

*Bosnia*

*Q.* Mr. President, the Secretary General said in his remarks that the instrument is there regarding Bosnia and other threats, but he's not sure that the will is there. Now, you just mentioned unanimity. It was a unanimous vote, as we understand it, last August for the same policy, yet many attacks have taken place in Sarajevo and have been unanswered by NATO. So first, do you think that there is a greater will now; do you sense a greater determination despite the misgivings of those peacekeepers on the ground? And secondly, is there a lower threshold, do you think, given this language that the British and the French, we understand, proposed on Tuzla and Srebrenica? Is there a lower threshold to use air power in those instances than for the wider air attacks regarding Sarajevo?

*The President.* I would make two points in response to your question. One is, I don't know that the threshold is lower, but there are more instances in which air power can be used now under the NATO policy. That is, clearly the policy asks our military command to explain how we can guarantee the troop rotation in Srebrenica and how we can open the airstrip at Tuzla, including the use of air power. So there are clearly more opportunities for it.

Secondly, is there still a difference of opinion about whether and how quickly we should use air power, especially to relieve a shelling of Sarajevo? I think on today's facts there are clearly some differences among the allies. And let me just mention one consideration. Those countries that have troops there are understandably concerned about the danger to their troops. If we use air power, are they more likely to be retaliated against? On the other hand, I think they're closer to being willing to use it than they were in August because a lot of them are very sensitive to the fact that their troops seem to be in more danger now than they were in August and that their casualties are increasing.

So do I think we are closer to real unanimity than we were in August? I do. Would they all vote the same in a given-fact situation? I don't know. That's why I think it depends largely on what the Bosnian Serbs do.

*Q.* Given the fact that there is still some difference of opinion, doesn't this come close to failing your own test from your intervention,

that why threaten if you're not going to have the will to—

*The President.* But I believe, based on what several of them said to me privately, they are more prepared to deal with this than they were in August. That is, Secretary General Woerner and I both said, "Let us not put this language back in unless we mean it. Let us clearly understand that we must mean it if we put it in this time." And they voted unanimously to put it in. And afterward several of them came to me privately and said, "Of course, we have reservations about what happens to our troops, but we have reservations about what happens to our troops under the status quo, and we are prepared to go forward with this."

*Q.* Concerning Bosnia, can we say today that you and President Mitterrand are on the same wavelength; do you agree, no more bones of contention?

*The President.* Yes. I've been a little surprised by the press reports that indicate to the contrary. I strongly supported President Mitterrand and Prime Minister Major's amendment adding Tuzla and Srebrenica to the resolution. I did not support substituting Tuzla and Srebrenica for the general commitment to use air power to relieve the siege of Sarajevo, for a very important reason. I think that it will be very hard for the U.N. mission to succeed. That is, keep in mind what the U.N. mission is doing, by the way, folks. We have the longest airlift in history there. We are trying to enforce the embargo. We are trying to enforce the no-fly zone. In other words, we are trying to contain the combat and the loss and trying to keep open humanitarian aid, hoping that we can all do something to convince all three sides that they have a real interest in stopping killing each other and taking whatever agreement they can get now.

Now, I believe if Sarajevo is destroyed and cannot function as a center for all kinds of activities, it will be very difficult for the U.N. mission to succeed. The French and the British have troops on the ground there. They naturally have more reservation about the use of air power in response to the shelling of Sarajevo than nations that may not have troops on the ground there. I understand that. They agreed with my position, and I strongly agreed with theirs. I do not believe there is a difference of opinion between us on this policy now.