

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2022

Remarks at a Thanksgiving Dinner With Servicemembers and Military Families at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, North Carolina

November 21, 2022

Thank you very much. Imagine: This has to be boring, boring, boring for these kids to stand up here. *[Laughter]* You're allowed to do anything you want, including go steal a pumpkin if you want. Anything you want to do.

Folks, it's an honor for Jill and I to be here. You know, we've had—the reason we came is, the chef is not bad. You know, we've had a lot of meals with him in the past. Thank you. Thank you for all you do.

You know, to be here with the—with the marines and sailors of the 2d Marine Expeditionary Force is a great honor. You know, I've gotten to see you all in the mountains of—and I mean this sincerely—the mountains of Bosnia. I've seen you in Iraq. I've seen you in Afghanistan. And you're incredible.

The American people have no idea the sacrifices you're making. One percent—1 percent—of you represents 99 percent of the public. You're all volunteers. You all just show up. And you're always there for—and we have a—I used to get in trouble for saying, when I was a Senator, America has a lot of responsibilities, but only one sacred responsibility. And I mean this sincerely from the bottom of my heart. It is that—that is to equip those we send into harm's way and care for them and their families when they come home.

Because as I said, you represent 1 percent of the population. And you defend the rest of us. You are the—you're the backbone, the sinew, the spine of the country. And you really are. And so I just want to come—we wanted to come and tell you how much we appreciate all you've done.

And you know, John Milton, the famous poet, said: They also stand—they also serve who only stand and wait. Your mothers, your fathers, your husbands, your wives—many times, they're not able to be with you—like now, for many of you. And they're serving too.

I remember when our son Beau was in Kosovo for 6 months as a U.S. attorney, and then he volunteered to head to Iraq for a year. And every morning, I'd get up before—Jill, my wife, is a teacher. She'd get—she's up earlier than me. She'd be out of the house by 7 o'clock. And I'd walk into the kitchen, and she'd be with her coffee, standing over the sink, saying a prayer. Just saying a prayer every single day.

Because your parents, when you're deployed, they don't know; their spouses don't know for sure. Every single day, they worry about you. Every single moment. And so we owe them too. We owe them a big debt of gratitude.

And the other thing is, you know, one of the things that people don't understand and they—until they run into you, is, you are literally, not figuratively, the greatest fighting force, the best fighting force in the history of the world. That's not hyperbole. In the history of the world. It's not a joke. And you really are an incredible group of women and men.

And, again, I want to thank the spouses as well, because they put up with an awful lot of your—because of your service. And a lot of those empty tables—I don't know how many birthdays you've had there's been an empty chair back at your home, with your parents looking at that chair, wondering are you all right, especially if you're deployed.

So, anyway, thank you, thank you, thank you for all you've done.

By the way, I'm serving mashed potatoes, so come to my place. I'm the—all kidding aside, thank you for everything you've done.

And you know, there's a lot—the rest of—I—I travel the world a lot, because as—before this as Vice President, before that as chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee. And no one—no one—in the world misunderstands your competence. No one in the world misunderstands that you are the finest fighting force in the world. That is not a joke. That's the God's truth.

So thank you, thank you, thank you. And I hope you have a great Thanksgiving and a good Christmas. God bless you all. Thank you.

Now, I'm not supposed to bless anybody. I'm supposed to call the chaplain up here. Where's the chaplain? Is he around? Oh, there you are, Chaplain. Okay. I was going to say your prayer for you, but I'm going to give that up.

All right, you know, I—they got lucky. I decided not to do what you're doing. *[Laughter]* So here you go. It's all yours.

Marine Air Corps Station Chaplain Cmdr. Wesley Myhand, USN. Thank you, sir.

The President. Thank you very much.

[At this point, Chaplain Myhand said a blessing; no transcript was provided. The President then continued as follows.]

One more thing, I want to thank the Governor, who is here, for the passport to come into the State. Thank you, Gov. *[Laughter]*

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:15 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to chef Robert Irvine; and Gov. Roy A. Cooper III of North Carolina.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Thanksgiving dinner with servicemembers and military families at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, NC.

Locations: Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, NC.

Names: Biden, Jill T.; Cooper, Roy A., III; Irvine, Robert; Myhand, Wesley.

Subjects: Military families; North Carolina, Governor; North Carolina, Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point; North Carolina, President's visit; Thanksgiving; U.S. Marine Corps; U.S. servicemembers, service and dedication.

DCPD Number: DCPD202201065.