

12:49 P.M. (L)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. We have just had a very productive meeting, President Delors and Prime Minister Papandreou and I. As I have said many times in the last few days, I came to Brussels in the hope of working with the leaders of Europe to build a broader and more integrated Europe.

At the heart of this new concept of security is the economic vitality of the relationship between the United States and the European Union. The EU remains America's most valued partner in trade and investment. A strong relationship between us is good for America. It can help to generate more jobs, more growth, more opportunities for workers and businesses at home as well as for those here in Europe.

That is one of the reasons that our administration strongly supported the Maastricht Treaty. We believe a strong and more unified Europe makes for a more effective economic and political partner. I think we proved that through our combined efforts to lead the world to a new GATT agreement in December.

One key to achieving that accord came last spring when President Delors agreed to join me in focusing on market access at last year's G-7 summit. I'm committed to deepening our relationship with the EU through regular meetings at all levels to continue to address other concerns as we address the market access concern and as we work together to get a new GATT agreement.

I have argued in my own country that to advance the global economy and to advance the interests of American workers as well, we must compete, not retreat. All advanced economies can only generate more jobs and higher incomes when they have more people beyond their borders to buy their goods and services. Therefore, we must continue our efforts to expand global growth and world markets. The GATT agreement will help in that regard. I am convinced it will create millions of jobs in the global economy between now and the end of the decade. But we also have responsibilities, the United States, the EU and others, to continue our own efforts toward open trade and more global growth.

In today's meeting, we discussed four ways in which we can build on the momentum generated by the GATT agreement. First, we stressed the need to finalize and ratify the agreement.

The agreement itself was an impressive breakthrough, but there are several areas in which we did not reach full agreement. I emphasized today our strong desire to resolve our outstanding differences.

We also agreed that further market access offers from Japan and from other countries are also needed to meet the ambitious goals on which we agreed. The U.S. and the EU cannot alone create the open markets the world needs.

We think it is clearly time for the other great economic power, Japan, to join us in this effort to open markets. Second, we agreed on the importance of putting jobs at the center of our trade and economic agenda. Today, the nations of the European Union are facing high and persistent rates of unemployment and sluggish growth.

In the United States, we have begun to generate more jobs, but our nation still has a long way to go before our unemployment is at an acceptable level and before our workers begin to generate more income when they work harder. The renewal of each of our economies will benefit all of them. We discussed some of the innovative ideas contained in the Delors White Paper. President Delors and Prime Minister Papandreou both made very thoughtful comments about the kinds of things we could do to generate more job growth both in Europe and the United States. And we look forward to pursuing those ideas at the jobs conference in Washington this spring, and again at the G-7 summit this July.

Third, we agreed to explore the next generation of trade issues. I suggested that the successor agenda to the Uruguay Round should include issues such as the impact of environmental policies on trade, antitrust and other competition policies and labor standards -- something that I think we must, frankly, address.

While we continue to tear down anticompetitive practices and other barriers to trade, we simply have to assure that our economic policies also protect the environment and the well-being of workers. And as we bring others into the orbit of global trade people who can benefit from the investment and trading opportunities we offer, we must ensure that their policies benefit the interest of their workers and our common interest in enhancing environmental protection throughout the globe. That is exactly what we tried to do with the North American Free Trade Agreement. And in the coming months I look forward to continuing discussions on these issues with our EU partners.

Finally, we discussed the imperative of helping to integrate the new market democracies of Europe's Eastern half into the transatlantic community. Yesterday, NATO took an historic step in this direction with the Partnership For Peace. We must match that effort by helping to ensure that our markets are open to the products of Eastern Europe. Ultimately, the further integration of Europe can be a future source of jobs and prosperity for both the United States and Western Europe as these nations become increasingly productive and, therefore, increasingly able to serve as consumers in the global economy.

We have already begun to open our markets to these new democracies. And I have urged that both the United States and the EU explore additional ways in which we can further open

our markets to the nations to our east. Our trade are a source of strength, the source of jobs, a source of prosperity.

I look forward to continuing these discussions in the future. We had a lot of very good specific discussions this morning on the jobs issue in particular. And we intend to continue to work together and to make progress together.

Thank you very much.

PRESIDENT PAPANDREOU: President Clinton, in this very brief presentation, has covered the issues that we discussed today. He has done so in a very complete way so I will make two or three comments and not more. To begin with, we have the revitalization of transatlantic relations, relations between Europe, the European Union and the United States of America.

It is very important for President Clinton that European integration, the great objective of a united Europe, is very important. Now, the other important issue is an opening towards Eastern Europe. The wall separating the East from the West have been dismantled. We do not want any further divisions in Europe. But we should not ignore the dangers that may confront us on this road.

Russia is involved in a very difficult economic, political and social reform. And we would like to contribute in any way we can so that this road will lead to a modern economy, to a peace policy and to a just society. We hope that that will be the final outcome of this process.

Now, the third point which is directly linked to what we have mentioned so far is a Partnership For Peace. We have to work together for peace. This is a great concept. We should consider ways of working together in the area of defense in connection with problems arising due to crises, due to nationalist fanaticism, due to conflicts in Europe or at the periphery. Crisis management is a very important objective. Military cooperation without Eastern European countries being members of NATO, but cooperation between them and NATO is not a threat for Russia, but rather an invitation to Russia to contribute constructively.

I will not embark on the problem of the European economy. Mr. Delors will speak about this problem. But the truth is that there are three regions in which we have both unemployment and recession -- Europe, Japan and the United States. Now, the United States has started an upswing.

We are faced with a very serious problem in connection with employment, and we will have to live with this problem for many years unless we manage to find a radical solution. It is not the right time to go into the details of these solutions. Now, this is what I wanted to say at the present juncture.

So, President Delors.

PRESIDENT DELORS: Questions immediately, because this is more interesting that what I could add to what Prime Minister Papandreu has spoken on behalf of the Community.

Q Back to NATO, Mr. President. What makes you think that the Serbs will take the threat seriously now since

NATO has been the boy crying wolf in the past? And what really has stiffened everybody's spine now after two years of shelling, bombing, slaughter?

PRESIDENT CLINTON: Well, keep in mind now the resolution was directed toward a specific set of circumstances. They reaffirmed -- NATO reaffirmed the August position that if Sarajevo was subject to strangulation defined as large-scale shelling, that air power from NATO could be used as a response to that. And then, today there were added two conditions that we asked our military leadership to come up with plans to ensure that the troop replacement in Srebrenica could proceed and to see whether the airstrip at Tuzla could be opened.

I can only tell you what happened in the meetings. The Secretary General of NATO and I both said that these steps should not be called for unless everyone voting in the affirmative was prepared to see them through. And there was an explicit discussion of that. So I think that the continued deterioration of conditions, the frustration of all us that no peace agreement has been made and that explicit debate should give this vote the credibility that I believe it deserves.

Q Listening to what you said about growth and jobs and also defense of the environment and social rights, I'm very struck by how similar your language is to the proposals which President Delors recently put to the European heads of government. Would you acknowledge that your thinking on these issues is very largely convergent? And what would you say to some people who responded in this Union by saying now is no time to be unduly concerned about workers' rights or the environment, that this can no priority when we are tackling mass unemployment priority when we are tackling mass unemployment? It's a debate we've had here in the Union. I wonder how you would advise people in that respect here.

THE PRESIDENT: First of all, I think it is fair to say that President Delors and I share a lot of common ideas. Prime Minister Papandreou and I have shared some ideas. I've read some of his thoughts and interviews. I think any person who seriously studies this issue, who studies income trends in the United States, who studies job trends in Europe, who studies now what is happening in Japan, will reach the conclusion that every wealthy country in the world is having great difficulty creating jobs and raising incomes, and that there are some common elements to this malady which have to be addressed.

Now, let me say in response to the two issues you've raised, first of all, with regard to the environment, I believe that dealing with the environment creates jobs, doesn't cost jobs if you do it in the right way. And I think we now have about 20 years of evidence that supports that -- that if you have the right sort of sensible environmental policy and if you finance it in the right way, you will create jobs, not cost jobs. Much of the environmental cleanup that is sensible requires the development of technologies and the generation of high-wage jobs which will be virtually exclusively the province of the same countries that are having trouble creating jobs.

With regard to workers' rights, I would respond in two ways. First of all, if in order to create jobs we have to give up all the supports that we have worked hard for over decades for working families, then we may wind up paying the same political price and social price. That is, we do not want to see

the collapse of the middle class in Europe or in the United States. What we want to do is to rebuild and strengthen the middle class.

If you look at the vote in Russia, if you look at the recent vote in Poland, you see what happens in democracies when middle class people feel that the future will be worse than the present. So if you're going to ask for changes in the system of support, those changes have to be done in a way that increase the sense of security that middle class working class families in all these countries.

Secondly, the issue of worker rights and the issue of the environment should be seen from our prospective as a global one. That is, if you look at what Ambassador Kantor negotiated with Mexico in the NAFTA treaty, the first trade agreement ever to explicitly deal with environmental and labor issues, we did it because we said, okay, if we're going to open our borders and trade more and invest more with developing nations, we want to know that their working people will receive some of the benefits and a fair share of the benefits of this trade and investment. Otherwise, they won't have increasing incomes and they won't be able to buy our products and services.

So I see this whole worker rights issue as more a function of the global economy and one that will help us to build up ordinary citizens everywhere, which I think should be our ultimate objective.

Q Mr. President, back on Bosnia. You mentioned that this threat of military action is not a new threat. How long can NATO keep on making these threats without carrying them out, without delivering? At what point does it become, as you warned about yesterday, an empty threat?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, first of all, we have two different issues here. The French and the British proposed the motion to ask our military planners to come up with a strategy to ensure the rotation of troops in Srebrenica and to see whether with the use of air power or some other device we might secure the opening of the airstrip at Tuzla to continue the U.N. mission, the humanitarian mission. So we'll await the plan and see what happens.

On the question of the use of air strikes in retaliation for the strangulation of Sarajevo, that is largely going to be a function of the behavior of the people who have been shelling Sarajevo, the Bosnian Serbs. So we'll just have to -- part of it depends upon -- when you say how long -- it depends on what is their behavior? Is the shelling going to abate now, as it did after August when we adopted the resolution? And then it basically escalated dramatically only relatively recently. Or will they continue to do it? And then we'll see if our resolve is there. My resolve is there. That's all I can tell you. And I believe the people in that room knew what they were doing when they voted for this resolution.

It depends in part -- when you say how long, it depends in part on what will be the conduct from this day forward of those who have been responsible for shelling Sarajevo.

Q I had a question on Partnership For Peace. And I'd be grateful if, Mr. President, you could answer, and perhaps President Delors, too.

With hindsight, I wonder whether you don't think you missed a trick by making entry into NATO for the former communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe work on the same track as entry into the European Union. Would this not have been a more credible approach for Partnership For Peace?

THE PRESIDENT: I'll be glad to answer that question, but I think perhaps I should defer to President Delors since he has a much better sense of how the membership track for the European Union works and let him answer the question that you specifically posed, and then I'll also respond. And perhaps Prime Minister Papandreou will respond.

PRESIDENT DELORS: Back in 1989 already, with the event that took place then, the Summit of Industrialized Nations dealt at length with this question: How, after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of communism, could we make it possible for the countries in question to get back onto the track of pluralist democracy and open economy? And then, it seemed to us that immediate entry by the countries in question into the European Union would be more damaging for them than would be a period of preparation and adaptation.

We were afraid then that there would be a clash between the strong and the weak, however much aid we could give them. So a period of transition was necessary. It was in the context of the mission that was entrusted to the European Community and to the Commission that we endeavored to help them in order to make it possible for them to progress in parallel along the two tracks that I have indicated today. After four years of experience and speaking in my personal name, I am ready to take stock of this aid to which the Community has contributed a lot.

May I recall that in 1989, the European Union only represented 25 percent of the external trade of the countries of Eastern Europe. Now we represent 60 percent. And so we have replaced COMICON, and that was absolutely necessary. We have doubled our imports over three years from these countries. We represent 60 percent of total aid, including the aid from the international financial organizations.

But we cannot replace them. These countries are responsible countries. They have to learn the workings of an open economy and democracy. Of course, there are claims in our countries. There are also people that are recommending other solutions, but I still think that immediate entry to the European Union would have been very damaging to them, irrespective of what our leaders would have had to explain to our citizens who are taxpayers.

For today, we have to take stock of what's happened, but not do this having in mind the idea that we could substitute for them. They are responsible for the fates. Some of them have chosen the "big bang" approach in order to reform their economies. I deplore this, and I feel that this was one of the reasons for the return of the former communists and others. Others have taken a more gradualist approach.

But each country was different. Czechoslovakia was traditionally an industrial country. Hungary, even out of communism, had begun experiments in decentralization way back in 1970. So we cannot act in their stead. Today, they have to face

a growing problem of security. The Partnership For Peace is there to deal with this, but there is also a need for economic security.

But I'm a pragmatist. I'm open to any solution. But when I hear some leaders within Europe saying that we should have acted otherwise, I remain convinced that we did opt for the right solution. Now, have we always supplied it with the desirable efficacy? That's another question. It remains open. But again, with the commissioners responsible, we shall take stock of all of this.

But we have to be careful. All of the miracle solutions that have been proposed would not have resolved the problems, and anyway, we can see this with German unification. It is not this that in any way has diminished the frustration of the populations concerned, or filled the psychological gap, or even made it possible to get onto the ideal road towards modernization. There are all sorts of problems. Besides, I'm very respectful of what is happening in Germany. But it is an experience contrary to the other one. You can see what problems remain to be resolved.

PRIME MINISTER PAPANDREOU: Just a few words, because I think President Delors has stated very clearly our stand. There is a very delicate relationship between deepening of the European Union and enlargement of the Union. They must go together in a careful relationship. Otherwise, the Union itself may not be able to achieve its fundamental goals. So some delays are necessary, both from the point of view of the countries petitioning the entry and also from the Union itself. But I think I've said enough, in view of what President Delors has already said in such detail.

THE PRESIDENT: I'd like to go back to your original question. What you asked, I think, was since there will be -- since there is sort of a phased-in possibility for additional membership to the European Union and a phased-in possibility for membership in NATO, should the criteria and timetables have been reconciled. I think that's the question you're asking.

I can't give you a yes or no, except to say that I think it would have been difficult to do that for a couple of reasons. First of all, NATO and the European Union are fundamentally different organizations. Membership in NATO means that each member has a solemn obligation to defend the security of each other -- any other member from attack. And membership in NATO includes a guarantee, therefore, coming from the United States and from Canada, something that is not the same with the European Union.

On the other hand, membership in the European Union now involves a commitment to a level of economic and political integration that some who may want to be a part of NATO may or may not want to commit to. So I think as a practical matter, it would have been very difficult to reconcile these two timetables since the organizations are different. Some may be more interested in being in the European Union. I can conceive of some countries who want to be in the Union who may not want to be in NATO. Some may wish to be in NATO before they're able to meet the responsibilities of the European Union.

PRESIDENT DELORS: I would just like to add one sentence. In my humble opinion, the generation that I belong to

and which holds responsibility at present has two obligations, and to reconcile these is not easy. On the one hand, we want to create a political union with the European countries that desire this, because we think that none of our countries is capable of coping with these problems and with world responsibilities.

And secondly, given the events that have occurred in the East, we have another obligation which is equally important; that is to extend our values of peace, cooperation and mutual understanding to the wider Europe. Believe me, to combine the two is no easy task.

And, again, I criticize those who put forth simplistic solutions in this area. Life is difficult. No one can prevent such events being conflictual. A little modesty on the part of those proposing miracle solutions will be necessary.

Q Mr. President, Germany recently requested that the famous Article 5 of the NATO Pact should apply for the security for the Czech Republic, not a NATO member, in order to face a threat not been defined yet. Since Greece is a NATO member, according to the report, many of them are facing a real threat in her northern border from an expected movement of Albanian refugees from Kosovo via Skopje. If the same article could apply on that case, keep also into account that European Union and Western European Union are not guaranteeing the Greek borders. And I'm taking this opportunity, Mr. President, to ask directly if America will be in the position to guarantee the security of Greece from such a threat on a bilateral basis?

PRESIDENT CLINTON: Frankly, that's a conversation I think I ought to have with Prime Minister Papandreou before I have it in public in some ways. But let me respond in two ways. First of all, the United States has taken two strong steps to try to make sure that the dire situation you described does not occur. We have sent 300 troops to be located in Macedonia -- or Skopje, as the Prime Minister describes it, as a part of a NATO effort or a U.N. effort to contain the conflict in Bosnia.

In addition to that, shortly before I became President but after I was elected President, the previous administration with my strong support sent a very strong and firm warning about involving Kosovo in the conflagration in Bosnia. And we made it very clear that we would have very strong views about that and a strong reaction to it.

So I think the real issue is, are we trying to protect the interests of Greece and other nations from being embroiled in the conflict now in the Balkans. And the answer is yes, and I think we've taken two strong steps to do that. I believe we will be successful in doing that.

THE PRESS: Thank you very much.

END1:19 P.M. (L)

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

January 7, 1994

PRESS BRIEFING

BY

SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY LLOYD BENTSEN,

SECRETARY OF STATE WARREN CHRISTOPHER,

AND

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE LES ASPIN

The Briefing Room

11:55 A.M. EST

SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER: Good morning. As almost everybody in America knows by now, the President will be leaving Saturday night for Brussels directly from Arkansas. This will be the first stop in his first official visit to Europe as President, and it will be the first of three visits he's making to Europe over the next six or seven months.

This series of trips to Europe underscores the fundamental importance that the United States attaches to its relationships with Europe. And what I'm going to do is to try to give you a quick walk-through toward the trip that he is taking to Europe.

In his speech in Brussels in Sunday and his speeches at the NATO and European Union on Monday and Tuesday, the President will articulate his vision for transatlantic security and prosperity. He will reaffirm the commitment of the United States to the Transatlantic Alliance indicating that we're determined to remain engaged in Europe, keeping our unbreakable bonds in good order and in good form.

Last year, I repeatedly emphasized that successfully concluding the GATT negotiations was as important to transatlantic security as renewing NATO. And as you all know, last month the United States and Europe completed the largest trade agreement in history. Next week we'll come together to take steps to renew this important alliance, the most important successful alliance in history.

NATO now faces a very momentous choice: Will it embrace innovation, or will it risk irrelevance, which will -- if that happens, I think would be very adverse to security and have dangerous consequences for all of Europe. That's why President Clinton is bringing to Brussels a proposal to help the Alliance adapt to this new post-Cold War era, and especially to adapt to the dramatic changes that are taking place all through Eastern Europe.

The agenda that he'll be bringing to Brussels has several key elements on which we hope to secure agreement from the allies during the course of the week.

First, we'll be seeking to create a combined joint task

forces, so-called CJTF, a concept which will allow flexible military structures for potential new missions outside of NATO territory as well as within NATO territory.

A second closely related initiative will be to take steps in the development of the European Security and Defense Initiative, the so-called ESDI that will reflect both NATO's flexibility and Europe's integration.

A third summit initiative will be to strengthen NATO's role in combatting proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Secretary Aspin, as would be appropriate, will be discussing these three defense-related initiatives after I conclude here.

The final and most important element, indeed the centerpiece of the NATO summit, is the plan to turn former adversaries into partners. This is the purpose of President Clinton's Partnership For Peace proposal. It will deepen NATO's engagement in the East and draw the new democracies toward the West. Through this Partnership For Peace, the forces of non-NATO states will be developing practical working relationships with NATO as they plan, train and exercise their armed forces together. The partnership will help adapt NATO's capabilities in several areas, areas such as crisis management, humanitarian relief, possibly peacekeeping. At the same time, I want to emphasize that this new Partnership For Peace will in no way erode NATO's core capabilities or undermine, in any respect, its responsibilities for the collective security of the NATO countries.

I want to emphasize that the Partnership for Peace, important in itself, should also be seen as a logical corollary to a summit declaration, which we hope will be adopted that NATO looks for and anticipates, hopes to add new members to the alliance in an evolutionary process of expansion. The Partnership for Peace is open to all nations in Eastern Europe on a nondiscriminatory basis. Nations choosing to be active in the Partnership will develop habits of cooperation and routines of consultation which are so important to the Alliance as we've known it over the last years. The partnership is a flexible tool that will allow the nations to demonstrate their credentials for potential future membership.

The United States believes that the objective of promoting security and stability in Europe could be undermined if NATO were to be expanded too rapidly. We want to avoid premature selections or hasty prejudgments. Such as course as that would risk dividing Europe by creating new blocs and unintentionally replicating a bit further to the East a line of demarkation that NATO has fought for such a long time to erase. Before the United States would extend its security perimeter to the East, the Congress -- and, indeed, the public -- must debate the impact on our military strategy and on our budget resources. That will take time. But next week's summit will launch what we expect to be a very important process for NATO's expansion to the East.

To move on now to a different subject -- the nations of Eastern Europe making the difficult transition to free market democracy must be able to deliver tangible benefits to their people. And President Clinton will be making the point that Western nations and institutions must help them do that by widening their access to Western markets. The President will be delivering that message when he speaks to the European Union on Tuesday afternoon.

On Wednesday, in Prague, when he meets with the leaders of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia, he'll be

discussing ways in which the Partnership for Peace will offer these countries practical forms of military cooperation so as to deepen their ties. I was very glad to read, as I was coming over in the car, that the defense ministers of the four Visegrad countries have endorsed the Partnership For Peace; I hope putting to rest some questions that have existed about the attitude of those four countries.

The President will also take this opportunity to express our country's deep admiration for the courageous action that these countries are taking, the Visegrad countries, who would be meeting with in Prague; admiration for their courageous steps toward free market reform.

The President's visit to Moscow comes at a crucial moment as Russia's newly and freely elected Parliament is meeting for the first time. The President will reaffirm that the United States is on a steady course of supporting democratic and market reform through bilateral assistance, private trade and investment. The President will also discuss how the international community can help support the Russian government's efforts to provide basic social protections during the painful transition. Secretary Bentsen, I know, will be addressing that question in his remarks in just a few minutes.

In Moscow, of course, the President will also be discussing with President Yeltsin the recently concluded NATO summit. We anticipate, indeed, we will welcome the anticipation of Russia's participation in the Partnership for Peace. One of the many benefits of Russian reform -- one that I have felt personally so many times -- is the ability that we have now to cooperate with Russia on global and regional foreign policy issues. Accordingly, the presidents -- President Yeltsin and President Clinton -- will be discussing a wide range of foreign policy issues: the Middle East, relations with the newly independent states, nonproliferation and other foreign policy issues.

From Moscow, the President will travel to Minsk as part of our effort to encourage reform and nonproliferation in the new independent states. As you all know, Belarus has made the courageous choice to ratify the START Treaty and also to adhere to the nonproliferation treaty as a non-nuclear state. The President will be discussing with the officials of Belarus, and other new independent states who may be represented there, ways in which we can cooperate with them as they go through this difficult transition.

Finally, the President's trip will conclude with a meeting in Geneva with President Asad of Syria. As you know, on the Middle East, we have structured a sequence of steps this month, beginning with the recently concluded consultations with officials from Lebanon and Syria, their heads of delegations; steps that we hope will energize the peace process. Following the Geneva meeting between President Asad and President Clinton, we have invited the heads of delegations from all the other tracks to meet here in Washington for streamlined, less structured peace process talks. The Geneva meeting between the two presidents are a very important part of this process. We remain committed to helping the parties achieve a comprehensive peace, and it is certain that Syria is essential to achieving a comprehensive peace in this region.

I thank you very much, and now let me turn the podium over to Secretary Bentsen.

SECRETARY BENTSEN: Thank you very much, Chris.

Well, I will be attending the Moscow summit with the President. I think it's interesting to note that in April on the U.S.-Moscow summit meeting that that was the first time a Secretary of Treasury has attended such. This will be the second time. What that really brings to mind is that the balance sheet has become just as important as the balance of power. So we're going to go to Moscow to re-emphasize a steadfast report for the reformers and what they're doing in that regard.

These reformers have made some real progress. For instance, prices for most goods have been freed. If you look at the operations of the Russian economy, price is now a very major factor in what's produced and that which is consumed. Also, privatization is coming along quite rapidly with one-third of the industrial labor force now in privatized firms. More than half the small businesses have been converted to private ownership. And beyond that, we see some now real progress in stabilizing the economy. We're looking at an inflation rate that in December was down to 12 percent. But Russia needs more reform, not less. There's a lot of work yet to be done. We've seen interest rates moving more toward real interest rates. We've seen some additional stabilization taking place.

Our trip to Moscow will give us the opportunity to talk to President Yeltsin about the course of economic reform in 1994. We hope this is a year in which economic reform can be solidified with further progress. But reform can only move forward if attention is paid to its social consequences at the same time, because the Russian people have faced some genuine hardship as they seek to shed the legacy of 70 years of communism.

We'll also want to talk to President Yeltsin about how Russia and the international financial institutions can energize that relationship -- make it more effective, raise more money for the purposes that have to be done. That will allow them together to advance reform and, very importantly, cushion the social impact of this transformation. We're not indifferent to the hardships that building a market economy out of the wreckage of a command economy has created for some of that population.

In addition, we will discuss with President Yeltsin and others how we can strengthen the trade and the investment relationships. We want to cover what we can to renegotiate and reinvigorate Russia's oil and gas industry; as well as discuss recent changes in the banking system in Russia.

Lastly, I won't be on the European leg with the President before the summit, but he'll be dealing with a variety of economic issues that are important to us. So, let me give you some of the specifics. First, he'll be talking with the EC about making the point that there is life after the Uruguay Round of GATT, there are more negotiations to be done as we work to further open up these markets. He wants to make it clear that this is the beginning, not an end, in our efforts to open those markets. And, second, he'll be discussing efforts to create jobs and bring down unemployment amongst the G-7 countries. If you recall, one of his initiatives is the jobs summit in March. And, thirdly, the President will stress that we need to achieve stronger growth in industrialized countries. And, finally, he'll emphasize the importance of opening our markets in the United States, Western Europe and Japan to the products of Eastern Europe and Russia.

SECRETARY ASPIN: Thank you, Lloyd and Chris. Let me just -- Chris has covered a good part of the things that I was going

to say, but let me add a couple of things to the points he was making. I'd like to speak a little bit about the three major initiatives that will be going on at NATO in the security area. All three will strengthen and prepare NATO for post-Cold War missions, and post-Soviet Union missions.

First, a little more about the Partnership for Peace, although Chris covered that very, very adequately in his remarks. As we envision it, the partnership would really provide a framework for detailed operational military cooperation in the European security efforts. These efforts will have NATO as its core. In time, the partner nations will join with the NATO forces in such activities as peacekeeping, disaster relief, search and rescue operations and perhaps others.

What we hope is that we will actually see some field exercises before the end of the year, before the end of 1994, that there will be some operations going on with NATO and some of the partners. If we can do that, it will demonstrate to Eastern Europe that NATO is serious about military cooperation, and that the Partnership For Peace program is real. There are some advantages. Let me just list some of the big advantages of the Partnership For Peace program.

First, it begins a process of meaningful military cooperation with countries in Eastern Europe without drawing a new security line. That's very, very important. We have a relationship -- it will be a differentiated relationship, but there will not be a new line drawn in Europe. Instead of drawing a new line that divides nations, the Partnership for Peace will establish new lines of communication that will connect nations.

Second, it sets up the right incentives. In the new post-Cold War world, NATO can be an alliance based on shared values of a free market and democracy. The program, this program, Partnership For Peace, rewards those who move in that direction, therefore it creates the right incentives.

Third, it provides for equality of opportunity for all eligible countries. There will be differentiations, but it will differentiations based upon what activities these countries are willing to undertake in cooperation with NATO.

Fourth -- and this is very important, I think, to a lot of constituents of members of Congress in this country -- it doesn't just ask what NATO can do for its new partners, it asks what the new partners can do for NATO. A terribly important point that we shouldn't overlook. And, finally, it puts the question of NATO membership where it belongs -- at the end of this process rather than at the beginning.

The second major initiative I'd like to say just a word about, and that's what we've called the Combined Joint Task Force. The European allies have had a long desire, longstanding desire, for a capacity for military action for missions as peacekeeping, humanitarian relief and other things that would be -- could be undertaken without American participation. They had the desire to have a European pillar to the NATO Alliance. In fact, we don't object to that. The Clinton administration, in something new, in fact, welcomes that. But we wanted to actually to complement NATO, this new operation, would be to complement, not to compete with it. We've long said that a European defense identity should be separable but not separate from NATO. And the Combined Joint Task Force accomplishes just that objective.

Under the plan, NATO-trained and integrated military forces and assets can be pulled out of the command and actually assigned and deployed in European-only contingencies. And these are cases where full NATO membership chooses not to participate. A task force could actually even include people who are not members of NATO, countries that have signed up for the Partnership For Peace program, for example, could become part of the joint task forces. The Combined Joint Task Force gives the European members of NATO a capability for independent action. It will support the development of a European security and defense identity; and importantly, however, no decision to activate a task force can take place without the full consultation with NATO.

So, finally, the point on counterproliferation, three issues -- Partnership For Peace, the Combined Joint Task Forces, and finally counterproliferation. We are engaging with our allies to deal with the threat posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Three propositions will be emphasized this summit coming up. Proposition number 1: Proposition number 1 is that NATO members recognize that the proliferation threat, that threat of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction affects all of us. Second proposition: That the Alliance needs to address both the political and the military aspects of that proliferation problem. Third proposition: That we need to begin to work immediately on a comprehensive approach to this issue. That's just a very opening thin line; there's a lot more to that. But in short, we need to add counterproliferation to the arsenal of nonproliferation. Counterproliferation means that -- a certain understanding that there is a military dimension to this thing, not just a diplomatic problem. Our engagement with our allies will ensure that counterproliferation efforts are an important part of NATO's overall adaptation to the new strategic environment. NATO is, after all, a defensive alliance. And what is it that we're worried about -- clearly, one of the things is proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. This summit initiative will put that higher on the agenda.

Let me just finish, when we're all finished here. Actually, these three initiatives -- the Partnership For Peace and the Combined Joint Task Forces and the counterproliferation -- will keep NATO at the center of European security concerns and, therefore, keep American involvement in the center of Europe.

Let me turn it over to the Chris and he can follow --

Q Secretary Christopher, can I ask you about Bosnia, which somehow doesn't get mentioned very often, even in lengthy briefings. There are reports that the U.N. commanders have asked for air strikes. There are reports that the U.N. Secretary General is vetoing air strikes. Could you get into this a little bit and give us the current U.S. position, and also the French request that the U.S. play some role, maybe in ground peacekeeping, maybe in supplies, which because they are, to an extent.

SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER: There are a number of questions there. With respect to discussions between the U.N. commanders and the U.N. Secretary General, you'll have to ask them about that. There's been no request made to us for the air support. The resolution adopted by NATO in Athens remains a valid resolution with respect to the air support and the NAC would have to act on any such request. With respect to the French, I've been in touch a couple of times in the last 24 hours with Foreign Minister Juppe. We're

working together in close coordination. The subject of Bosnia will be under discussion, I'm sure, by the heads of government at the summit. And I would expect that we'll come forward with a coordinated position as we have in the past on that subject.

Q But haven't the Serbs crossed that line that the NATO Council set in August, haven't they violated the conditions? Haven't they continued the strangulation? I mean, they're bombarding Sarajevo to death. Haven't they taken action that calls for triggering NATO's warning in August that if you go that far you're going to get hit?

SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER: Well, that subject is under constant review by both the United States and NATO. We examine the facts, and if that point is reached, a decision will have to be taken by the North Atlantic Council on that subject.

Q You've told us about all of the things that the President is going to do when he talks to NATO, but isn't he going to assert some leadership over Bosnia? You haven't given us any sense of what he's prepared to say there.

SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER: Well, as I say, Bosnia will come up. There will be discussion of it. I've been in touch with my counterparts. But I want to emphasize that the summit was called for by the President in Athens to discuss the future of NATO, to discuss how NATO would reach out to the East, to the newly emerging democracies. That is the role of the Partnership For Peace. That's the centerpiece of the NATO discussion. We'll also be discussing the Combined Joint Task Forces. We're talking about NATO's future now. There's no doubt that one of the things we want to do is to help NATO have a greater capacity to deal with questions like Bosnia in the future. And as I said, I'm sure Bosnia will be discussed by the heads of government.

Q Secretary Bentsen, can we talk a bit about what you said about reform? You said that Russian reform has to continue, that we need more reform not less. Immediately after the election, the Vice President in Moscow said that there had been too much shock therapy. There seems to have been a change of policy in the intervening weeks. Can you explain that, and what do you mean when you say that the IMF and the World Bank are going to have to do something to cushion the impact? What can they do to cushion it? How much money?

SECRETARY BENTSEN: Well, I think the two statements are compatible. What we're talking about is a continued conditionality. I think you have to have that. When you talk to Gaidar and you talk to Fedorov and the rest of them that have been doing some of the lead in the reform, they talk about this being assistance to them. This is a part of the leverage in helping bring about the kind of reforms that are taking place there in the way of privatization and the way of curbing some of the inflation.

Now, we also must not overlook the fact that there's is considerable pain that has taken place on the part of the population by this kind of a transformation and what we would hope to see, where the IMF has been supportive and helpful, that we see an even closer cooperation between the Russian government and the IMF and the World Bank to further energize what's being done in that regard and to give further significance to the part which has been pained the transformation.

Q But, clearly, your emphasis today is that more

reform is needed. And that is very different from what the Vice President was saying in the immediate aftermath of the election results.

SECRETARY BENTSEN: Well, I think what you've seen in the aftermath of the election is a reflection of that pain on the part of some of the population in the way they voted. But by the same token, I think once again that the sooner we get the reform done and over with, the sooner that you'll see stability and that you'll see less pain and the transformation to a market economy, the sooner you'll see stabilization. I think those two things go together.

Q Can I follow on the same subject, on Russia? Secretary Bentsen, following on the question, do you expect to see an easing of conditionality by the IMF? I mean, have they been too stiff? I mean, you want conditionality to help the reform progress, but does there need to be some leniency in getting the second tranche loan out from the IMF?

SECRETARY BENTSEN: Let me just say on the first tranche, and what you saw there was some easing of the conditionality as compared to what the IMF would normally insist on. And that was something that we worked out with the IMF. So I think you see a continuation of that taking place.

Q And then, would you expect to -- again, part of the pain of the social -- the social aspect of the pain of reform, would you expect to announce an increase in the privatization fund during this summit? And will you talk about the prospects for rescheduling Russia's debt for 1994?

SECRETARY BENTSEN: Well, I think what you have to see on that is working with the other G-7 countries, in particular, who have been quite forthcoming in their assistance to have a further understanding of the difficulty of making the transformation and trying to urge on the part of the IFIs -- the international financial institutions -- a even greater participation than they've had in the past. But to try to give definitive numbers -- I'm in no position to do that.

Q On Syria, sir, what quid pro quo are you going to offer Asad? Do you anticipate taking them off the terrorism list if they recognize Israel's borders? And do you still expect to see U.S. troops enforcing an Israeli pullout from the Golan?

SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER: Well, let me emphasize what our role is in those talks. We're the sponsors of the Middle East peace talks -- co-sponsors, that is, along with Russia. The governments of Israel and Syria have asked the United States to play the role of intermediary. At the present time, they apparently don't want to engage in direct discussions. So they've asked the United States to be an honest broker, and we're assisting in that role. It's not our function to provide quid pro quos between them or to get into the negotiations except to try to play, as faithfully as we can, the role of full partner. And in that setting, I think it's very important, very desirable that President Clinton meet with President Asad of Syria. He's met with all the other leaders of the other three entities that are involved in these very important negotiations. And I think that's the essence of these discussions, rather than involving quid pro quos or our making offers or our providing various resources to the parties. We're not at that point yet in the discussions.

Q Mr. Secretary, back to the to the French

proposition. How much higher is Bosnia going to be on the Brussels agenda? And, secondly, do you expect now, because of the acceleration of the fighting, a more concerted effort than expected on Bosnia after the Brussels summit?

SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER: Well, I think that it was always certain that Bosnia would be discussed by the heads of government when they meet, and it certainly will be discussed at the present time. As I say, over the last several days, I've been in touch with my foreign minister counterparts on this issue and I think you'll see this issue treated with the seriousness and gravity that is warranted by the conditions on the ground.

Q Secretary Christopher, Strobe Talbott has talked about the need to broaden American contacts with reformers and Democrats -- that we should broaden -- we should seek them out and meet them wherever we can find them. To what extent does Mr. Clinton plan to broaden these contacts beyond Mr. Yeltsin? And can you share with us whom he may be meeting with? Will he be meeting with people in the new Parliament? Perhaps even elements of Mr. Zhirinovsky's --

SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER: I think the President will be meeting with other elements at Russia at the present time. The existence of a newly elected Parliament identifies various groups and leaders who are coming into the fore, and I think the President will have an event with them somewhat comparable to the important event he had in Tokyo -- meeting with the various elements of the new constituencies arising in Japan. I don't know all the details, nor do I have for you the guest list. But I think the President plans to have an event at which he'll have an opportunity to meet with those individuals who may play a leadership role.

The one exception from that is the President does not intend to meet with Mr. Zhirinovsky because of the kind of statements, and his conduct simply does not seem to warrant the President meeting with him when he is in Russia.

Q A follow-up, Mr. Secretary. Can you just respond to Mr. Zhirinovsky yesterday saying that the President was too weak a leader, afraid to meet with him?

SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER: No, I don't think I would dignify that with any kind of a response. President Clinton's leadership, I think, will be evident all through this trip and they're not going to get into a match with somebody whose verbal conduct is of the character of Mr. Zhirinovsky.

Q You were talking about the possibility of field exercises as early as by the end of the year with East European countries or others.

SECRETARY ASPIN: Yes ma'am.

Q How do you propose -- or what kind of proposals are on the table for funding bringing their militaries to the point where they can communicate with NATO militaries, where they can actually engage in military exercises?

SECRETARY ASPIN: Well, what we have -- are you talking about our forces or their forces?

Q Their forces. I mean, presumably their forces are not up to NATO standards.

SECRETARY ASPIN: Correct.

Q What do you do about that?

SECRETARY ASPIN: Well, what we do is we try -- it's through those exercises that we try to work out joint operations so that they can be jointly operated if something happens for real. In other words, if it's a real peacekeeping operation or a real search and rescue operation or a real crisis management situation, what you do is you run practices. And they all have exercise budgets. It would mean just taking the exercise budgets that they would now apply to their own exercises and putting them as part of a combined effort. We do the same thing -- we budget every year for exercises. If they're joint exercises, we do them jointly; if they don't, we just budget them and carry them out on our own.

Q A little bit of follow-up on NATO. I get the impression since October when this was first made public that you are more skeptical about the eventual admission of Eastern Europe and other countries into NATO than the Secretary of State is. And I wonder whether that's true or not, or whether I'm imagining it.

SECRETARY ASPIN: I think you're imagining. Basically, when we went out to discuss the proposition -- I can't remember now the particular date -- but at the time that the President made the decision that we would foster here this notion of Partnership For Peace and that this was the general stand that we would take, I went to a meeting of NATO defense ministers in Brussels, Chris went on a trip that brought him into Eastern Europe. We found ourselves talking to different audiences. Chris was talking to an audience that was very much wanted to have very much more involvement with NATO and the Eastern European countries. I was talking to an audience that was very reluctant about that. If a different tone came out, I think it was essentially due to that.

Chris and I talked this thing over -- and I'll let Chris speak for himself -- but he and I talked this thing over. We had several meetings of the principals. The President considered it -- we are not, were not and will not be on different wavelengths on this issue.

Q Secretary Aspin, may I follow on a question I asked Secretary Christopher about Syria? Do you foresee a time when a significant force of American troops might be in the Golan Heights to ensure a peace between Israel and Syria?

SECRETARY ASPIN: I think that's clearly something that needs to be crossed -- a bridge that needs to be crossed when we get there.

Q Secretary Christopher, were you saying --

SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER: That's why I said there's not a shade of difference between us on admission to NATO. (Laughter.)

Q Beyond the defense ministers, were you saying the four Warsaw Pact countries have now accepted the Partnership for Peace? And what does the involvement of Russia mean if it actually joined?

SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER: Well, on the first question I can only refer to the item I saw on the way over. The four defense ministers of the Visegrad countries, apparently acting together, had

said their countries were all enthusiastic about the Partnership for Peace. They hope for eventual membership in NATO, but nevertheless, they thought this was an important first step. And I assume, like other defense ministers, they would be speaking only on authorization. (Laughter.)

SECRETARY ASPIN: Absolutely.

Q Any difference there?

SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER: No difference. Not a shade of difference.

Q And what would Russia's role would be with -- I mean, why do you need a NATO after that?

SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER: Well, if the Partnership For Peace moves to the point where there's the admission of Russia -- if Russia takes the steps that would qualify it and commend it for membership, it's clear that we would have taken a very important step forward. But then it would be a security arrangement for all of Europe, and that would be a very desirable thing to have achieved. But there are other regions of the world, and I think you have to look way down the road to see that. For the time being, the Partnership For Peace seems by far the best mechanism to provide for an opportunity to reach out to Eastern Europe.

Q Mr. Secretary, do you anticipate that the President is going to offer either in Eastern Europe or in Russia or in the former Soviet states any new commitments of American dollars to any aspect of these developing countries? I understand that the U.S. has already committed a great deal, but will there be new dollars?

SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER: John, I think I'll leave that for the President to announce, if he's going to, when he's in Moscow.

Q Secretary Christopher, you mentioned before that you think the Clinton-Asad meeting in Geneva next week in Geneva next week is an important part of the peace process. Can you tell us what you expect to be coming out of that meeting? And what impetus do you think it gives to the peace process?

SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER: You'll understand why as the intermediary I would not want to get into any detail about what the discussions will be between the two presidents. I do think it will provide a very strong impetus for the peace process. That fact that the two presidents have met, I think, will tend to energize that process and will give new meaning to the discussions that will take place just two days later here in Washington of the heads of delegation. After all, we're strongly in favor of a comprehensive peace in the Middle East. And Syria is a key factor there. No one in the Middle East would doubt the crucial character of Syria to a comprehensive peace in the Middle East. So the fact of that meeting, that fact of the relationship between the two presidents is very significant.

END12:30 P.M. EST

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Brussels, Belgium)

For Immediate Release

January 9, 1994

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
TO STAFF AND FAMILIES OF THE U.S. EMBASSY TO BELGIUM,
THE U.S. MISSION TO NATO, AND
THE U.S. MISSION TO THE EUROPEAN UNION

The Conrad Hotel
Brussels, Belgium

8:03 P.M. (L)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Thank you for coming. Thank you for playing. And thank you for waiting a little as I had the chance to stop downtown and talk to some citizens after I gave my speech.

I want to tell you how very much I appreciate the work that all of you are doing for your country a long way from home, but at the center of the future we have to make together.

I think in a way you're all fortunate to be serving in Brussels at such a pivotal point in the history of Europe and the history of the world. This is a remarkable city, the headquarters of the Commission on European Unity and Union and NATO. And I want to thank all of our three ambassadors behind us for the work that they have done. The importance of our bilateral relationship with Belgium can hardly be overstated.

Alan Blinken, I think, will represent us very well, particularly if all of you at the embassy do what everybody tries to do at the White House everyday and make sure I'm not my own worst enemy. (Laughter.) I want to thank Bob Hunter for the work he's doing at NATO and say that this Partnership For Peace, contrary to what some have suggested, is not a weak limitation on the future of European security, it is a strong first step that opens the possibility of the best possible future for Europe in which everyone will have an opportunity to be a democracy and to be part of our shared security.

And I want to say a special words of thanks to my longtime friend, Stu Eizenstat, for coming here to serve. We've worked hard to get this GATT agreement. The European Union is now a reality. We have to see it through; there's still a lot to do.

I stopped at a little coffee shop and restaurant on the way out here tonight, just talked to some citizens, and I met this incredible Belgian lady who said, you're right, we've got to compete. We can't run away from the world. And she said, I know how hard it is economically, but two years ago I didn't have a job, and now I have my own business and I'm doing very well, and I'm excited about the European Union. I'm going to do business in other countries now.

We've got to somehow communicate that spirit, that belief that we can bring this economy back, this whole global

economy back to people here so they can believe in themselves. I can tell you that, back home, that is beginning to happen. We do have more control over our economic destiny. The deficit is coming down after going up for 12 years. Jobs are being created and movement is there in the economy. And there is a sense that we're beginning to confront problems that we have ignored for way, way too long.

So I think we're coming here at a very important time, and an appropriate time. And I guess I ought to end by apologizing to those of you who have had to do so much extra work because of this trip, and the headaches I may have caused you. But, believe me, it is in a worthy cause, and we are going to make a new future for the people of Europe and the people of the world so that we don't repeat the mistakes of the 20th century in the 21st; and so that we give all these children a better future than any generation has ever known.

Thank you very much. (Applause.)

MAYOR TIXHON: In the name of the city of Dinant, I have the honor to give to the President of USA an instrument of sax -- the saxophone, yes. (Laughter and applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: In case you didn't understand it, Dinant, Belgium, is the home of Adolphe Sax, the man who invented the Saxophone. And this says, "Adolphe Sax, 1814 to 1894. To Bill Clinton, President of the United States." And it says something else, but my glasses are not here. (Laughter.) Dinant, Belgium, and --

MAYOR TIXHON: "International year of the saxophone."

THE PRESIDENT: Yes -- "The international year of Adolphe Sax." And it points out that this wonderful horn was made in Paris by Selmer.

Thank you very much.

END8:07 P.M. (L)