

threats without carrying them out, without delivering? At what point does it become, as you warned about yesterday, an empty threat?

*President Clinton.* Well, first of all, we have two different issues here. The French and the British proposed the motion to ask our military planners to come up with a strategy to ensure the rotation of troops in Srebrenica and to see whether with the use of air power or some other device we might secure the opening of the airstrip at Tuzla to continue the U.N. mission, the humanitarian mission. So we'll await the plan and see what happens.

On the question of the use of air strikes in retaliation for the strangulation of Sarajevo, that is largely going to be a function of the behavior of the people who have been shelling Sarajevo, the Bosnian Serbs. When you say how long, it depends on what is their behavior. Is the shelling going to abate now, as it did after August when we adopted the resolution? And then it basically escalated dramatically only relatively recently. Or will they continue to do it? And then we'll see if our resolve is there. My resolve is there; that's all I can tell you. And I believe the people in that room knew what they were doing when they voted for this resolution. When you say how long, it depends in part on what will be the conduct from this day forward of those who have been responsible for shelling Sarajevo.

*Integration of East and West*

*Q.* I had a question on Partnership For Peace. And I'd be grateful if, Mr. President, you could answer and then perhaps President Delors, too. With hindsight, I wonder whether you don't think you missed a trick by making entry into NATO for the former Communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe work on the same track as entry into the European Union. Would this not have been a more credible approach for Partnership For Peace?

*President Clinton.* I'll be glad to answer that question, but I think perhaps I should defer to President Delors since he has a much better sense of how the membership track for the European Union works and let him answer the question that you specifically posed, and then I'll also respond. And perhaps Prime Minister Papandreou will respond.

*President Delors.* Back in 1989, already with the events that took place then, the summit of industrialized nations dealt at length with this

question: How, after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of communism, could we make it possible for the countries in question to get back onto the track of pluralist democracy and open economy? And then it seemed to us that immediate entry by the countries in question into the European Union would be more damaging for them than would be a period of preparation and adaptation. We were afraid then that there would be a clash between the strong and the weak, however much aid we could give them. So a period of transition was necessary. It was in the context of the mission that was entrusted to the European Community and to the Commission that we endeavored to help them in order to make it possible for them to progress in parallel along the two tracks that I have indicated today. After 4 years of experience and speaking in my personal name, I am ready to take stock of this aid to which the Community has contributed a lot.

May I recall that in 1989, the European Union only represented 25 percent of the external trade of the countries of Eastern Europe. Now we represent 60 percent. And so we have replaced COMECON, and that was absolutely necessary. We have doubled our imports over 3 years from these countries. We represent 60 percent of total aid, including the aid from the international financial organizations. But we cannot replace them. These countries are responsible countries. They have to learn the workings of an open economy and democracy. Of course, there are claims; in our countries there are also people that are recommending other solutions. But I still think that immediate entry to the European Union would have been very damaging to them, irrespective of what our leaders would have had to explain to our citizens who are taxpayers.

For today, we have to take stock of what's happened, but not do this having in mind the idea that we could substitute for them. They are responsible for the fates. Some of them have chosen the "big bang" approach in order to reform their economies. I deplore this, and I feel that this was one of the reasons for the return of the former Communists and others. Others have taken a more gradualist approach. But each country was different. Czechoslovakia was traditionally an industrial country. Hungary, even out of communism, had begun experiments in decentralization way back in 1970. So we cannot act in their stead. Today, they have to face a