

Dutch forces, and to explore how Tuzla airstrip might be opened. Now, either of these activities could require the use of NATO, including United States air power. We also have a continuing commitment to and the opportunity to use air power to protect the United Nations troops there if that is needed for close air support.

Now, these are the actions which have been taken. In other words, we have reaffirmed our position of last August, which is an important thing to have done in light of the recent shelling of Sarajevo. We have instructed our military command to come up with plans to see what can be done to ensure the rotation of the troops in Srebrenica and the opening of the Tuzla airstrip. And those plans, as has been said by the Secretary General, can include the use of air power.

Let me just mention one or two other things. While the WEU and other European international bodies would play an important role in meeting the security challenges in Europe in the coming years, I still believe that NATO remains the linchpin of our mutual security. And so, as we finish this summit, I want to say a special word of thanks to Secretary General Woerner for his remarkable leadership. I have had the opportunity now to meet and work with many leaders around the world. He is a genuine statesman. He understands what is at stake here. He has a vision of the future, and he leads this alliance with great vision and discipline. And I thank him for that.

I also want to thank the other NATO leaders for their hospitality and especially the Prime Minister of Belgium and the people of Belgium and Brussels for their hospitality to us. I believe this was a very successful meeting. They had accomplished everything that I hoped, and I think as the years go by we will be glad that it occurred.

Bosnia

Q. Could you please tell us whether or not there was unanimous belief by the NATO allies that these air strikes could go forward, or is there something that still needs to be done before you can actually commit to movement?

The President. There was unanimous—and I want to be very clear on this—there was unanimous support for the policy as it is written. Everybody voted for it. In order to trigger the air strikes, what must happen? I want to empha-

size two things. One is, whether they occur or not depends upon the behavior of the Bosnian Serbs from this moment forward. Secondly, based on that behavior, our military personnel will take this issue back to the NAC in our absence, and we will deal with it. And of course, we will consult with the U.N. if it is something that involves the use of air power other than to give support to the U.N. forces as already approved.

So that is what I think—at that point, we'll deal with the facts. Some of us, I think it's clear, were stronger than others about the appropriateness of it under the circumstances that we now know about or could imagine. But I think the accurate thing is there was unanimous support for the policy, which means everybody who voted for it recognized that air power might well be used. What happens now depends upon the behavior of the combatants, principally the Bosnian Serbs, and what the military commanders come back and recommend.

Partnership For Peace and NATO

Q. When you get to Prague, in light of this meeting and in light of your own feelings, will you be in a position to tell at least some of the Visegrad leaders that they are in fact on a fast track toward membership in NATO?

The President. I think I'll be in a position to tell them, number one, the purpose of the Partnership For Peace is to open the possibility of NATO's enlargement as well as to give all the former Warsaw Pact countries and other non-NATO nations in Europe the chance to cooperate with us militarily, that NATO is an alliance with mutual responsibilities as well as the security guarantee. And we are clearly serious about pursuing this, including ultimate membership, as evidenced by the fact that the Secretary General said in his closing remarks—I don't know what he said here in the press conference because I didn't hear it—he said in his closing remarks that General Joulwan would immediately contact the military leaders of these countries, including the Visegrad countries, to talk about how we could begin planning for mutual operations in training and exercise.

So I think that they will clearly understand that this is a very serious proposal that opens the possibility of membership, not one that limits it.