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**Folder Title:**
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PRESIDENT WILLIAM JEFFERSON CLINTON
REMARKS AT
GRASSROOTS HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE EVENT
THE WHITE HOUSE
DECEMBER 12, 1995
Acknowledgments:

Congressman Jim Moran (VA)

Congressman Vernon Ehlers (MI)

I am honored to welcome all of you to the White House. You represent the qualities that make this nation and its people so great: A willingness to work hard for something you believe in. A faith that one person can touch the lives of many. And most of all, a generous heart and spirit.
You took it upon yourselves to help desperate people in a far-away land -- people whose names you didn’t know and whose faces you had never seen. You did this not for profit or glory, but because you knew you could make a difference. You did it because it was right.

Your extraordinary efforts are mirrored in the support that thousands of Americans have given to humanitarian organizations, which have provided relief to the Bosnian people during four dark years of war.
Indeed, the international community has carried out one of the largest humanitarian efforts ever during this terrible war, including the longest airlift in history to the city of Sarajevo. But you, more than anyone, know that relief to the victims of war, heroic as those efforts have been, is no substitute for peace. Now, the Balkan leaders have made a commitment to peace and our nation has a responsibility to help them make it work.
That is why our troops are going to Bosnia -- not to fight a war, but to secure peace... a peace the Bosnian people have chosen and have asked us to help take hold.

As part of the NATO force, our soldiers will help create a secure environment in which the Bosnian people can begin the hard work of rebuilding their country. Within this secure environment, a separate civilian relief effort will help bring the concrete benefits of peace to people's lives.
If peace is to endure, the people of Bosnia must have food, medicine and clothing. Their roads, schools, and hospitals must be repaired. Their factories and shops must be reopened. Families must be reunited and refugees returned to their homes.

The goal of the civilian relief and reconstruction effort is to ensure that by the time the NATO force is ready to leave, the Bosnian people have a much greater stake in peace than in war.
No one -- not the United States, not NATO -- can guarantee success in Bosnia. But one thing is clear: the consequences if we don’t act will be devastating. We do not have to imagine what will happen. We have already seen it. War will return to Bosnia, with all its horror and suffering. And this time, the fighting could well spread to other nations in the region, drawing America in to a much wider and more dangerous conflict. NATO -- the alliance that has shielded our security for half a century -- will be shaken to its core. And American leadership in Europe and around the world will pay a terrible price.
As Members of Congress consider their support for our troops and their mission in the days ahead, I hope they remember this: In Bosnia, America has already made the difference between war and peace. Now, only America can make the difference between a war that resumes and a peace that takes hold.

And I hope that all Americans will draw strength and confidence from the examples of each of you here. You remind us of the bonds of humanity that join us all -- and the responsibility we have toward one another...
You remind us that others around the world trust America to help them because they know that our nation has no ulterior motives. And you demonstrate that when Americans pull together, we can make the world a better place.

Both Bosnia and America are in your debt, and I thank you.
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