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Genocide
June 30, 1994 appearance before SFRC

SEC. CHRISTOPHER: Senator, with respect to GATT, you raised questions about the World Trade Organization. I think that organization is strongly in the interests of the United States. It's been not only a bipartisan theme it's been, I think, a strong Republican position that we needed to have strong, multilateral enforcement of trade rules around the world. The United States is usually the one that is trying to enforce trade rules with respect to violations from other countries. So I think that the World Trade Organization will in the long term be a great benefit to the United States business and industry because it provides a mechanism to ensure that there are not violations in other countries. We've had to go hat in hand frequently when we found violations of various trading rules. But now we'll have a mechanism that can be more effective in that regard.

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I understand that this needs to have careful explanation to the people of the United States, and we need once again to point out the benefits of the multilateral trading system. But I think those benefits have provided prosperity for much of the world, for the part that was able to take advantage of it. And so I think if we can work together on this and if we can finally get over the budget hurdle, then I think we can see a GATT organization that will be fully effective for the future.

As to the consequences of not ratifying GATT, I can't imagine anything that would be more negative for the image of the United States. Here we were one of the leaders in encouraging other countries to reach the GATT agreement last December, pressing our

European allies, pushing in Asia, pushing Japan, getting concessions here and there, and now if we come up to it and fail to take this next step of ratification, I think the United States would have forfeited the leadership that we urgently need in world economic matters.

On Rwanda --

SEN. KASSEBAUM: Mr. Secretary, if I may just interject, I agree with you, but I think this has to be a full court press on the part of the administration so the public can be reassured in understanding the importance of this.

SEC. CHRISTOPHER: I'll take that message back down to the building where it will be most useful, Senator.

With respect to Rwanda, I'd like to see if I couldn't dispel this fog about the issue of genocide. The international treaties use the word "acts of genocide," and it's for that reason that we have used, with respect to both Bosnia and Rwanda, the phrase "acts of genocide." But if the question is asked to me, as it was when I was overseas a couple of weeks ago whether there was genocide, I have no hesitation in saying that there was genocide in Rwanda and had been genocide, is genocide, in Bosnia as well.

Now, what that requires us to do under the treaty is to prevent and punish, and I think is living up to those responsibilities. That's not a singular responsibility on the United States; no one country has a unilateral responsibility. It's a generalized responsibility, and

we're trying to carry that out through the creation of a war crimes tribunal for Bosnia, which is fairly far along. I met with the deputy prosecutor the other day and he told me about the assembling of his staff and the development of facts with respect to Rwanda. I'm not sure whether you were in the room, Senator, but there's a United Nations commission of inquiry determining -- you know, we know there was genocide but I don't think we can say with any certainty who was responsible. So, we are proceeding on that front.

With respect to the French, you're absolutely right. Their intervention there is a time-limited one; they hope to be out in a couple of months and hope to turn it over to the African nations and the African nations are coming forward. We have a standing willingness to discuss with any of the troop contributors how we might help with the logistics. We offered that to the French and we'd be glad to offer that to other countries.

I think that's an appropriate measure of the United States. We have the resources to do that, which very few other -- we have the equipment to do it, I should say, which very few other countries do. And so we'll be proceeding along those lines. I do hope that the OAU can be effective here. Secretary General Salim-Salim was here, and I talked to him at length on both Sunday and Monday about the OAU's growing responsibilities here and I think they will be quite effective.

On Syria and Israel, Senator, both parties are serious about the negotiations. There are very big stakes. The early issues are very contentious. There are two of the toughest negotiators in the world, I think, in President Assad and Prime Minister Rabin. I've never met with people who I thought were firmer and more intelligent about their negotiations. But I think their very seriousness is a good sign. And as I said, I'll be going back to the region on the 17th of July to try to see if we can't move that process forward.

I think the time is ripe, I hope I'm right.

SEN. KASSEBAUM: Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

SEN. PELL: Thank you very much. Senator Feingold?

SEN. FEINGOLD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let me just quickly --

SEC. CHRISTOPHER: Good morning, Senator.

SEN. FEINGOLD: Good morning, Mr. Secretary. Could we go back to Rwanda for a minute, then I want to talk about a couple other things. Rwanda is sitting on the U.N. Security Council right now and is scheduled to chair the Security Council in the month of September. However, officials who proclaim themselves the government of Rwanda -- after April 6th assassination of the president of Rwanda -- should not be, in my view, legitimized in any way. The government consists of people who -- we've just been discussing this -- have been implicated in genocide and the most extreme human rights abuses. Which government exactly is the U.N. liaison to the Security Council representing and is he not representing an illegitimate government?

SEN. CHRISTOPHER: Senator, that's a delicate issue, as you might imagine, at the