

Remarks to Community Members at Cherry Point Marine Corps Air Station in North Carolina

February 1, 1991

Thank you very much for that warm welcome. And it's a wonderful honor to be introduced by Ms. Hearney, whose husband is doing such an outstanding job for the country. Let me salute the Secretary of the Navy, Larry Garrett; of course, General Al Gray, upon whom I depend so much as a member of the Joint Chiefs; and General Mundy and General Richwine and Colonel McDyre and, of course, Governor Martin, the Governor of this great State—an old friend, Jim Martin; and Mrs. Krulak and Mrs. Sutton; families and friends and members of “the few, the proud, the Marines.”

There's a song which speaks of “Carolina in the Morning.” Well, I am very pleased to be here this morning to salute all of you who form the magnificent Carolina MAGTF [Marine Air Ground Task Force].

Admiral Bull Halsey—if you'll forgive me, a Navy man—[*laughter*—once called you “not merely the elite Corps of this country but the elite Corps of this world.” And I agree. Let me tell you, it's a real privilege—and I mean that—to be at a home base of the United States Marine Corps.

For 216 years, the corps has helped write the story of America. And today—in wartime, as in peacetime—you write that story still. It is the story of *Semper Fi*—Always Faithful—to the liberty which set men free.

My squadron helped cover the landings at Guam and Saipan, and I was way up there and those marines were way down there. And I saw their courage then, firsthand. Think of the marines storming the beaches at Iwo; or taking the shell-torn ridges at Chosin, Guadalcanal; patrolling the skies from Okinawa to Korea; and now in Saudi Arabia.

As I said Tuesday night in my State of the Union speech, to be an American means writing new chapters in this story. It means enlisting in the cause of liberty and undertaking the hard work of freedom—a cause which, today in the Persian Gulf, your colleagues, friends, above all, families have bravely and willingly borne as marines have

always done.

It comes as little surprise that the first ground engagement in the Gulf involved marines. It comes as no surprise that the marines fought with great distinction and fought very bravely. Their professionalism and sacrifice will end the nightmare—I'm absolutely confident of that—will end the nightmare of Iraq's brutal occupation and ensure that Kuwait is once again free.

What's this T-shirt up here?

No, but their courage and commitment will help punish aggression and protect our new world order from the tyranny of ruthless dictators with no concern for human life.

We're now more than 2 weeks into Operation Desert Storm. My report to you today is that we are on course, we are on schedule, and things go well. Day by day, night by night, Iraq's capacity to wage war is being systematically destroyed by U.S. and coalition military forces. And our investment, our training, and our planning are paying off. And yes, achieving our goals will require time and sacrifice, but we will prevail—make no mistake about that. And when we do—and when we do, we will have taught a dangerous tyrant and those few who would follow in his footsteps that there is no place for lawless aggression in this critical region and in the new world order that we seek to create.

Every day, I think of our brave service men and women like the 2d Marine Airwing, 11 squadrons and 2 battalions deployed in the Gulf; the 2d Marine Division; and the 2d Force Service Support Group. Ninety percent of their members are deployed in the Gulf. And they, too, believe in a cause larger than themselves. And most of all, we think of all those who have given the last full measure of devotion, and I will always keep a place in my heart for the memories and especially for the families of these American heroes.

I'm told that not far from here yellow ribbons stretch as far as the eye can see.

And they show what a former President, a former general, Dwight Eisenhower, meant when he said, "Morale is the greatest single factor in successful wars." The communities of Jacksonville and Havelock care. And so, like communities all across America, they've joined hands to support military troops and their families. And I think of your schools, touching troops with their letters and their love. And the "Key Wives Program," linking families and hearts. And if there's anyone around this country who wonders what we're fighting for, they need look no farther than right here in this room.

Unfortunately, there are no medals of valor for military families. If there were, there would be as much decoration on your chests as there is pride within them. Two weeks ago, a monument was dedicated a mile from here. It has five service seals and this inscription: "Operation Desert Storm: This beacon burning bright is a constant reminder of Havelock's home fires burning in support of our military men and women and their families." To all of you—spouses, children, parents, loved ones, marines—you're doing more than just keeping the home fires burning. Your dedication and bravery is lighting the heart—believe me—it is lighting the heart of every American. You're hastening the day when your men and women will come home. And let me repeat this to the families: We will stay in the Gulf for as long as necessary, but not one day longer than it takes us to complete this mission.

Today, in the Gulf, marines are enduring much to keep America strong and great. Let me leave you with words that were written more than a century ago. Back then,

the marines had just landed on another distant shore, and a reporter wrote, "The Marines have landed, and the situation is well in hand." Nothing has changed, and nothing will.

You know, I heard on the radio, "The President is going to North Carolina to lift the morale of the people." Let me assure you, it's the other way around after seeing this group.

So, thank you, thank you for your support. God bless you and this great country. And most of all, God bless the finest soldiers, sailors, airmen, coastguardsmen, and marines any nation has ever had. Thank you very much.

Note: The President spoke at 8:43 a.m. in a hangar at the air station. In his remarks, he referred to Maggie Hearney, wife of Richard D. Hearney, commanding general, 2d Marine Air Wing; Secretary of the Navy H. Lawrence Garrett II; Gen. A.M. Gray, Jr., Marine Corps commandant; Lt. Gen. Carl E. Mundy, Jr., commanding general, Fleet Marine Force, Atlantic; Brig. Gen. David A. Richwine, commanding general, Marine Corps Air Station, Cherry Point; Col. Daniel B. McDyre, commander, 2d Marine Aircraft Wing; Gov. James G. Martin of North Carolina; Zandra Krulak, wife of Brig. Gen. Charles C. Krulak, commanding general, 2d Forces Service Support Group; Linda Sutton, wife of Brig. Gen. Russell H. Sutton, Director, Operations Division, Plans, Policies, and Operations Department; and President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. Following his remarks, President Bush traveled to Goldsboro, NC.

Remarks to Community Members at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base in Goldsboro, North Carolina

February 1, 1991

Thank you so very much. Cynthia, thank you for that introduction. This is the warmest picnic on a cold day I've ever attended, I'll tell you. And really, it's great to be here at Seymour Johnson, home of the 4th Tac-

tical Fighter Wing—the "Rocketeers" and the "Chiefs"—as well as these great refueling units, the 68th and the 916th. And let me just pay my respects and say what an unbelievable job Colonel "Jumbo" Wray is