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PRESIDENT WILLIAM JEFFERSON CLINTON
REMARKS TO AIR UNITS
AVIANO AIR BASE, ITALY
JANUARY 13, 1996
[Acknowledgments:]

Defense Minister Domenico Corcione [cor-CHOH-nee]
General Joulwan
General Michael Ryan
Colonel Charles Wald
Aviano Families
Men and Women of Operation Decisive Edge

Thank you, Colonel Wald, for that fine welcome. I am pleased to be here in Aviano -- probably a lot more pleased than you are to have me here at this early hour.

But I thank you for turning out and giving me this chance to meet the men and women of Operation Decisive Edge.
The work you and our allies are doing here and in Bosnia is the difference between a war that resumes and a peace that takes hold. You are giving people who have suffered so much a chance to enjoy the blessings of a normal life. And you are living up to the great tradition of our armed forces, protecting America’s interests by keeping out a fire that threatened the heart of Europe’s stability.
On behalf of all Americans, I thank you for the superb job you are doing in this historic mission. As they did in Operation Deny Flight and Operation Deliberate Force, the 31st Fighter Wing and all the other units here at Aviano -- including the Guard and the Reserve -- are showing in Operation Decisive Edge the professionalism, the skill, and the dedication that make America’s military the greatest on earth...and NATO a force for peace throughout Europe.
The American people know that the burden of our leadership in the world weighs heavily on you and on your families. Many of you have been a long way from home for a long time. Others have just arrived. Because of the sacrifices of all you are making here and in the Balkans -- and the strength of the families that stand behind you -- America is standing up for its values and interests.

I particularly want to thank Colonel Wald, who has done such a tremendous job in commanding Aviano and the 31st Fighter Wing. America is proud of the way this base has met the challenge of this operation.
Today, in recognition of Colonel Wald’s success here and his outstanding career over 25 years, I am pleased to promote him to Brigadier General. Mrs. Wald, I know that your husband has long relied on your support -- as so many members of our Armed Forces depend on their spouses and family members. Would you help me pin on your husband’s stars?

General, the Air Force, our nation and I look forward to many more years of your service at the very highest level of the military. Congratulations.
I also want to thank Defense Minister Corcione [cor-CHOH-nee], the Italian government and the people of Italy for the hospitality you have shown our forces and for your help in coordinating this difficult operation. Your efforts, along with those of all the other NATO countries participating in Decisive Edge -- and I know that distinguished units from Britain and Spain are here today -- are playing an important part in keeping our Alliance strong and this mission successful.

Men and women of Decisive Edge: I wish you good luck and Godspeed. You are heroes for peace -- and our nation is very proud of you. God bless you. God bless America.
PRESIDENT WILLIAM JEFFERSON CLINTON
RADIO ADDRESS
TUZLA, BOSNIA
JANUARY 13, 1996
Good morning.

I am speaking to you today from Tuzla, the main base for America’s soldiers in Bosnia. I have just visited with our commanders and troops. Some of them are with me now -- including Task Force Eagle engineers from the Army... members of the Air Force’s Red Horse squadron... and Navy Seabees. The American people should be very proud of the job they are doing. Our armed forces are giving the Bosnian people -- exhausted by four years of war -- the strength to make peace.
I wish that every American could see first hand what the men and women of our military have accomplished under very difficult conditions. In Tuzla, the weather report is pretty much the same every day: mud, mud and more mud. But despite that, and the snow and freezing rain, in less than a month our soldiers have built a base camp with hundreds of hardback tents -- complete with wooden floors, heat and lights. They’ve set up a road network and sophisticated communications. The airfield, which had no lights or navigational equipment when they got here, is up and running 24-hours a day.
Some of the men and women with me today designed, built and now operate the pontoon bridge over the Sava River -- the key land link to Bosnia for our troops. The biggest army bridging operation since World War II demanded the kind of strength and ingenuity that only American soldiers have. The river swelled to a record high for the century, washing away our encampments. Its banks became muddy bogs. But the Sava didn’t drown America’s spirit. As one of our army engineers put it, “We’ve been crossing rivers for 218 years. We’re going to cross this river.” And they did.
Now that most of the preliminary work is done, our soldiers and their partners from more than two dozen other nations -- including NATO allies and former adversaries like Poland and Russia -- are set to carry out their mission step-by-step -- steadily, surely, and safely. They will make sure the former warring parties in Bosnia live up to the letter of the peace agreement they signed... and they will create a secure environment to give the people of Bosnia a chance to rebuild their lives and their land.
Only the people of Bosnia can seize that chance -- and come together as equal citizens of a shared land with a common destiny. After so many lives lost and futures destroyed, finding the strength to live and work side by side, as they have for so much of their history, will be very hard. But I am convinced that the overwhelming majority of Bosnia’s people agree that the alternative -- a return to the sorrow and suffering of the past four years -- must not be allowed to happen. And they are looking to our soldiers to help them make a new beginning.
So often, when people abroad look to America for help and hope, America looks to the men and women of our armed forces. Of course, we can’t be everywhere. We can’t do everything. But where we can make a difference -- and where our interests and values are at stake -- we must step forward. In Bosnia, our soldiers are making a difference -- the difference between a war that resumes and a peace that can take hold.
We have asked the men and women of our military to bear the burden of American leadership. And they are rising to the challenge with strength, skill and determination. The soldiers I’ve talked to are proud of their accomplishments and ready for the hard work ahead. I know the American people are proud of them -- and that they join me in saying Godspeed to the men and women of the world’s finest military as they carry out their mission of peace in Bosnia.

Thanks for listening.
PRESIDENT WILLIAM JEFFERSON CLINTON
REMARKS TO THE PEOPLE OF CROATIA
ZAGREB AIRPORT
JANUARY 13, 1996
President Tudjman; distinguished guests; people of Croatia:

I am very pleased to be in Croatia -- especially at a time when the people of this region are turning from the horror of war to the promise of peace. To see so many people here at this late hour tells me that in Croatia, you feel that promise and you want to make it real. I only wish that I had more time to visit with you and to see this beautiful country.
Today, I was in Tuzla, the main base for the American troops in Bosnia. Our soldiers are heavily armed and very well prepared. But they have come to Bosnia on a mission of peace -- together with soldiers from more than two dozen other countries. Their job is to make sure all the former warring parties in Bosnia live up to the peace agreement they signed... and to create a secure environment that gives the people of Bosnia a chance to rebuild their lives and their land.

I want to thank President Tudjman for his leadership - - and the people of Croatia for their determination -- in helping to end the war in Bosnia.
The war is over. But the peace is just beginning.

Each of us must do our part to help it take hold. The United States expects Croatia to support the Muslims and Croats of Bosnia as they strengthen their Federation. We expect Croatia to work for the full implementation of the agreement on Eastern Slavonia -- which will reunite Croatian lands through peace and reconciliation.

And the United States also expects to see Croatia take its full place among the western community of nations -- whose watchwords are tolerance, human dignity, freedom and peace. That's where Croatia belongs. That's where Croatia must be.
As President, I have traveled to many places around the world where it was long believed that conflict was normal and cooperation impossible. But in so many of those places -- the Middle East... Northern Ireland... and now the Balkans -- people are turning from hatred to hope. In making that turn, the greatest struggle people face is not between Arabs and Jews... Catholics and Protestants... Croats, Muslims and Serbs. It is between those who embrace peace and those who reject it. Those who look to the future and those who are blinded by the past. Those who open their arms and those who still clench their fists.
So each and every one of us -- and each and every one of you -- must choose. We’ve all seen the horror of war. We all know the promise of peace. We must choose peace.

Thank you all for being here. May God bless you and the new day of peace that has dawned on the Balkans.
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PRESIDENT WILLIAM JEFFERSON CLINTON
REMARKS TO U.S. TROOPS
TUZLA, BOSNIA
JANUARY 13, 1996
Thank you, General Nash.

Men and women of Task Force Eagle: the First Armored Division... the Third Infantry Division... the Third Battalion of the Three-Two-Five Parachute Infantry Regiment... the Air Force 4100th Provisional Group and the legendary Red Horse engineers... the Navy Seabees... and all the veterans of Tuzla mud -- I am proud to stand with you today. I come with a simple message: America is proud of you.
You are the best-trained, best-equipped, best-prepared fighters in the world. Time and again, you -- the men and women of the American military -- have stood down aggression. Time and again you have triumphed in war. But you came to Bosnia on a mission of peace. This is a mission for heroes. Thank you for defending America’s interests. Thank you for helping the Bosnian people. Men and women of Operation Joint Endeavor -- Thank you for being warriors for peace.
When I last saw many of you at Baumholder, the headquarters of the First Armored Division in Germany, your Humvees were a little cleaner and your BDUs a little greener. But to me, seeing you here in the field, doing the jobs you were trained for so well -- you've never looked better.

Earlier today, I was briefed by your commanders -- Admiral Smith and General Nash. On behalf of your proud and grateful nation, I want to tell the world what they told me:
In less than a month, despite terrible weather, some 7,000 of America’s finest fighters -- the first wave of a force that will be 20,000 strong -- have set up camp in Bosnia.

You fought rain and floods to bridge the Sava River -- in our biggest military river-crossing since 1945. In only two weeks, more than 2,000 vehicles -- M1’s, Bradleys, Hum Vees and more -- have rolled across the waters and rumbled into town.
You secured your base of operations and established base camps throughout your sector. I just came from Outpost Lima, manned by the Charlie Rock Company of the Third Battalion. I saw for myself that the "Third Herd" and everyone else at the outposts are doing a great job in less than great conditions.

You took an airfield that had no lights or navigational equipment... turned it around and opened it for business -- 24-hours a day.

You strung nearly 5 miles of phone and cable wire to build a massive, modern communications network.
You are working with soldiers from more than two dozen other nations. Among them are former adversaries who have become new friends. Polish and Czech combat battalions... Hungarian engineering corps... soldiers from the Baltic states... and an entire Russian brigade. From the ashes of war in Bosnia, you are raising the torch of a new, undivided Europe.

Step by steady step, you are making history here in Bosnia.
Don’t forget that, even when this extraordinary mission seems routine. I’m told that some of you have compared life here with the Bill Murray movie “Groundhog Day,” where the same day keeps repeating itself. I’m told also there are only two kinds of weather conditions in Tuzla: When it snows, the mud freezes. When it rains, the mud thaws. Even the dining hall is apparently in on the act -- dishing out the same food every morning and night. The military promised you square meals -- and when you get your eggs each morning, you can see they meant what they said.

But your mission is anything but routine.
The Bosnian people have chosen peace, but they cannot do it alone. You must help give them the confidence they need to follow the rules they have agreed to. America has an important interest in seeing the peace take hold -- for the people of Bosnia, who have suffered so much... for Europe’s stability, so crucial to our own... and for the safer, better world we want to leave for our children.

That’s why we’re counting on you.

The Bosnian people are exhausted by war. You must give them the strength for peace.
This mission requires strength and skill -- from separating former enemies to avoiding the dangers of mines... from making sure the cease-fire holds to creating a stable environment... from the days on your feet in the rain and snow to the nights you must sleep in your Bradleys.
The people around you know you are prepared, heavily armed and ready to meet any threat to your safety with swift and decisive force. They know that our J-STAR aircraft are patrolling high above the clouds, tracking the smallest movements... that out in the Adriatic, the Navy and Marine Corps are ready to project power at a moment’s notice... that just above the treetops, the Army’s Apache gunships are scouring the ground below... and that our Special Forces are here, there and everywhere. I have said this before and I will say it again: America looks after its own.
I know that the burden of America’s leadership weighs heavily on you and your loved ones back home. Just as your commanders and I are committed to protecting your safety, so we are working to take care of your families: to keep them informed and in touch with you... to help them with the things that matter the most -- like day care, health care, and paying the bills.

The pride your families have in you is shared by Americans all across our nation. We look at all you are doing here -- confident, compassionate, disciplined and strong -- and we see in you the best that our country has to offer. You are what America is all about.
Before I left Washington to be with you, I signed an Executive Order that creates a new campaign medal. It’s called the Armed Forces Service Medal, and it will be awarded to all those who serve their nation in significant, non-combat military missions such as peacekeeping operations. I am pleased to announce that, as participants in Operation Joint Endeavor, each of you will receive America’s newest military honor.

As you move ahead with your mission, keep this in mind: Around the world, people look up to America not only because of our size and strength -- but because of what we stand for, and what we’re willing to stand against.
And though it imposes extra burdens on us, they trust us to help them share in the blessings of peace.

We can’t be everywhere. We can’t do everything. But where we can make a difference -- and where our values and interests are at stake -- we must act. That’s the case in Bosnia. All of its people are looking to America. And so America looks to you -- the men and women of our armed forces.
In Bosnia, our nation can make the difference between a war that starts again and a peace that takes hold. From the highest commander to the newest recruit, that difference lies in your hands. You give America power and strength. You are giving Bosnia a new day of peace. Be proud of what you are doing here. Your country, and I, are immensely proud of you.

God bless you all, and God bless our America.
PRESIDENT WILLIAM JEFFERSON CLINTON
RADIO ADDRESS
TUZLA, BOSNIA
JANUARY 13, 1996
Good morning.

I am speaking to you today from Tuzla, the main base for America’s soldiers in Bosnia. I have just visited with our commanders and troops. Some of them are with me now -- including Task Force Eagle engineers from the Army... members of the Air Force’s Red Horse squadron... and Navy Seabees. The American people should be very proud of the job they are doing. Our armed forces are giving the Bosnian people -- exhausted by four years of war -- the strength to make peace.
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Now that most of the preliminary work is done, our soldiers and their partners from more than two dozen other nations -- including NATO allies and former adversaries like Poland and Russia -- are set to carry out their mission step-by-step -- steadily, surely, and safely. They will make sure the former warring parties in Bosnia live up to the letter of the peace agreement they signed... and they will create a secure environment to give the people of Bosnia a chance to rebuild their lives and their land.
Only the people of Bosnia can seize that chance -- and come together as equal citizens of a shared land with a common destiny. After so many lives lost and futures destroyed, finding the strength to live and work side by side, as they have for so much of their history, will be very hard. But I am convinced that the overwhelming majority of Bosnia's people agree that the alternative -- a return to the sorrow and suffering of the past four years -- must not be allowed to happen. And they are looking to our soldiers to help them make a new beginning.
So often, when people abroad look to America for help and hope, America looks to the men and women of our armed forces. Of course, we can’t be everywhere. We can’t do everything. But where we can make a difference -- and where our interests and values are at stake -- we must step forward. In Bosnia, our soldiers are making a difference -- the difference between a war that resumes and a peace that can take hold.
We have asked the men and women of our military to bear the burden of American leadership. And they are rising to the challenge with strength, skill and determination. The soldiers I've talked to are proud of their accomplishments and ready for the hard work ahead. I know the American people are proud of them -- and that they join me in saying Godspeed to the men and women of the world’s finest military as they carry out their mission of peace in Bosnia.

Thanks for listening.
PRESIDENT WILLIAM JEFFERSON CLINTON
ADDRESS TO TROOPS
TASZAR, HUNGARY
JANUARY 13, 1996
[Acknowledgments:] General Abrams, thank you for those good words. I’m glad to be with you and with General Shalikashvili; General Joulwan; and General Crouch. I’m sorry that General Bill Bell -- who had to leave Taszar because of his wife Katie’s illness -- couldn’t be here too. But I know he’s with us in spirit, and that everyone’s thoughts and prayers are with him and Katie.

Men and women of the 21st Theater Army Area Command... the 1st Armored Division... the 29th Support Group... the 30th Medical Brigade -- and everyone taking part in Operation Joint Endeavor: I am proud to be with you today.
A few moments ago, General Abrams briefed me on all that you have achieved here in Hungary. As many of you know, General Abrams’ father, Creighton Abrams, gave his name to the M1A1 tank that is helping you keep the peace in Bosnia. I just reviewed a company of Abrams tanks that are about to convoy to Tuzla. When I look out at all of you, I can’t help but think that the Abrams is a pretty good symbol for this whole operation.
The Abrams is the best all-around tank in the world -- and you’re the best all-around fighting force in the world. Like the Abrams, you’re combat proven. You’re fast. You’re tough. And when you need to be, you’re lethal. In fact, I could find only one difference between the Abrams and the men and women of Operation Joint Endeavor: they say the Abrams is very, very quiet -- but General Abrams tells me you’ve been known to make a little noise...

I’ve just come from Tuzla, where I spent the day with your friends and fellow troops of Task Force Eagle. They are doing an outstanding job.
For those of you heading to Tuzla, I’d like to be able to report that deluxe accommodations await you. Well, that would be stretching the truth. But they’ve got showers and heaters and Red Horse tents with hard floors and electricity. Some soldiers have turned their MRE boxes into dressers, shelves and tables. And they’re even doing custom conversions on the Humvees, complete with car stereos. With a little bit of ingenuity -- and lots of plywood, duct tape and sandbags -- our soldiers are making Tuzla the next best thing... to Taszar.
But most important, Task Force Eagle is heavily armed and very well prepared. The airfield and communications are up and running. J-STAR aircraft are patrolling high above the clouds... the Navy and Marines are keeping watch from the Adriatic... Apache gunships are flying the treetops... and the Special Forces are everywhere. The operation in Bosnia is moving ahead step-by-step -- steadily... surely... and safely.

Let me say to those of you based here in Hungary -- none of this would be happening without you. You provide the "beans, bullets and black oil" that keep our people fed, armed and ready to roll.
As of today -- in just one month -- 12,000 troops... 700 trucks... and 200 trains have passed through Taszar. Our airplanes have flown 400 sorties. You've got a 300-bed hospital up and running and a tent city for 7,000 troops. That's one impressive track record -- and you should feel very good about the job you're doing.

It's an important job. Just before I left Washington, I signed an Executive Order that creates a new campaign medal. It's called the Armed Forces Service Medal, and it will be awarded to all those who serve our nation in significant non-combat military missions such as peacekeeping operations.
I am pleased to announce that, as participants in Operation Joint Endeavor, each of you will receive America’s newest military honor.

I also want to express my gratitude to the people of Hungary, to its government and to its military, for their hospitality, cooperation and professionalism. Remember this -- just six years ago, Hungary was still part of the Warsaw Pact. Now, it is home to the largest American military operation in Europe since World War II.
I am proud that the hard work we have done getting the Partnership for Peace off the ground and preparing to open NATO’s doors to new members has made this teamwork perfectly normal.

In Bosnia itself, you will be joined by other new friends -- Polish and Czech combat battalions... Hungarian engineering corps... soldiers from the Baltic states... and a Russian brigade. When your mission is completed, all of you will be able to look back at this new partnership of former adversaries and say: we made history.
Men and women of Operation Joint Endeavor: I know you’ve been trained to fight wars -- and to win them. You’re the best in the world at that.

This mission is different. We’ve asked you not to fight a war -- but to give a people exhausted by war the strength to make -- and stay at -- peace. You will succeed because you’re the finest fighting force in the world. And your presence in Bosnia can make the difference between a war that starts again... and a peace that takes hold.
All over the world, people look to America for help, hope and inspiration. We can’t be everywhere. We can’t do everything. But where we can make a difference -- and where our values and interests are at stake -- we must act. That’s the case in Bosnia. All of it’s people are looking to America. And so America looks to you -- the men and women of our armed forces.

I know that you and your families bear the heaviest burden of America’s leadership. We ask you to travel far from home... to be apart from your loved ones... to take on difficult and sometimes dangerous missions. We ask all these things -- and time and again, you deliver.
So I wanted to come here with one simple message: the American people are proud of what you’re doing... they’re proud of how you’re doing it... and they’re proud of you.

To each and every one of you: Godspeed... and God Bless our United States of America.
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