

Withdrawal/Redaction Sheet

Clinton Library

DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
001a. letter	To Kate Britton from Melanne Verveer re: photo (1 page)	03/03/2000	Personal Misfile
001b. letter	To Melanne Verveer from Kate Britton re: photo (1 page)	01/21/2000	Personal Misfile

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
First Lady's Office
Melanne Verveer
OA/Box Number: 23247

FOLDER TITLE:

[Letters 1999-2000 Last Names Starting with "B"] [1]

2013-0534-S
ry1621

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
P3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
P4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA]
P5 Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA]
P6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA]

C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.

PRM. Personal record misfile defined in accordance with 44 U.S.C. 2201(3).

RR. Document will be reviewed upon request.

b(1) National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA]
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b(9) Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

November 2, 1999

Tim Brenneman
2380 Wayne Street
Orrville, OH 44667-9626

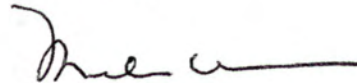
Dear Mr. Brenneman:

Thank you for your letter and the draft copy of Jimmie Boogie Learns About Smoking. I read the book with interest and have shared it with my colleagues. You are to be congratulated on your quality product to help children avoid smoking and its consequences.

Unfortunately, we are not in a position to help promote the book. However, we wish you much luck in finding a wide audience.

Very best wishes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Melanne', followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Melanne Verveer
Chief of Staff to
the First Lady

2

October 21, 1999

Tim Brenneman
2380 Wayne Street
Orrville, Ohio 44667-9626
330-683-1187

Ms. Melanne S. Verveer
Chief of Staff to the First Lady
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20500

Dear Ms. Verveer:

Enclosed is a final draft of the children's book, JIMMIE BOOGIE LEARNS ABOUT SMOKING. This draft consists of copies of the original artwork. The final product will have professionally enhanced color and clarity. The cover will be 80 # glossy cover stock with pages of 80 # glossy text stock and will be saddle stitched. Printing has been delayed to take into consideration any recommended changes by people like you.

Please allow me to tell you how this book came to be, the positive impact it has had on children thus far, and the unique and powerful message it conveys.

This book was written for my two sons, ages nine and seven. They identified with the characters and took to heart the message delivered. They shared this book with their friends who, in turn, shared it with their friends, creating positive peer pressure among friends. The book thus grew in popularity with local children and their parents almost overnight.

At this point I realized the potential this book has to help educate children on the dangers and ill effects of smoking. The book has even encouraged some children's parents and grandparents to quit smoking.

I am convinced that reading this book will keep children from ever taking that first cigarette, consequently developing an addiction with resulting health related problems later in life and burdening the health care system and or the public health care assistance programs not to mention the personal pain and hardship inflicted on individuals and their family as a whole from such an avoidable tragedy. This is our opportunity to break this vicious cycle.

We need to get this book into the schools, hands and minds of our precious, young, impressionable children.

JIMMIE BOOGIE LEARNS ABOUT SMOKING provides us with a rare opportunity to slay the dragon. For the cost of a pack of cigarettes we can supply a child with this invaluable book. We can save untold millions of dollars in future health care costs. The current social and political atmosphere concerning tobacco usage today leaves the window of opportunity wide open, but for how long we don't know. The time to take action is now.

Isn't it ironic that we can get the people responsible for this disaster in the making to pay a large portion of the cost for the solution. Tobacco companies, thanks to people like yourself, the courts and many untold others are being forced to help pay for preventative education.

This book is available as Follows:

\$2.89 per book for orders of 100,000 or less plus shipping

\$2.79 per book for orders of 100,001 to 1,000,000 plus shipping

\$2.69 per book for orders of 1,000,001 or more plus shipping

All initial orders require 50% down, 50% on delivery. Successive orders will require 25% down, 75% on delivery.

Any advice or feedback you have to offer would be deeply appreciated. I look forward to working with you and others to make our children's lives healthier and happier, and our nation stronger as a result.

Together we can conquer the villainous menace looming on our children's horizon.

Enclosed is a list of people and organizations who have been mailed this letter and the draft of JIMMIE BOOGIE LEARNS ABOUT SMOKING.

Thank You,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Tim Brenneman', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Tim Brenneman

PHONE LIST OF RECIPIENTS

PAGE 1 of 5

President Clinton
(202) 456-1414

Hillary Rodham Clinton
(202) 456-6266

Mr. John Podesta
Chief of Staff to the President
(202) 456-6797

Ms. Melanne Verveer
Chief of Staff to the First Lady
(202) 456-6266

Vice President Gore
(202) 456-2326

Mrs. Tipper Gore
(202) 456-6640

Ms. Donna Shalala
Secretary of Health and Human Services
(202) 690-7000

Mr. David Satcher
Surgeon General
(202) 690-7694

Mr. Richard Riley
Secretary of Education
(202) 401-3000

Mr. Gerald Tirozzi
Assistant Secretary of Education
(202) 401-0113

Ms. Patricia Gore
Director of Goals 2000: Educate America
Department of Education
(202) 401-0039

Mr. Jeffrey Koplan
Centers for Disease Control
(404) 639-3534

Mr. Harold Varmus
National Institutes for Health
(301) 496-2433

Mr. Don Cameron
National Education Association
(202) 833-4000

Mr. John Porter, R-ILL
House Subcommittee on Labor, Health, Human Services and Education
(202) 225-3508

Mr. Tony McCann, Staff Director
House subcommittee on Labor, Health, Human Services and Education
(202) 225-3508

Mr. Arlen Specter, R-PA
Senate Subcommittee on Labor, Health, Human Services and Education
(202) 224-7230

Ms. Bettilou Taylor, Staff Director
Senate Subcommittee on Labor, Health, Human Services and Education
(202) 224-7230

Ms. Michele Chang
Smoking and Health Liaison Office Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
(202) 205-8500

Mr. Michael Friedman
Food and Drug Administration
(301) 827-2410

Mr. Martin Meehan, D-Mass.
Congressional Task Force on Tobacco and Health
(202) 225-3411

Mr. James Hansen, R-Utah
Congressional Task Force on Tobacco and Health
(202) 225-3411

Mr. Bill McCann, Staff Director
Congressional Task Force on Tobacco and Health
(202) 225-3411

Mr. John F. Banzhaf III
Action on Smoking and Health
(202) 659-4310

Mr. William D. Novelli
National Center for Tobacco Free Kids
(202) 296-5469

LOS ANGELES TIMES
Washington, D. C.
(202) 293-4650

NEW YORK TIMES
Washington, D. C.
(202) 862-0300

USA TODAY
Arlington, VA
(703) 296-3400

WALL STREET JOURNAL
Washington, D. C.
(202) 862-9200

WASHINGTON POST
Washington, D. C.
(202) 334-6000

WASHINGTON TIMES
Washington, D. C.
(202) 636-3000

NEWSWEEK
Washington, D. C.
(202) 626-2000

TIME
Washington, D. C.
(202) 861-4000

PHONE LIST OF RECIPIENTS

PAGE 4 of 5

U. S. NEWS AND WORLD REPORT

Washington, D. C.

(202) 955-2000

ABC NEWS

Washington, D. C.

(202) 222-7777

ABC NEWS

New York

(212) 456-7777

CBS NEWS

Washington, D. C.

(202) 457-4321

CBS NEWS

New York

(212) 975-4321

NBC NEWS

Washington, D. C.

(202) 885-4200

NBC NEWS

New York

(212) 664-4444

FOX NEWS

Washington, D. C.

(202) 824-6300

FOX NEWS

New York

(212) 452-5555

CNN

Washington, D. C.

(202) 898-7900

CNN

Atlanta, GA

(404) 827-1500

PHONE LIST OF RECIPIENTS

PAGE 5 of 5

PBS NEWS
Alexandra, VA
(703) 739-5000

NICK NEWS
New York
(212) 258-8000

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

November 2, 1999

Mette Beecroft and Barbara Gordon
Association of American Foreign Service Women
5125 MacArthur Blvd., NW Suite 36
Washington, DC 20016

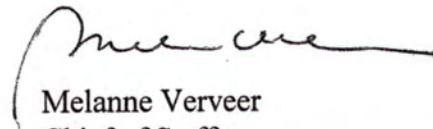
Dear Ms. Beecroft and Ms. Gordon:

On behalf of the First Lady, thank you for your letter and invitation for Mrs. Clinton to attend "A Century of Achievement: the Foreign Service Women 1900-2000" at the State Department on December 14.

Regrettably, Mrs. Clinton's schedule will not permit her to accept your kind invitation. As a goodwill ambassador for our nation, Mrs. Clinton has seen firsthand the critical work that America's Foreign Affairs community does abroad, often at great sacrifice to themselves and their families. She unfailingly speaks to the embassy community wherever she goes and brings the thanks of the President and all our fellow citizens. Please accept her appreciation for you and your colleagues' vital work to support America's mission abroad, along with her best wishes.

All the best.

Sincerely,



Melanne Verveer
Chief of Staff to
the First Lady



Association of American Foreign Service Women

*P
Regret*

October 19, 1999

First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mrs. Clinton:

The Board of Directors and Membership of the Association of American Foreign Service Women (AAFSW) cordially invite you to join us in observing "A Century of Achievement: the Foreign Service Woman 1900-2000." The purpose of the program will be to recognize those who have contributed so much to improve the quality of Foreign Service life during the last century--a celebration of all that has been achieved.

The AAFSW was established in 1960 to advocate better health, education, housing and employment opportunities for family members of the entire U.S. Foreign Affairs Community abroad. We are all loyal to the Foreign Service and believe that an acceptable quality of life is essential to support the U.S. mission overseas. It goes almost without saying that life in the Foreign Service can be challenging, interesting and rewarding. However, there are numerous problems inherent in this life as well, including those related to terrorism and evacuations. Many people, both volunteers and employees, have worked diligently through the years to find solutions to diminish the impact of some of these problems. It is these efforts which we plan to highlight in our program, which will take place on **Tuesday, December 14, 1999 from 10:00 to noon in the Diplomatic Reception Rooms of the Department of State.**

We will send a formal invitation closer to the date. However, given your demanding schedule, we are writing now in the hope that you might be able to join us, if only for a short while. We would be pleased indeed if you would consent to be our Guest of Honor on this special occasion. We also plan to invite senior officials from the Department of State, Members of Congress, AAFSW members past and present and a representation of State employees who have contributed significantly to safeguarding and improving Foreign Service quality of life.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mette Beecroft".

Mette Beecroft
President, AAFSW

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Barbara Gordon".

Barbara Gordon
Program Chair, AAFSW



Association of American Foreign Service Women
5125 MacArthur Boulevard NW
Suite 36
Washington, D.C. 20016

First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Att: Melanne Vermeer

Withdrawal/Redaction Marker

Clinton Library

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First Lady's Office
Melanne Verveer
OA/Box Number: 23247

FOLDER TITLE:

[Letters 1999-2000 Last Names Starting with "B"] [1]

2013-0534-S
ry1621

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Withdrawal/Redaction Marker

Clinton Library

DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
001b. letter	To Melanne Verveer from Kate Britton re: photo (1 page)	01/21/2000	Personal Misfile

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
First Lady's Office
Melanne Verveer
OA/Box Number: 23247

FOLDER TITLE:

[Letters 1999-2000 Last Names Starting with "B"] [1]

2013-0534-S
ry1621

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

March 7, 2000

Dr. Benjamin R. Barber
Director, Center for the Culture and Politics of Democracy
Rutgers University
89 George Street
New Brunswick, NJ 08901

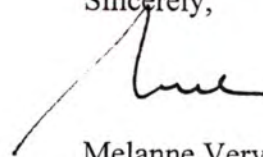
Dear Ben:

Thank you for conveying the invitation for the First Lady to attend the screening of *From Swastika to Jim Crow* on February 28 in Spring Valley, NY.

Regrettably Mrs. Clinton could not attend the film, as she was already scheduled be elsewhere on that date. But promoting dialogue about race relations in our nation is so important. Please convey Mrs. Clinton's appreciation for the filmmakers' thoughtful invitation, along with her best wishes.

All the best.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Melanne', with a long, thin diagonal line extending from the top left of the signature.

Melanne Verveer
Chief of Staff to
the First Lady



THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY
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do

The Walt Whitman Center for the Culture and Politics of Democracy

Benjamin R. Barber, Director
Whitman Professor of Political Science

February 24, 2000

Ms. Melanne Verveer
Chief of Staff to the First Lady
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20502

Dear Melanne,

My colleagues at Pacific Street Films have just completed this powerful and politically relevant film that touches deeply on the sometimes-troubled relations of Jews and African Americans. The film will be screened at the Martin Luther King, Jr Multipurpose Center in Spring Valley, New York on February 28 at 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. and Hillary Clinton will be a welcome guest. The joint audience of African-Americans and Jews and the touching film might make a marvelous event for the First Lady. If she is interested her staff can contact Dr. Stella Marrs at MLK Multipurpose Center at (914) 425-8910 or Ms. Chiara C. Montalto at Pacific Street Films at (914) 478-1900.

Sincerely,

Ben

Benjamin R. Barber,
Director

Enclosure "From Swastika to Jim Crow" materials



Pacific Street Films

579 Broadway, Hastings-on-Hudson, NY 10706 (914) 478-1900 Fax (914) 478-1928 e-mail: pacfilm@ldt.net

FROM SWASTIKA TO JIM CROW

Press Release

The issue of race relations is perhaps the most challenging and daunting one facing the American people today. It has haunted our past... and created doubts about our future. But history has also provided compelling examples of how, in the midst of the most horrific circumstances, people of goodwill can join together in a shining example of what is possible. This is the lesson of a new documentary film, **From Swastika to Jim Crow**.

In the 1930's Jewish intellectuals who escaped Nazi Germany and immigrated to the United States faced an uncertain future. Confronted with anti-Semitism at American universities and a public distrust of foreigners, a surprising number sought refuge in a most unlikely place - the traditionally black colleges in the then segregated South. Securing teaching positions, these scholars came to form lasting relationships with their students, and went on to significantly impact the communities in which they lived and worked.

Based on the book by Gabrielle Simon Edgecomb, **From Swastika to Jim Crow** tells the little-known story of two very different cultures, sharing a common burden of oppression. The scholars were truly, "strangers in a strange land," who found new meaning and purpose in their adopted homeland. Their students, benefitting from the knowledge brought to them by these refugees, were able to go on, and for many, carve out their own academic careers. The documentary also highlights the role of African-Americans, like Ralph Bunche, in securing positions for these scholars at places like Howard University, Tougaloo College, and Hampton Institute.

Recently, relations between African-Americans and Jews have been particularly strained. In Crown Heights, Brooklyn, in 1991, rioting broke out after a Jewish driver struck and killed two African-American children. Following that, a young Jewish man, Ari Halberstrom, was shot and killed on the Brooklyn bridge in retaliation. In 1994, then Nation of Islam leader and aide Khalid Abdul Mohammed and Malik Zulu Shabazz held two rallies at Howard University. The incendiary, racist and anti-Semitic commentary, especially on the part of Shabazz, triggered a malestrom of commentary in colleges, universities and the media about the increasingly tenuous relations between Blacks and Jews. Almost completely unnoticed and ignored by the media at the time was the once close relation of German Jewish expatriot academics to universities such as Howard. Professor John Herz, of Howard University, and one of the prominent professors in **From Swastika to Jim Crow**, wrote a letter to the New York Times, in response, "Mutual sympathy as victim (sic) of persecution and discrimination united the mostly Jewish refugees, who had barely escaped the impending Holocaust, with black Americans. The helping hand stretched out by black colleges and black scholars should not be forgotten when, alas, Jewish-Black relations have become strained. I will forever remember in gratitude." That letter was the inspiration for **From Swastika to Jim Crow**.

On Monday, February 28th, at the Martin Luther King, Jr Multipurpose Center in Spring Valley, New York, **From Swastika to Jim Crow**, will be screened. It will be the first screening of the film in front of a joint African-American and Jewish audience. On hand to answer questions will be the ninety-two year old Professor John Herz and producers, Joe Sucher and Steven Fischler, Lori Cheatle and Martin D. Toub.

Contact Information:

Dr. Stella Marrs
MLK Multipurpose Center
(914) 425-8910
Chiara C. Montalto
Pacific Street Films
(914) 478-1900

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

March 10, 2000

Mr. David Beckmann
President
Bread for the World
1100 Wayne Avenue, Suite 1000
Silver Spring, MD 20910

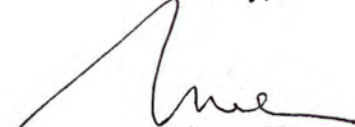
Dear David:

Thank you for your letter and the copy of Bread for the World's 2000 Offering of Letters kit, which we hope will be successful in furthering Bread for the Word's mission to end hunger.

Providing a better life for our nation's low-income families is critical. As you know, the President has proposed regulatory action to make it easier for low-income families to own a reliable car and still receive food stamp benefits. Thank you for your leadership and for all you and your colleagues are doing to help those in need.

Very best wishes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Melanne', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the left.

Melanne Verveer
Chief of Staff to
the First Lady



Bread for the World

Seeking Justice. Ending Hunger.

2

February 28, 2000

Melanne Verveer
Assistant to the President and Chief of Staff to the First Lady
Old Executive Office Building
17th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20502

Dear Melanne,

Bread for the World's main legislative campaign this year is called *A Fair Share: Working to End Hunger*. The *Fair Share* campaign supports legislation to help low-income people escape hunger by strengthening the Food Stamp Program and increasing the federal minimum wage. The *Fair Share* campaign's goal is to pass the bipartisan Hunger Relief Act (S. 1805/H.R. 3192), which would extend the reach of the Food Stamp Program to more hungry families, and to raise the current minimum wage of \$5.15 an hour by \$1.00 over the next two years.

I am pleased to send you the enclosed copy of our 2000 Offering of Letters kit. Earlier this year we mailed this kit to thousands of churches and individuals across the country, and we expect 150,000 hand-written letters will be sent to members of Congress in support of *A Fair Share: Working to End Hunger*.

I hope you will take a few moments and watch the video. It is the real story of one low-income working family's struggles to make ends meet. The family does not qualify for food stamps because their car costs more than \$4650. The Hunger Relief Act would help this family and thousands of others by allowing low-income people to own a reliable car and still receive food stamp benefits.

I am grateful for Mrs. Clinton's public service and for your important work.

*Primer has
proposed a
regulation
to make it
easier
to*

Sincerely,

David

David Beckmann
President

enclosure

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

March 21, 2000

Mrs. Susie Buffett
2443 Fillmore Street
San Francisco, CA 94115-1814

Dear Susie:

A wonderful surprise box of goodies arrived today with your inspirational note. I am very grateful for both. It was a real pleasure to see you again, and we are grateful the time you took to hear about Vital Voices. As I told you, I still vividly remember our first conversation at Glide Memorial, which I so enjoyed. I want to respond, as best I can, to your point about your longstanding commitment to and support for international family planning and how it complements the mission of Vital Voices.

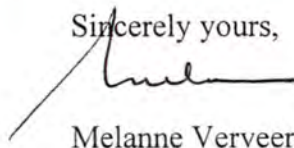
In order to achieve broad acceptance of family planning and reproductive health services, we must make investments in the human rights and economic development of women and girls. For example, we know that when we educate a woman, we educate a family and by extension an entire society. With an educated woman, we lower the risk that her infant will die and increase the chance that she will better care for her family and space her children.

We also know that for a greater awareness of and commitment to family planning, we need enlightened government officials, NGO leaders and advocates. As you know, NGO's and advocacy groups have been on the frontlines supporting health centers in remote villages and encouraging parents to send their girls to school. Partnerships between governments and NGO's have yielded the greatest success on these issues.

Around the world, we have heard a chorus of women -- vital voices -- who are demanding and working for a better life for their families and societies, whether in Parliaments, NGO offices, health clinics or local governments. The Cairo consensus concluded that women's reproductive health and empowerment are critical to a nation's growth and sustainability. Development, human rights and population issues are linked together. Vital Voices is about the empowerment of women. Without women's advancement, progress on population issues will be seriously impeded. That's why the First Lady has promoted both family planning issues and the Vital Voices democracy initiative.

I hope this is helpful to you. We are grateful for all you do.

Sincerely yours,



Melanne Verveer

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

April 13, 2000

Ms. Vera Blinken
466 Lexington Ave.
New York, NY 10017

Dear Vera,

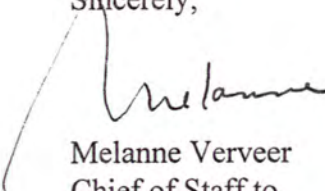
Thank you for your note and the exciting news about the "Primavera Mobile Mammography Unit," which I have shared with the First Lady. I know she'll be as thrilled as I am.

It is a tribute to your leadership and commitment that the Primavera group has accomplished so much in such a short time. You should take great satisfaction in knowing your vital work has and will continue to truly make a difference for so many. Thank you for all you do. We value your friendship.

Very best wishes and hope to see you sometime soon.

*Vera - Such
great news!*

Sincerely,


Melanne Verveer
Chief of Staff to
the First Lady

April 12, 2000

Ms. Vera Blinken
466 Lexington Ave.
New York, NY 10017

Dear Vera,

Thank you for your note and the exciting news about the "Primavera Mobile Mammography Unit," which I have shared with my colleagues.

It is wonderful to know the Primavera group has accomplished so much in such a short time. You should all take great satisfaction in knowing your vital work has and will continue to truly make a difference for so many. Thank you for your leadership, your many important achievements, and all you do.

Very best wishes and hope to see you sometime soon.

Sincerely,

Melanne Verveer
Chief of Staff to
the First Lady

a tribute to your leadership & commitment that I know she'll be as thrilled as I am.
all you do & we value your friendships

VERA BLINKEN

Eric! ^{holler} @
address

March 28, 2000

Dear Melanne,

I just returned from Hungary where, with the wife of the Prime Minister, I cut the ribbon of the "Primaera Mobile Mammography Unit." It is the first such mobile unit for Hungary and for the region, and is the accomplishment of the "Primaera" women's group that I initiated. It is the group of women with

whom Hillary met when
she (and you) were in
Budapest. I am very proud
of this achievement which
was all done on a volunteer
basis. Now we will try to
expand it to the entire
region of Central Europe.

Hillary's campaign
is looking good! We are
getting involved in the
field of education, which
interestingly, was our original
contact with Hillary back
in 1988.

Hope all is well with you!
My very best to both Phil
and you,
Freddy, Ulla

Emel:
pluto

VERA BLINKEN

Dear Melanne,

After I mailed the letter to you yesterday, I realized that I didn't enclose the photo of the Primavera Screening Unit. Here it is, with an article that describes the project so far. "The American spirit of volunteerism" is key!

All my best,

Vera

Primavera
Program a Nők Egységéért

SOROS
F. R. T. I.

ORSZÁGOS MAMMOGRÁFIÁS MÉRLEK SZŰRÉS

Primavera

Vera Blinken: Charity Abroad in the Global Village

New Yorker Vera Blinken has taken the American phenomena of fundraising and philanthropy and exported them abroad. When her husband, Donald, was the Clinton administration's ambassador to Budapest (1994-1998), Mrs. Blinken (a native of Hungary who speaks the language) organized a group of Hungarian professional women to volunteer their time, skills, expertise, and contacts to realize and promote a breast cancer screening program, which they called Primavera Program for Healthy Women. (They chose the name Primavera, meaning "spring," to evoke rebirth.) With the exception of Mrs. Blinken's backing and organization, the program was entirely Hungarian. Cancer screening is of course a common practice



Bobby Neel Adams

in the West, but is still not generally available in former Iron Curtain countries, especially not outside capital cities. The group raised funds from Hungarian companies and multinationals doing business there and bought the first mobile mammography unit in all of Cen-

tral Europe. The unit came equipped with a darkroom and computers. The Soros Foundation underwrote the cost of the first twelve thousand screenings, covering approximately the first year of operation. They also encouraged local businesses to pay for workers' screenings so they could provide more free screenings for other local citizens. Ninety-seven percent of the women screened had negative results and breast cancer has been diagnosed only in 25 cases (5 per 1000). Mrs. Blinken feels she has accomplished two things with this project: she has initiated a life-saving medical program where it was not only desperately needed but also previously inconceivable; and she has exported the American spirit of volunteerism.



Ⓜ

February 15, 2000

Melanne Verveer
Chief of Staff to the First Lady
Office of the First Lady
Old Executive Office Building, Room 100
Washington, DC 20502


Dear ~~Ms.~~ Verveer:

Please accept an advance copy of the Center for Arts and Culture's first book, *The Politics of Culture*, published by the New Press.

The controversy at the Brooklyn Museum and the Pew Charitable Trusts' multi-year strategy to support "cultural policy" are two very different examples of recent events in the cultural field that need to be understood in a richer context. Both the fight in Brooklyn and the Pew initiative occurred after this book went to press; *The Politics of Culture* will help readers understand them both.

As you know, disputes over offensive art and government funding represent a very small piece of our cultural landscape. We need to bring new contexts to changing cultural realities. This book explains the meaning of cultural policy and the framework for the national wave of interest in this important subject. It shows that *policies for culture may begin in the world of the arts, but they do not end there.*

→ [The book creates a vocabulary for the Center's next major initiative, *Art, Culture and the National Agenda*, a series of briefing papers leading to a book that will bring arts and culture into policy discussions during the upcoming presidential and congressional transitions. The Center expects that *Art, Culture and the National Agenda*, along with *The Politics of Culture*, will establish the terms of the national conversation about culture and policy for many years to come.

I am grateful for your support of the Center's work and invite you to join the volume's editors and authors for a celebration of the book's publication at 5:30 p.m. on March 14, at the National Building Museum following a Center *Calling the Question* program titled, "The Politics of Culture and Technology."

Sincerely,


Gigi Bradford
Executive Director

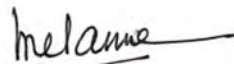
With thanks for all you do for arts and culture in America. Note Ellen's essay! All best - g.



CR

February 15, 2000

Melanne Verveer
Chief of Staff to the First Lady
Office of the First Lady
Old Executive Office Building, Room 100
Washington, DC 20502


Dear ~~Ms.~~ Verveer:

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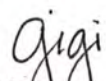
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Sincerely,


Gigi Bradford
Executive Director

With thanks for all you do for arts and
culture in America. Note Ellen's essay!
All best - G.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

April 13, 2000

Ms. Gigi Bradford
Executive Director
Center for Arts and Culture
401 F Street, NW #334
Washington, DC 20001-2728

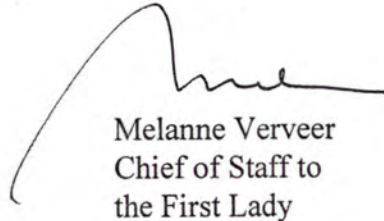
Dear Gigi:

Thank you for the copy of *The Politics of Culture*, which I read with great interest.

It is heartening to know the Center is making such an important contribution providing a better understanding of the relationship between public policy and the arts. Thank you for your leadership and all you and your colleagues are doing to promote our nation's cultural life.

Very best wishes.

Sincerely,



Melanne Verveer
Chief of Staff to
the First Lady

April 12, 2000

Ms. Gigi Bradford
Executive Director
Center for Arts and Culture
401 F Street, NW #334
Washington, DC 20001-2728

Dear Gigi:

Thank you for the copy of *The Politics of Culture*, which I read with great interest and have shared with my colleagues.

It is heartening to know the Center is making such an important contribution to understanding the relationship between public policy and the arts. Thank you for your leadership and all you and your colleagues are doing to promote our nation's cultural life.

Very best wishes.

Sincerely,

Melanne Verveer
Chief of Staff to
the First Lady

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

May 2, 2000

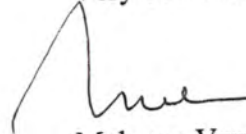
Mr. Dick Batchelor
Dick Batchelor Management Group, Inc.
201 South Orange Ave., Suite 960
Orlando, FL 32801

Dear Dick:

Thank you for the copy of the your article from the *Orlando Sentinel* about the U.N. Human Rights Commission, which I read with great interest and have shared with my colleagues. You offer so much wisdom.

Thank you for your leadership on the Commission and all you are doing to protect the rights of those in need.

Very best wishes,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Melanne', with a stylized, sweeping line above it.

Melanne Verveer
Chief of Staff to
the First Lady

DBMGFAX

To: Melanne Verveer
Fax #: 202-456-6244
From: Dick Batchelor
Date: April 12, 2000
Re: **United Nations Human Rights Commission / Geneva**
Pages: 2 , including this page.

The attached appeared in yesterdays *Orlando Sentinel* regarding my speech to the U.N. last week.

I am extremely grateful that President Clinton appointed me to this commission – it certainly is a life experience I'll never forget.

Best regards.

DJB/mei
enclosure

(Dictated/not read)

DICK BATCHELOR MANAGEMENT GROUP, INC.

201 South Orange Ave., Suite 960 • Orlando, FL 32801 • Tel: 407-841-4311 • Fax: 407-841-4313 • dbmg@atlantic.net

The Orlando Sentinel

"The Best Newspaper in Florida"

TUESDAY, April 11, 2000



By Dick Batchelor

SPECIAL TO THE SENTINEL

GENEVA, Switzerland — As a member of the U.S. delegation to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, I believe that the great issues that the commission debates are as important to the American people as they are to the American government. I have been in Geneva, in part, to explain to the people of my home state of Florida what the commission does. But I also want the commission to understand why human rights are important to me and to the people of Florida.

My parents were tenant farmers, and I began working in the fields at the age of 5. We lived in public housing until we could afford our own home. Those years gave me an opportunity to work alongside African-Americans and witness the burdensome restrictions on their civil and political rights.

After high school, I joined the Marine Corps and served in Vietnam. My platoon included men from many different racial, ethnic, religious and economic backgrounds. I learned a lot from them, and from fighting in an unpopular war.

When I returned home, I resolved to make a difference by working to lower the voting age to 18 so that everyone old enough to serve in the military could vote. Of course, my voice was but one among tens of thousands of people and organizations working on the issue. That is not unusual in the United States, where more than 1 million non-governmental organizations influence every level of government.

Next, my group lobbied our state and local governments to change the laws so that minorities could vote. This was not an easy task. Racial prejudice does not melt away in just a few years. We have made great progress since then, but my country's journey is not yet complete. Although our laws take time to change, they always do when enough people demand it. Such is the basis of our government and our institutions, and we are all the better for it.

In 1975, I traveled to Poland and Romania to speak to people about freedom of expression and religion. It was the year of the Helsinki Final Act, which gave human rights a formal status. It was a turning point in European history; nothing would ever be the same. Although it would take another half-generation, the people of Central and Eastern Europe did taste freedom.

Later, when I met young political leaders in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador, I found that they had the same thirst for democracy and human rights. By the time I visited South Africa and met Nelson Mandela, I knew that there is something universal about the quest for human rights. At its heart is a powerful idea: the recognition that everyone is born free and equal in dignity and rights.



Batchelor

Among the most basic of these rights is freedom of worship. When I drive to St. Luke's Methodist Church, my route takes me past Lutheran, Catholic, and Baptist churches, a Mormon Temple, a synagogue and a mosque. Like the rest of the United States, Orlando is rich in beliefs and creeds living side by side. Although no one is forced to worship and our laws maintain a healthy separation of church and state, the United States is home to more religions than any country in the world.

This mixture of freedom, diversity and religious devotion has helped Americans come to recognize the central role of tolerance and respect in all religious traditions. No religion teaches degradation or violence. Governments or leaders who do so in religion's name are either false or foolish — or both. Inevitably, they distort the beliefs that they purport to represent, in pursuit of their own interests.

Thus, we cannot remain silent when we see the Sudanese government persecute Christians and animists. We cannot remain silent when Chinese authorities jail tens of thousands for practicing Falun Gong, abuse Tibetan Buddhists and Muslim Uighurs, and persecute Protestants and Catholics who do not belong to state-sanctioned churches.

Nor can we remain silent when Iranian authorities attack Baha'is and Jews; when Iraqi officials persecute or imprison hundreds of thousands of believers; or when the Taliban leaders in Afghanistan impose stifling restrictions on women and girls. These are not acts of faith but of oppression.

When I left for Geneva, one of my sons asked if what I would be doing was important. Of course, I answered yes. But as I reflect on what may be accomplished in Switzerland, I began to search for something more to tell my son. I came to Geneva knowing that other children are huddling in fear in Chechnya or lying sick in the camps that dot Africa's Great Lakes. I came to Geneva knowing that in Sudan, children are sold as slaves, and that in far too many countries, children are forced into prostitution. Not to condemn these barbaric practices would be an insult to commission discussions about human rights.

But sometimes simple appeals are not enough. We have to be very candid about human-rights violations and prepared to take decisive and principled action. That is the real reason the U.N. commission exists.

So what will I tell my son?

I will tell him that fundamental freedoms belong to everybody but that many millions never know their rights. I will tell him that words can carry us only so far. I will tell him that human rights must live in the heart before they can live in the law and that only then will the vicious cycle of oppression and abuse end.

Dick Batchelor of Orlando is a former member of the Florida House of Representatives. This commentary is based on a speech he gave Thursday as a member of the U.S. delegation to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in Geneva, Switzerland.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

May 4, 2000

Ms. Carol Biondi
Commissioner
LA County Commission for Children and Families
500 West Temple Street, Rm. B-22
Los Angeles, CA 90012

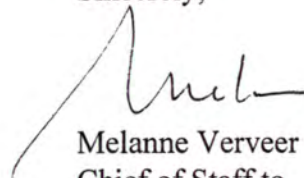
Dear Carol:

Thank you for the copy of From Child Welfare to Child Well Being's report, which I read with interest and have shared with my colleagues. The report touches so many important concerns and presents a sound platform for action.

We just held the first White House Conference on Teenagers, which hopefully will lead to even more progress on behalf of our children. There are so many reasons to be optimistic that the critical need to take care of all our nation's children will continue to receive more and more attention.

Very best wishes and thank you for all you do. I learned so much from our recent telephone conversation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Melanne', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Melanne Verveer
Chief of Staff to
the First Lady



Los Angeles County
Commission for Children and Families

CAROL OUGHTON BIONDI
Commissioner

Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street, Room B-22
Los Angeles, CA 90012

(213) 974-1558
FAX: (213) 625-5813

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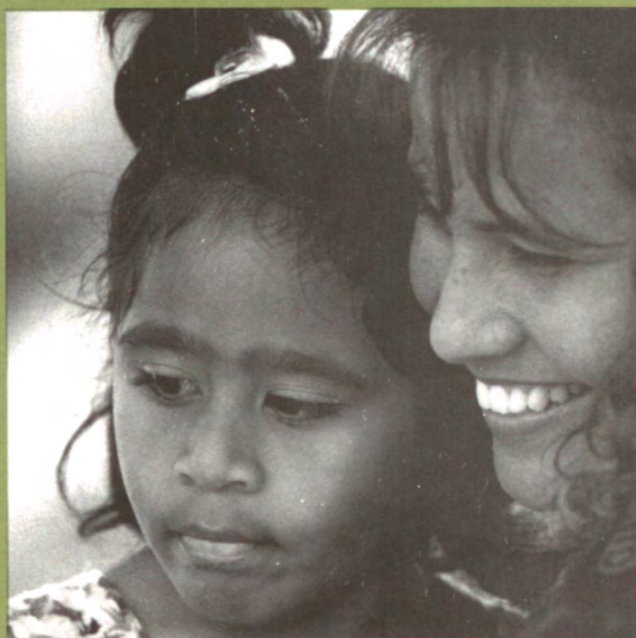
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from
child welfare
to child
well-being



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

May 23, 2000

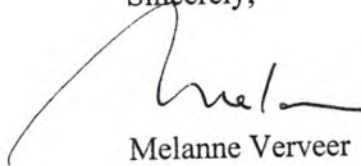
Hon. Donald Blinken
435 East 52nd Street
New York, NY 10022

Dear Mr. Ambassador,

Thank you for the copy of your insightful article about "How NATO Joined Hungary," which I enjoyed reading very much. You made a great contribution to the cause and your points in the article are very cogent.

Very best wishes and hope to see you and Vera sometime soon. Tony does a great job here.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Melanne', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Melanne Verveer
Chief of Staff to
the First Lady

March 7, 2000

Hon. Donald Blinken
435 East 52nd Street
New York, NY 10022

Dear Mr. Ambassador,

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Melanne Verveer
Chief of Staff to
the First Lady

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+ Vera
Tony does a great job here.

where does this go?

Your ~~points~~
~~that I like~~
points in
the article
~~are well~~
are very
coherent.

EUROPEAN SECURITY

Q
Thank
you
for
article

Volume 8

Winter 1999

Number 4

Europe's Precarious Centre:
Franco-German Co-operation and the CFSP
PETER VAN HAM

Security Challenges in Europe's Mediterranean Periphery –
Perspectives and Policy Dilemmas
BRYNJAR LIA

'Walking the Tightrope':
The Kosovo Conflict and Russia in European Security
DOV LYNCH

NATO's Enlargement:
The Theory and Politics of Alliance Expansion
RYAN C. HENDRICKSON

America's Freedom to Act in the Caspian Area
PAUL WIBERG-JORGENSEN

How NATO Joined Hungary
DONALD BLINKEN

Chemical Weapons in Russia: After the CWC
DEREK AVERRE

The Kosovo Conflict and the Swiss Contribution
HEIKO BOCHERT

SHORT NOTES (2 titles) • BOOK REVIEWS (10 titles)

A FRANK CASS JOURNAL

How NATO Joined Hungary

DONALD BLINKEN

The last Russian troops left Hungary in 1991. Only four years later, American forces under NATO command were invited to establish a base in Hungary to support IFOR's peacekeeping role in Bosnia. Why did NATO zero in on the Taszar airfield Hungary; how did the US prepare the Hungarians for this historical gesture, what were the practical issues faced by the Hungarian and American negotiators, are questions answered by a key participant, former US Ambassador Donald Blinken (1994–97). The difficult US–Hungarian negotiations, their happy resolution, as well as some corollary events occasioned by President Clinton's January 1996 visit to Taszar, form an insider's description of 'How NATO Joined Hungary' ... helpful guidelines for future American diplomatic and military policy-makers.

The groundbreaking collaboration of NATO with Hungary – a non-NATO member – in successfully intervening in Bosnia, has not received adequate attention. As US Ambassador to Hungary for almost four years, I played a role in NATO's post-Cold War evolution from a defensive alliance to the provider of security and stability throughout Europe. How this [co-operation] was accomplished without any precedent to rely upon, may offer some useful guidelines for future American policy-makers and be of special interest to scholars of international relations and historians of the period.

The last Russian troops quietly quit Hungary in 1991, leaving behind ghostly airfields, military bases and communications centres stripped of their wiring and plumbing fixtures. The Hungarian people breathed a sigh of relief. For the first time in almost 50 years, no uninvited foreign forces occupied Hungarian soil. Yet, just four years later, American troops under NATO command, were invited freely, in fact enthusiastically, by the Hungarian government to establish a NATO base at a former Hungarian airfield at Taszar in support of NATO's Implementation Force (IFOR) peacekeeping operations in Bosnia.

The Hungarian government and subsequently the Hungarian people welcomed the US/NATO troops with some trepidation but also with a feeling

of *carpe diem* – a unique opportunity to bring some peace and stability to the former Yugoslavia and at the same time advance their case for NATO membership and deeper integration with the West. This Hungarian realism was, in the end, more than proven right. But the success of NATO's projection through Hungary was far from pre-ordained; so intimate a collaboration with a former Warsaw Pact country had never been attempted.

United States-Hungarian relations, put to their most demanding test since the end of the Cold War, could have taken a turn for the worse, erasing six years of growing progress and co-operation. The strengths or weaknesses of American advice and assistance to Hungary's Warsaw Pact trained and equipped defence establishment would now be exposed to the light of a real test. NATO and the US Army in Europe (USAEUR in Germany) would wrestle with the challenge of projecting NATO power through a non-NATO country – one also lacking a contiguous border with any NATO member.

On the diplomatic front, the Departments of State, Defense and the NSC, through their surrogates in Budapest and Germany, would be obliged to co-operate and innovate in uncharted waters, balancing their Dayton Accord mandates with the delicate task of working with and through a former Warsaw Pact member.

From Hungary's perspective, its NATO aspirations would come up against the reality of an 'invasion' by friendly NATO troops only four years after it was rid of the Russians. How would the Hungarian public react?

Finally, could the United States and Hungary perfect a complicated and groundbreaking series of legal steps and agreements under severe time pressure in order to accomplish the Dayton mission, pay due respect to democratic processes, and satisfy their own self interests? In November 1995, none of the desired outcomes was either self-evident or inevitable.

THE VIEW FROM HUNGARY IN 1995

The Government of Hungary, by virtue of its geographic proximity to the former Yugoslavia, had been obliged to tread circumspectly during the Bosnian fighting. Only a few years before, fighting in Croatia had brought the danger of the Yugoslav crisis to the very border of Hungary. By the autumn of 1995, that government recognized that US leadership in restoring calm in Bosnia spelled a fundamental change in the likely outcome. The shift in US policy from frustrated observance of the carnage in Bosnia to proactive intervention was greeted with expressions of relief by the Hungarian government.

By 1995 Hungary had two foreign policy priorities. Along with its determination to improve relations with its immediate neighbours, Romania

and Slovakia, it was determined at all costs to receive an invitation to join NATO. Hanging over these priorities like a storm cloud was Bosnia, both a security threat and an economic burden for Hungary. Early in the Yugoslav disintegration and débâcle, fighting had briefly spilled over into Hungarian territory and airspace. While Hungarian borders and airspace had been honoured during the previous three years, the threat of new fighting to the south whether in Bosnia or Croatia, remained. Economically, Hungary estimated that its observance of the economic sanctions levelled at Serbia had, by 1995, cost it more than \$1 billion in lost trade and shipping revenues. And of course, all Hungarians were conscious of the risks posed to the Hungarian minorities resident in Serbia, Bosnia and Croatia. So Hungary's public policy was always to tread lightly, avoiding provocation of its southern neighbours. As the highly esteemed Hungarian President Arpad Góncz had noted on numerous occasions, 'We are obliged by history to live in a very dangerous neighborhood.'

However, both Hungarian Prime Minister Gyula Horn, who had grown up in the former Warsaw Pact school of diplomatic hardball, and his highly accomplished Foreign Minister, László Kovács, had told both Secretary of State Warren Christopher and Secretary of Defense William Perry in my presence, that the only thing that certain neighbors to the south really understood was the threat of force made credible by American leadership. Nothing else would impress Belgrade or Zagreb.

The critical importance of US leadership was very much on my mind. The UN failure to retaliate against Bosnian Serb shelling of Sarajevo and Srebrenica was politically and morally unacceptable. I was painfully aware that US prestige was visibly ebbing away, not only in Hungary and the new democracies of Central Europe, but also in Western European capitals. This boded poorly for all future US interests in Europe and in the former Soviet Union. While the United States seemed unable to make up its mind, both Assistant Secretary Richard Holbrooke and UN Ambassador Madeleine Albright's activism seemed both right and overdue. Like Americans and Western Europeans, the Hungarians and their neighbours also watched CNN. Sarajevo too often reminded them of Budapest in late 1944 or 1956. So the evident relief in Hungarian government circles when NATO finally bombed Serbian positions in August 1995, was almost palpable.

NATO COMES INTO PLAY

Together with our Hungarian colleagues, we closely followed reports out of Dayton. We had been put on full alert by the NATO Defense Ministers' October meeting in Williamsburg, Virginia, which Holbrooke describes in his definitive book *To End a War*: 'With surprisingly little difficulty, the

ministers gave (Sec) Perry support for a structure without precedent – one that would enforce a peace agreement and include both NATO and non-NATO troops.'

Whether the Dayton conference, which began on 1 November, produced a peace accord or not, it was clear that US forces would now be positioned alongside British, French and other UN troops, either to enforce a peace agreement or, in the worst case, to help extricate UN forces from Bosnia.

The Hungarians had also anticipated possible involvement in a NATO-led Bosnian operation. In fact, on 11 October 1995, the Hungarian Ambassador to NATO, Andras Simonyi, told my Embassy's NATO Expansion Task Force that on the previous day he had delivered to Brussels, Hungary's offer of support for IFOR. In what he termed 'an offer in principle', Hungary stood ready to give NATO use of its airfields, military installations and other resources to support IFOR operations. Hungary's parliament would need to approve any specific arrangement that had been worked out with NATO planners.

UNCHARTED WATERS: PROJECTING NATO THROUGH A NON-MEMBER COUNTRY

So my team and I were not surprised to learn that CINCUSAREUR General William Crouch, accompanied by Lt General John Abrams (the son of the famed hero of the relief of Bastogne in World War II and subsequently Chief of Staff of the US Army, General Creighton W. Abrams Jr) and several colleagues would like to come and see me on 2 November, to discuss with me and my Country Team the possible need to use Hungarian facilities for the logistical support of US/NATO forces taking part in IFOR.

2 November 1995

Bill Crouch (subsequently Vice Chief of Staff, US Army) and his team turned up at 8am on 2 November and as is customary met briefly with me in my office, which has a unique history. From 1956 to 1971 it was the home and refuge of Cardinal Josef Mindszenty, who was given sanctuary from his communist persecutors by a succession of US envoys. The Cardinal, who enjoyed a reputation for personal courage, would have undoubtedly relished the sight of so many distinguished US military leaders, chests resplendent with decorations, meeting in the room that for 15 years had served as his haven.

After a 'country team' briefing to give Crouch a current update on Hungarian developments and attitudes, I turned the meeting over to him. Using detailed flip charts, he reviewed the IFOR assignment likely to be handed to US forces in Europe; the availability and current positioning of American troops (principally Germany), the number of personnel

committed to IFOR; and their likely destination in Bosnia. To accomplish this would require the largest deployment of US forces in Europe since World War II. Key to this undertaking would be the establishment of a staging area close by but not in Bosnia or Croatia, with secure facilities, a safe and friendly environment, dependable road, rail and air infrastructure, and, not least, genuine co-operation from the host government. The only country that met these criteria was Hungary.

After some 30 minutes of presentation, during which my colleagues later told me that General Crouch's team wore increasingly worried expressions on their faces, he put down his briefing book; Hungary was their first choice for an IFOR staging base. If President Clinton gave IFOR the green light, he asked, would I advise and support him in asking our Hungarian hosts for the use of Hungarian facilities. He assumed that this might be a long and complicated process for which he was seeking my advice. He added that there was no need to consider his request immediately; could I give it some thought and then get back to him.

Bill Crouch, who is a very impressive soldier and diplomat, had posed his conclusions and request in precisely the most effective and correct manner. By suggesting that I 'think on the matter', he politely deferred to my status as the senior US official in Hungary. And he also gave me the opportunity, if I wished to seize it, to establish the Embassy's viewpoint in a positive way at the very outset. 'General', I replied, 'I don't need time to reflect on your request. When you are ready to call upon us to ask officially for Hungarian co-operation, consider it done.' The relief on the faces of Crouch's team was, I was told later, clearly visible. Crouch had been very sensitive to the manner in which to enlist an ambassador's co-operation; I was impressed by his approach. He left Budapest knowing that he could count on the Embassy's unconditional support.

DEMOCRACY AGAINST EFFICIENCY: COULD HUNGARY MEET THE TEST?

3 November

The day following Crouch's visit to the Embassy, my political Counselor William Siefken and the Embassy's acting Defense Attaché Colonel Jon Martinson called upon the Hungarian Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence to alert them to a possible US request for use of facilities for logistical support.

10 November

Seven days later, on 10 November, USCOM Director of Operations, Rear Admiral Charles Abbot, led a delegation to Budapest to begin initial talks

with the Hungarian government on the 'possible establishment of an IFOR logistical operation in Hungary'. A key member of the US military team was Brigadier General, now Major General, James Wright, who was to organize the entire logistical operation with great skill and charm. The US team immediately launched into a briefing on the state of its military planning followed by Wright's description of the possible extent of activity in Hungary – including the use of air, rail, road and river transport, and deployment of up to 3,000 military permanent party personnel to be stationed in Hungary to support these operations.

Reiterating their strong support, in principle, the Hungarians made it clear that they viewed these plans as not only contributing to peace in Bosnia but also to Hungary's continuing efforts to become NATO interoperable, and ultimately, to become a member of NATO.

Reassured on this point by Admiral Abbot, they welcomed the suggestion that three days later – on 13 November – a team of 40 logistical planners from USAREUR arrive for a 3–4 day fact finding mission. Their recommendations would then require inter-agency approval from Washington and the required agreement from the Hungarian government.

13 November

The planners arrived wearing civilian clothes to minimize local speculation. Headed by Jim Wright, who had originally recommended Hungary as the best potential staging area, the planning team first had their attention directed to locations in southern Hungary including Baja. Yet Wright and his colleagues had been advised that the ancient city of Pecs offered the best prospects. But it soon became clear that Pecs lacked the infrastructure, particularly railheads and the heavy duty airfield, necessary to handle the approximately 26,000 troops expected to transit through Hungary.

At this point, someone raised the possibility of Taszar, which in fact proved to be the best possible choice. On the same day, Hungary's Minister of Defence, Gyorgy Keleti, briefed his National Security Cabinet on the status of the USAREUR fact-finding mission. And the following day, the six Hungarian parliamentary parties were brought into the picture.

16 November

As a final preparatory step, Keleti briefed the full Hungarian Cabinet. The Cabinet, in turn, drafted and approved a parliamentary resolution to be introduced if and when IFOR and the US formally requested the use of Hungarian facilities.

FROM A COMMAND SYSTEM TO PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY

It did not escape my notice that the Government of Hungary, only a few short years after Russian troops finally exited its territory, was meticulous in observing all the required legal steps before formally committing itself to its new allies. Hungary's Prime Minister Horn had grown up and mastered his political and diplomatic skills under the old command system. In domestic matters he sometimes appeared to fall back upon his earlier experiences. But in foreign policy and security matters, he was always careful to respect Parliament's role as provided by Hungary's new constitution. A vivid demonstration of the key role played by the Hungarian Parliament, and in particular its Defense Committee, occurred the following year when a senior Hungarian officer gave permission for a few Hungarian MiGs to take part in a PFP air exercise over Poland – but without first making the necessary request to the Parliamentary Defence Committee. Although all agreed that he was a fine officer and had, without doubt, innocently overlooked his consultative responsibility, he nevertheless resigned from office shortly thereafter – having broken a constitutional imperative.

A busy and decisive day was 16 November. Senior US military officials met with their Hungarian counterparts to discuss the initial results of their fact-finding mission. Their surveys had now concluded that the airbase and surrounding area in the Taszar/Kaposvar region, in south-central Hungary could serve most effectively as the reception, staging and onward movement facility. Taszar, a functioning Hungarian military airfield, offered several and clear advantages: it featured a long airstrip which had been built to handle fairly heavy aircraft. In addition, a spur railhead from a mainline led directly to a siding alongside the field. This was to prove invaluable in facilitating the transfer of personnel, materials and weapons among and between the cargo planes, freight trains, trucks and bases, which would pour into Taszar en route to Bosnia in a few weeks time. And Taszar was only a few miles from the mid-sized city of Kaposvar, which also offered excellent rail and road connections with the West and Budapest. Jim Wright accurately predicted that tying these two facilities together, would meet most IFOR requirements.

With the survey results in hand and the likelihood of a Presidential directive activating IFOR mounting, the Embassy in co-operation with the US military, now put its political/legal plans into high gear. For the Hungarians this primarily meant readying parliamentary resolutions and approvals. For the Embassy, it was time to review the legal framework needed to launch this operation. The US and Hungary had already signed a Status of Forces Agreement (a SOFA), the terms governing the treatment

and conduct of friendly foreign forces in a host country. Yet there still remained the necessity of concluding transit as well as acquisition and supply agreements.

21 November

On this same day, President Clinton, speaking from the White House Rose Garden said, 'Now that a detailed settlement has been reached (in Dayton) NATO will rapidly complete its planning for IFOR. American leadership, together with our allies is needed to make the peace real and enduring.'

All of us, Hungarians and Americans, now acted upon the assumption that our planning and fact finding were soon to be translated into action.

23 November

Two days later, a second team of some 50 USAREUR planners led by Wright, plunged into detailed surveys. Wright is a highly professional logistics officer (he now is Commandant, US Army Quartermaster Center and School.) His extraordinary charm and 'can do' attitude worked wonders with the Hungarians, whose memories of Soviet style military decision-making were quickly, and one hopes, permanently erased by Wright's way of doing business.

Even 'Friendly' Invasions Are By No Means Simple

Yet smooth sailing was to come later. The issue which now began to cloud our bilateral talks was the hammering out of an acquisition agreement between the US/IFOR Forces and the Government of Hungary; a broad and detailed range of issues included direct IFOR contracting; establishing a protocol for the primary subcontractor, Brown & Root; writing a rental agreement for the use of Hungarian facilities; consular, customs and police co-operation; taxation and US military financial arrangements; a claims procedure for the inevitable damages; air space management and blanket air clearances; radio frequency usage; convoy documentation; and press/public relations co-ordination – just some of the details that had to be concluded if the IFOR transit, no matter how well planned and executed militarily – was to succeed.

The only way to keep on top of these issues was to set up a series of overlapping task forces, both within the Embassy and externally with the Hungarian government. The Hungarians, meanwhile, were wary and uncertain as to how far they should push financial arrangements in advance of an IFOR operation, the scope of which they could only imagine. The first draft of an acquisition agreement (US purchases during the first full year of IFOR staging came to more than \$100 million; not a large number by US standards but extremely significant in Hungary, where the average monthly

wage was \$350 to \$400), was prepared by the Embassy together with its US Military colleagues.

CRITICAL JUNCTION

25 November

I called upon the very Western, young acting Foreign Minister, Istvan Szent-Ivany, who confirmed Hungarian willingness to proceed informally with preparations for IFOR deployment. Demonstrating flexibility, he suggested that pending a formal UN Security Council resolution, his government would be willing to accept a US request as a basis for going to Parliament.

As a consequence, we cabled Washington with the proposed text of a diplomatic notice 'requesting the Government of Hungary's permission to introduce US military and civilian personnel and their associated equipment and supplies into Hungary in order to begin preparations for possible deployment of IFOR forces'. We also reported that Szent-Ivany indicated a Hungarian willingness to waive standard parliamentary procedures in order to introduce on an exceptional basis the necessary parliamentary resolution. Since Parliament met in Plenary Session only on Mondays and Tuesdays, such a US request would need to be received no later than the opening of business on Monday, 27 November if Parliament was to act that week. My cable concluded with the observation that 'the Government of Hungary wants very much to make a contribution and is willing to provide support in whatever way it can'.

While I was meeting with Szent-Ivany, Lt General John Abrams, accompanied by Jim Wright and my political/military team, revisited Taszar and Kaposvar for a final look at what needed to be done.

FROM DAYTON TO TASZAR

President Clinton's announcement also had the effect of putting the steps needed to gain formal Hungarian consent on a fast track. Secretary Holbrooke had returned to Washington from Dayton and soon had his team at State focusing on IFOR implementation. Having triumphed by sheer will and force of personality over innumerable obstacles, he was quite naturally concerned that Murphy's law not come into play once IFOR was unleashed. I was advised that Holbrooke had summoned his entire staff and expressed concern that the Budapest Embassy as well as others in the region might not realize how complicated was the task they now faced; that we might be unaware of the complex steps that would have to be taken in a few days time to get the political, military and public diplomacy aspects of the arrival of NATO in Hungary right.

I sympathized with Holbrooke's concerns: I admired not only the thrust of his policies but also, and most important, the fact that he cared so deeply. But, I was certain that both my Embassy and our military colleagues and advisors were well ahead of the curve. I so advised Secretary Holbrooke. I was gratified that he had confidence in me and my staff, because I did not hear more about the IFOR build-up in Tazsar until we met there on 13 January 1996.

HUNGARY SHEDS THE PAST AND FACES THE FUTURE

We received approval from State the day before Thanksgiving to proceed with delivering an informal text of our request for the use of Hungarian facilities to the Government of Hungary on Friday, in order to give it the weekend to review the text and prepare its own resolution to be delivered to Parliament the following Monday. The Hungarian Foreign Ministry received the actual diplomatic note the following Monday morning, 27 November.

28 November

That afternoon, I was proud to send the following cable to Washington – one that gave me perhaps the greatest personal satisfaction of my service as Ambassador:

Following consultations with the leaders of the six Parliamentary parties on the morning of November 27th, the Parliamentary Defense and Foreign Affairs Committee met in an exceptional combined session at noon November 27. The two committees approved the text of a Parliamentary resolution authorizing Hungary to provide support to IFOR. This resolution was then passed by the entire Parliament on the evening of November 28th by a vote of 312 in favor and 1 against it, with six abstentions. The resolution provides for the transit and temporary stationing of IFOR forces (not limited to US forces) along with their equipment and supplies as well as the use of Hungarian air space.

In addition, we cabled, 'Parliament ratified the NATO Status of Forces agreement, putting (it) officially in force'. And in another bit of good if unexpected news, we reported that 'the Government also sought Parliamentary authorization to send a military bridging unit to participate in the IFOR operation in Bosnia'.

This was obviously an advance from Prime Minister Horn's earlier statement that Hungary could not send troops to join in a military operation in a neighbouring country. While engineers were obviously important, they

were also non-combat troops. In a clever compromise, Hungary would be seen to be contributing to IFOR above and beyond the leasing of bases – yet none of its neighbours could be offended. In due course, Hungary would contribute some 400 engineers who played a valuable role in restoring destroyed bridges on the approach march through Croatia to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The remarkable Hungarian response to our request for IFOR assistance not only set an example for all the other European countries likely to be involved in IFOR transit activity, but also earned Hungary high marks in Washington and the other NATO capitals. By putting aside both domestic politics and residual fears following 45 years of Soviet occupation in just 48 hours time, Hungary demonstrated in a manner that no words could match, that it was clearly prepared to be taken seriously as a candidate for NATO membership. I wrote letters to President Goncz, Prime Minister Horn, Foreign Minister Kovacs and Defense Minister Keleti expressing the US Government's appreciation for their resolution of support.

ENLISTING THE SUPPORT OF THE HUNGARIAN PEOPLE

4 December

The Hungarian and international press were restlessly awaiting the arrival of the first IFOR troops in Taszar, but poor weather and German railroad scheduling delays combined to cause some slippage. Virtually all personnel and materials would be coming from USAREUR bases in western Germany – a 96-hour trip by road. We decided, however, that the press should not be kept waiting, whether IFOR troops had arrived or not. So on 4 December, a gray overcast day, some 100 Hungarian and international journalists, accompanied by my wife Vera and our US Information Services staff, were given a preview of Taszar. They found a rather depressing Hungarian air force base, with only a few serviceable buildings providing shelter from the elements. This preview turned out to be a very valuable exercise, because the contrast between the Taszar of 4 December and what the media and Hungarian officers would find just three weeks later, was a revelation. This highlighted the unparalleled ability of the US military to overcome any obstacles – whether natural or man-made – in providing servicemen and women with safe, efficient and reasonably comfortable facilities anywhere in the world in record time.

7 December

'Orders were issued for the logistical support operation', we cabled,

this should pave the way for the arrival of two C-130 aircraft on December 9th (they actually arrived on December 10th) which would

carry approximately 130 personnel who would get the bases ready to receive troops. The Ambassador plans to be in Taszar to welcome them upon their arrival. General Abrams is tentatively scheduled to take command at Taszar on December 10th.

8 December

We advised Washington that 'Embassy contacting senior officers in Kaposvar and USAREUR to discuss need for a military public affairs officer on site as well as for more publicly releasable information and greater access for the media'.

Military bases in Hungary, whether operated by government or Soviet troops had always been 'off limits'. The Hungarian people viewed them with a mixture of apprehension and disdain. We were determined at the outset that the IFOR bases be seen in a positive and friendly way by the Hungarian people and media. In due course we would open the bases to the public on a regular and controlled basis – consistent with security. We reached out to all local elected officials, who were invited on base whenever important personages were expected. And the US Army's civil-military operation center in Kaposvar, set in motion an all out PR effort reaching into local schools, churches and businesses.

This was to pay off – both for IFOR and Hungary. Press reports from Taszar were consistently positive, and the normal friction caused by the movement of more than 25,000 troops and heavy equipment in and around Taszar/Kaposvar, was mitigated by the hospitality offered the local populace. The proof of the pudding came on 16 November 1997, the day the Hungarian people held a referendum on whether to seek NATO membership. Somogy County, home to both bases, produced the highest pro-NATO vote in all of Hungary.

11 December

Early on that morning I flew to Taszar accompanied by Colonels Szurgi and Martinson together with our political/military officer, Kurt Volker. A very happy Jim Wright joined us in greeting the arrival of the first C-130 Cargo flights from Germany carrying personal baggage and few key supplies. In ten days time, the transformation of the air base and supporting facilities would be striking. A tent city was sprouting together with a mess hall, administrative facilities and a complete, state-of-the-art field hospital.

The rain and snow of recent weeks combined with the massive influx of trucks and military vehicles had created a sea of mud. But the army engineers and Brown & Root had already put down wooden planks and begun to build gravel roads and walkways. The tents were dry and the arriving troops found hot water showers in well designed latrines purchased

from Norway, where I was told they had been recently used by the Olympic athletes at Lilihammer.

A few weeks later I was pleased to see that an American company was installing a large number of telephone booths for the servicemen and women to use in calling home to Germany or the US. A PX (Post Exchange Store) was already up and running and plans were underway to add an exercise equipment facility as well as a chapel in the near future. It was apparent that whether our troops were in transit for only 48 hours or selected to remain as permanent party – they were the primary concern of Crouch, Abrams and Wright.

15 December

‘Although last minute surprises and the heavy volume of rail traffic continue to require constant attention by the US Army liaison officer assigned to the Hungarian railroad control centre, the system for receiving and moving US military trains is up and running’, we reported on 15 December. The major cause of delays is simply slotting the trains into the existing flow of rail traffic. We have been told that the projected flow of 20 trains per day from Germany is likely to overload the capacity of the rail networks in Croatia and southern Hungary. ‘At the same time’, we noted, ‘the first truck convoys have reached their destinations. Many more are en route. Travelers in western Hungary have reported that virtually all roads are clogged with trucks carrying equipment. This is due in large part to the continuing snowy weather as well as enormous volume of truck traffic. There is now a one and a half hour delay at the Austrian/Hungarian border.’

These not unexpected teething problems were quickly overcome – thanks to Jim Wright’s leadership and the co-operation of Hungarian government and transportation authorities. The sheer numbers are staggering. From 16 December to 14 February, more than 24,000 soldiers, 200,000 tons of cargo and 12,000 pieces of equipment reached Hungary, and subsequently, Bosnia, in the largest overland deployment since 1945. Military equipment included 101 tanks, 251 support military vehicles, 145 aircraft and 57 artillery pieces. To get this done, Wright and his team required 409 train trips delivering 7,340 freight cars, 507 bus voyages, 1,770 cargo trucks and about 750 C-17 Galaxy cargo aircraft flights. Cargo flights were featured in the early stages of deployment in order to deliver tanks and other protective armor, but the bulk of the deployment – personnel and cargo – made maximum use of trains, buses and trucks.

THE SAFETY AND COMFORT OF US FORCES

As the weeks flew by, Taszar more and more took on the appearance of an almost permanent US base – complete with rudimentary gravel roads, an

enormous mess tent, a PX and even a choice of fast foods vendors like Burger King as an alternative to army meals. We would shortly begin to make plans for the young men and women to see other parts of Hungary in the spring – particularly Budapest and Lake Balaton. The Army contracted with Hungarian bus companies to provide free transportation to and from these recreational sites, and the Embassy negotiated special, very low cost rates at leading hotels in both locations. These two day trips – which began after the major troop deployments had been completed – were very popular and trouble-free.

GOD IS IN THE DETAILS

20 December

On 20 December, I was privileged to play a central role in an event without precedent in modern Hungarian history. At the invitation of its distinguished Chairman, Imre Mecs, I was invited to speak to the full Parliamentary Defence Committee – a ‘first’ for the United States, and also the first time a foreign diplomat has been so honoured. I was aware, of course, that the invitation came to me as the representative of the United States, but I could not help but think that the Hungarian government and parliamentary officials recognized that I had been attempting to play a constructive and friendly role in furthering our bilateral relationship.

Our subsequent cable to Washington reported that

Ambassador Blinken spoke to the full committee and answered questions about the US deployment to Hungary and general US policy on IFOR. This was an historic event, representing the first time a US ambassador had addressed a committee of the Hungarian Parliament. The Ambassador praised the Hungarian Government and Parliament for their exemplary co-operation in supporting IFOR. He said he fully expects that Hungary’s significant contributions will be recognized as Hungary pursues its integration into Western institutions.

The build-up at Taszar continued at full speed during the Christmas/New Year period. Bad weather continued to make life for our forces both in Hungary and Bosnia especially unpleasant, but deployment proceeded without let-up. A sampling of our cables from late December and early January gives some indication of the real problems we and the Hungarians were working to overcome.

29 December

‘The Hungarians raised several concerns about US forces not following through quickly enough in adhering to Hungarian regulations and

establishing mechanisms for handling recurring issues', we reported, 'among the issues raised: US forces putting overweight vehicles into convoys – a concern given the weight bearing capacity of certain roads and bridges. Not yet having signed contracts for paying for public utilities used by US forces. Not having established a means for paying compensation for damages done by US forces.' (These and related issues were all adjudicated in the months to come; compensation for damage to Hungarian property became part of a global financial agreement.) 'These concerns aside', our cable continued, 'Most of the bugs appear to have been worked out of the system for clearing movements into, out of, and through Hungary'.

2 January 1996

On 2 January, Defense Secretary William Perry, CJCS Shalikashvili, and Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) General George Joulwan paid the first high level visit to Taszar. They were greeted by Generals Crouch, Abrams and Wright who were living at the new base. The day was cold and murky, but spirits were high. Our troops were delighted to welcome their visitors, and I was particularly struck by the warmth our soldiers felt towards Perry and Shalikashvili. More than 15 minutes was taken up with their posing for group photographs, quite a contrast to my experience during World War II. At that time, enlisted personnel stayed as far away from officers as possible. The notion that they would cue up to be photographed with top brass would then have seemed very far-fetched.

Our cable to Washington reported that,

Perry, Shalikashvili and Joulwan expressed to Defense Minister Keleti and Hungarian Armed Forces Commander Deak, the 'appreciation of the US Government and the American people for Hungary's support of the US forces'. Secretary Perry said that from the beginning, it was clear that the US bases in Hungary would be the key link in the entire operation and that our deployment would not have been possible without them. In response to a press inquiry, Perry said that through its actions in support of IFOR and the US forces, Hungary is rapidly fulfilling the requirements for NATO membership. The visit received excellent press coverage and was another important step in strengthening the US-Hungarian partnership in facilitating the IFOR deployment.

A PRESIDENTIAL VISIT; PLANNING FOR SURPRISES

3 January

News had begun to trickle through to the effect that President Clinton would be coming to Bosnia and the IFOR bases in Hungary, as well, early in the

New Year. Anticipating a White House request for possible speech or 'talking points' for use in meetings with Hungarian officials, I cabled National Security Council Senior Director Dan Fried (now US Ambassador to Poland) with the following suggestions:

With Hungary's support, after just 30 days, roughly 65 per cent of the US deployment has been completed. To be specific, Hungary has helped the US move over 12,000 troops, 200 trains, 400 airplane flights, and over 700 supply trucks through Hungary. The United States and the American people are deeply grateful for Hungary's extraordinary efforts to support the US forces. We would like in particular to offer our profound thanks to the Hungarian people for their patience and understanding. Together we have overcome a myriad of obstacles and made the implementation of the Dayton Accords possible.

This was essentially what President Clinton said when he came to Taszar, on 13 January.

A Presidential visit is always a very special event. Advance planning, an Embassy/White House advance team joint exercise, focuses the mind. Many ambassadors past and present, have a jaundiced view of Presidential advance teams, complaining about their indifference to local advice as well as their failure to show the Embassy proper respect. But Budapest during my ambassadorship, had only positive experiences. Whether readying for visits by President Clinton (December 1994 and January 1996), Hillary Rodham Clinton, Secretary of State Christopher, or Secretaries of Defense Perry and Cohen, we found their advance squads pleasant to deal with, very professional and always courteous. The planning process is by definition tedious and the scheduling is sometimes excessively rigid and minutia-bound. Yet the effort is necessary, both to maximize the use of limited time constraints and, of course, to always focus on the top priority, the visitor's security.

We now learned that President Clinton's visit to Tuzla (Bosnia) and Taszar was set for Saturday, 13 January. The basic plan was for the President first to visit US troops near Tuzla, the front line and then stop off at Taszar to tour the base, speak to US personnel and hold a brief bilateral meeting with Hungarian leaders. These priorities together with weather conditions argued for Tuzla in the morning followed by Taszar in the early afternoon – perhaps 1:30 or 2pm – allowing the presidential party to leave Hungary during daylight hours.

However, Tuzla, notorious for difficult weather amid its valley topography, posed a special problem. Many mornings in December 1995 and early January 1996, Tuzla airport was closed by dense fog until 11am

or 12 noon. The planning therefore, required flexibility. The President's advance team and the US military in Bosnia and Hungary agreed that the special Presidential aircraft would first attempt to land in Tuzla with Taszar scheduled for early afternoon.

The possibility remained that the order of visits might have to be reversed at almost the last moment – if conditions in Tuzla so dictated. This complicated life for our Embassy. For I was to escort the Hungarian President, Prime Minister, Foreign Minister, and Defence Minister, and their top aides, to Taszar by plane – a 35-minutes flight from the Budapest airport. I had two aircraft at my disposal; our own C-12 and a sister plane borrowed from the US Air Force. The Hungarian officials would assemble at the VIP lounge at Budapest's Ferihegyi airport 30 minutes before the departure time – estimated to be 1pm.

The problem, however, was what to do if the order of the President's trip had to be revised at almost the last moment, which would require all of us to assemble at the Budapest airport at 9am.

12 January

I arranged with my military attachés to advise me by 7am if plans were being changed. And, of course, the Hungarian dignitaries would also have to be called. But if we heard nothing by 7am, then the takeoff from Budapest for Taszar at 1pm was on. My wife Vera and I put our 'Taszar clothes' out Friday night, to save time, and went to bed prepared for any eventuality.

13 January

Saturday morning dawned bright and sunny – the first good weather in several weeks. I arose at 7am; watched the clock advance to 8.45am with no telephone call. It's 'go' for the afternoon departure for Tazsar, I told Vera, and we ate a leisurely breakfast.

Then at 9am, my phone rang. After circling fog bound Tuzsla for some time, the President's pilots decided that they have to go to Hungary first after all; this decision coming almost two hours after the planned deadline. We would have to try and be at the airport in one hour – a 40-minutes drive from my residence and as well as those of the President, Prime Minister and other Hungarian dignitaries.

Could the Hungarians be notified in time, I asked? Having not heard by 7am, they must have assumed that the scheduled assembly at Ferihegy just before 1pm, was on. This was a problem, but we had no choice. All the phone calls were being made; only Defence Minister Keleti who was in the Taszar area attending a pig killing, might be unreachable. Vera and I scrambled; called our driver, dressed and dashed for the airport. To my great

relief, most of the Hungarians were already there and the rest were expected momentarily. Shortly after 10, we boarded our twin aircraft – having divided the Hungarian government between our two planes as a matter of prudence, and took off for Taszar. If the Hungarians thought we had staged this last minute confusion to make some sort of diplomatic point, they were too polite to say so.

The weather at Taszar was fair and breezy. Greeting us on the runway, to my surprise, were Dick Holbrooke, appropriately decked out in Russian calf length boots, and television anchorman Dan Rather, who seemed bemused and relaxed to be off camera in an unfamiliar but friendly environment. The Hungarian leaders and my small team were bundled into a small military convoy and rushed off to the Taszar administration building just in time to catch up with the President, who had obviously enjoyed his tour of the base and visit with our troops in the huge mess tent. And Hungarian Defense Minister Keleti, reached by his mobile phone, joined us as well, fresh from the pig farm. On another happy note, we also found my son Antony, the President's senior foreign policy speechwriter, on hand to greet us.

Almost as memorable as the scramble to get to Taszar to meet the President, was the sartorial issue – what to wear when meeting the President of the United States at a NATO base in Hungary. It had occurred to me about a week before the planned visit, that I should try and learn what the President would prefer in the matter of dress; business suits or sports attire. I asked my public affairs officer and Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) to find out from the presidential advance team which was now at Taszar.

The answer was 'informal'. Certainly no suits or ties. Zipper jackets or sports wear were recommended because this is the way President Clinton would dress – he usually wore a bomber jacket when visiting US forces in the field. Word was passed, accordingly, to the Hungarian government through its Foreign Ministry. So much for that, I thought.

But at 9.45pm Friday night 12 January, I was called by DCM Gadsden. The President's advance team, leaving no stone unturned, or in this case, no button unbuttoned, had just telephoned to ask that I remind the Hungarian dignitaries once more that suits and ties were out, to avoid any embarrassment. Would I therefore call Foreign Minister Kovacs to remind him to remind his President and Prime Minister about tomorrow's dress code.

It was now almost 10pm – and I was not thrilled with this assignment, but I telephoned Foreign Minister Kovacs at his home. 'Laszlo', I said, 'I apologize for disturbing you so late in the evening, but the President's advance team has just asked me to remind you and your colleagues not to wear suits and ties. And, Laci, I have seen you sporting a very smart black leather jacket around town on weekends. Why don't you wear that?'

He did and Hungary's President, Prime Minister and Cabinet Officers without exception turned up appropriately in sporting attire. No one commented on this bizarre American behaviour except the witty and debonair Deputy Foreign State Secretary, Ference Somogyi, who, pointing to his nifty parka with the 'made in USA' label asked, 'Mr Ambassador, do you think my jacket is NATO compatible?'

TAKING STOCK

19 January

On 19 January, we were ready to provide Washington with a summary of reactions to President Clinton's 13 January stop at Taszar. 'Senior Hungarian officials told us', we reported, 'that they were very pleased with President Clinton's January 13th visit to the US base at Taszar, the early arrival and departure did not hurt the success of the meeting or the positive press coverage.' Both Hungarian political and military officials reported that 'they were pleased with the bilateral meetings and the subsequent tour of the base arranged by US forces'.

20 January

On 20–21 January a truly historical event took place; for the first time since their exodus in 1990, Russian troops en route to serve in Bosnia under US IFOR command, passed through Hungary via Taszar. This went virtually unremarked in Hungary, although what must have been going through the minds of Prime Minister Horn or Defense Secretary Keleti, can only be imagined. But it seemed clear to me that they must have taken great satisfaction in knowing that post-1990 Hungarian foreign policies and most importantly, Hungary's decision to cast its lot with NATO – were proven to be beneficial to Hungary.

LOOKING BACK: THE LESSONS LEARNED

The events I have described from 2 November 1995 to 20 January 1996, took place four years ago. Since then:

The IFOR operation in Bosnia became the Stabilization Force (SFOR). After a period of false starts, the process set in motion at Dayton has produced impressive results. Ethnic violence and the sources that nourished it, were effectively shut down. SFOR restored responsibility and control to those individuals and institutions that supported Dayton. The 1995 actions taken at Dayton, Budapest and Taszar, now appeared to be paying dividends as the Bosnian people begin to realize the advantages of mutual accommodation.

The US intermediate staging base has remained active throughout 1997 and since 1998 with a much reduced permanent garrison. Fortunately, it remained under US control because NATO's opposition to Serbia's ethnic cleansing in Kosovo and Hungary's formal admission to NATO – both occurring in March 1999 – thrust Taszar into the forefront once more as NATO's principal airbase north of Serbia.

In July 1996, Hungary, along with Poland and the Czech Republic was formally invited to apply for full NATO membership. On 16 November 1997, the Hungarian people in a popular referendum, overwhelmingly voted to join NATO, and in April 1998, the US Senate, after serious debate, approved NATO membership for the three invitees – by voting to ratify the required treaties with each applicant.

In May 1998, the Hungarian people voted out the Horn-led Socialist government, replacing it with a coalition headed by 36-year old Victor Orban and his Young Democrat Party. The new government has continued the pro-NATO policies of its predecessor. It appears unlikely that any changes in Hungarian foreign or defense policy – at least in substance – will emerge. In March 1999 Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Poland were formally admitted to NATO in ceremonies held at the Truman Library in Independence, Missouri.

What lessons can be drawn from these events; how did the challenges faced and the measures taken by all parties concerned fare?

First and foremost I believe that the United States is and must remain a European power, in its own interest as well as in the interest of peace and stability in Europe. When the US withdraws, bad things happen. The Europeans, who are making remarkable progress in building economic unity, remain indecisive or conflicted in issues involving national security and the projection of power. Self-interest and history continue to block real European multinational physical security without strong US leadership on the ground. Our intervention in Bosnia through NATO was both wise and effective. Both concept and implementation deserve high marks.

By establishing its forward staging area in Hungary – a non-NATO country lacking a contiguous border with a NATO member – the geographic argument for withholding NATO membership from Hungary was demolished. The lesson learned from Taszar and Kaposvar is that that political institutions, the rule of law, and a desire to settle disputes with neighbours only by peaceful means, are far more important than geographic location. They greatly helped define NATO's new role in a time of fluidity and uncertainty. What had been purely a defensive alliance against Soviet aggression, now became the principal keeper of peace and setter of national and international standards of behavior.

The political framework and climate of a country are the key elements in its ability to operate successfully within an alliance of democratic countries. Hungary had both the will and the parliamentary system needed to work closely and harmoniously with NATO.

Diplomacy without the backing of military power is greatly handicapped. But military force, without the employment of diplomacy and political skills, is also likely to fail badly. Fortunately, both the US State Department and the Defense Department, together with the President's National Security team, understand fully why diplomacy and the potential for use of military action must mutually reinforce one another.

Finally, the US military is a superb and unequalled institution whose performance, both military and political – deserves our admiration and support. Working with our armed forces, as I learned in 1995–96, is rewarding and reassuring; they invariably do what they say they will do, and their dedication to American values and the democratic process can only be admired. The American people, and certainly our President and our Hungarian NATO ally, owe our armed forces their thanks and appreciation.