

endangered species but about endangered jobs.

I am here to tell you that I'm the one who will respect the wildlife, yes. I think we all do. We all agree. But I'm also the one who will fight for jobs, for families, and for communities.

I have come here to tell you that I will not stand for a solution that puts at least 32,000 people out of work. It will not stand. I mean it.

I've come here to tell you that we haven't forgotten about the human factor. Because in the end, in the final analysis when all the campaigns are over and all the charge and countercharge takes place, the human factor, that is the most important factor of all.

I've come here today to tell you that we can restore the balance. We must restore the balance. And with your help, we will restore the balance.

May God bless your families, your jobs, your hopes for our great country. And may God bless the United States of America. Thank you all very, very much. Thank you. Thank you all.

Note: The President spoke at 6:30 p.m. at Burrill Lumber Co. In his remarks, he referred to company officers Michael Burrill, president and general manager, and Eugene Burrill, owner. The President also referred to the Endangered Species Act Exemption Committee ("God squad").

Remarks to the National Guard Association in Salt Lake City, Utah September 15, 1992

Thank you all so much. May I first thank General Ensslin for being my host here today, and all of you for that wonderful reception. And of course, I want to single out Utah's Governor, Norm Bangerter, who's just done a superb job for this—[*applause*]. I see we have some Utah Guard folks here. And while you're clapping, Jim Hanson, a Member of the United States Congress, doing a great job for our country. And may I salute all the leaders of the National Guard.

I understand, with some embarrassment, I understand that some of you may have had to go through room changes to—[*laughter*—sorry about that. I really feel badly about that. I apologize for any inconvenience. But I really am very, very pleased to be here with you.

I was thinking of giving a political speech, a real stemwinder with catchy sound bites, the usual biting insults. Then I got to thinking: I'm not going to do that; you've already sacrificed enough for your country. [*Laughter*]

Instead, I'd like to talk about a more serious subject: America's national defense and, really, our place in the world. I firmly believe that just because we face stiff chal-

lenges at home, and we do, it doesn't mean that America can pull in its wings and ignore the world outside our borders. Think of the world of change that we've seen the past few years. Today, the Berlin Wall, the Warsaw Pact, the Soviet Union itself, Soviet empire, all are gone, swept away by the most powerful idea known to man, the undeniable desire of every individual to be free. Remember the Communists' claim that history was on their side? Well, today, the "dominoes" all fall in democracy's way.

We must recognize these events for what they were: a vindication of our ideals, but also a victory for the men and women who fought for freedom, because this triumph didn't just happen. Imperial communism didn't just fall. It was pushed, and the National Guard was pushing every inch of the way. From Concord and Lexington Green to the sands of Desert Storm, guardsmen or their forefathers have served with distinction in every major war that America ever fought.

In August of 1990, within days of my decision to draw a line in the sand, more than 4,000 volunteers from National Guard units all across America were activated, airborne

and on the way to the Persian Gulf, the first of 767 National Guard units called up during Desert Storm. And when American troops rolled across the Iraqi border, and I'll never forget that day, the National Guard was among the very first to cross.

Here at home, when riots ripped South Central, ripped Los Angeles, the California Guard answered the call, 2,000 in just the first 6 hours. You went into the streets to protect the innocent against the outlaws, to restore the peace.

Late last month, when Hurricane Andrew roared in, again the National Guard answered the call, delivering 215 tons of food, water, and supplies to Miami in the first 24 hours alone, helping bring hot meals and comfort to people who had lost their homes. Guardsmen are working right now to bring comfort to the island of Kauai.

You've all seen the pictures of people hugging the Guardsmen in their fatigues. You know one thing for sure; it wasn't to thank them for their cooking. But nevertheless—[laughter]—what the Guard is doing in Homestead and Hawaii and in Lafayette Parish is a godsend. It shows us the true meaning of service, of leadership, of love of country.

This is an important task for which the Guard has and will continue to have the primary responsibility and where we only turn to our Active Forces for backup. Indeed, that happened in the Miami situation, as you know. It's happening now out in Hawaii as well. We need to know that the Guard is there, there for the crises at home, there for the challenges abroad, there when a nation in need looks to you to protect life and liberty.

As all of you know, our cold war victory means a downsizing in our national defenses, Active, Reserve, and Guard alike. But we remain committed to our total force concept: the smallest standing army consistent with our national security and yet large enough to deal with any likely threat. For that total force policy to be effective, a strong Army and Air National Guard are absolutely essential.

Let me be clear: Maintaining strong, capable Reserve and Guard forces will remain essential to our military strategy. You are part of the flexible forces we will need to

meet our new military challenges. In fact, we can move certain units or functions from Active Forces to the Reserves to lower costs. At the same time, we recognize the need to be sensitive to the demands placed on individual National Guardsmen, Reservists, and really to their families. As true citizen-soldiers, our Guardsmen must devote time to their families, civilian occupations, or education. If we intrude upon you for every trouble, we may find it hard to keep the very best soldiers that characterize the Guard today.

I know that my opponent will be following me today. So you can expect to hear stories about my administration's cutback of the Guard. Of course, the new National Guard will be smaller, just as our Active Forces are being reduced. Anyone who tells you different is simply not leveling with you. But as long as I am President of the United States, the National Guard will be well-trained and well-equipped. And as Commander in Chief I can assure you, we will never shortchange the National Guard.

Yes, I'm cutting back defense spending with the end of the cold war, through orderly and deliberate downsizing. But don't forget the facts. My opponent proposes to cut nearly \$60 billion beyond which my civilian and military experts believe is responsible, \$60 billion more than the cuts that I have proposed. Now, let me say this: You cannot cut \$60 billion more from defense and not touch the Armed Forces. You simply cannot do it.

We have to be very careful with our defense downsizing. At other times in our history, political leaders rushed to carve apart our military—we remember that—leaving only a hollow shell. Then other Americans paid a big price, paid even with their lives, for those mistakes.

The defense budget is more than a piggy bank for folks who want to get busy beating the swords into pork barrels. The President has got to stand up for an America second to none. And he must be able to say: America is safe, as long as America stays strong.

I learned the value of military strength the hard way, and some of you might identify with this, commanders of the Guard units. I learned it the hard way, by sending

our troops into battle. I am proud of our accomplishments, thankful that I've been able to give the order so many Presidents longed to give, for many of our nuclear forces to stand down from alert; proud to be the first President in 50 years to lead an America that's not at war, hot or cold.

But the fact is: For all the great gains we've made for freedom, for all the peace of mind that we've secured for the young people in this country, the world remains a dangerous place. The Soviet bear may be extinct, but there are still plenty of wolves in the world: dictators with missiles, narco-terrorists trying to take over whole countries, ethnic wars, regional flashpoints, madmen we can't allow to get a finger on the nuclear trigger. And you have my word on this: I will never allow a lone wolf to endanger American security. We must remain strong.

No, our work in the world did not end with our victory in the cold war. Our task is to guard against the crises that haven't caught fire, the wars that are waiting to happen, the threats that will come with little or no warning. I make this promise: As long as I am President, our services will remain the best trained, the best equipped, the best led fighting forces in the world. This is the way to guarantee the peace.

Let me add something else that's really close to my heart. Even as we respond to the new challenges, we must never forget those who flew and fought in face of the old. The one hero we must never forget is the hero who has never come home. And I pledge to every American family awaiting word of a loved one: We will continue to demand the fullest possible accounting for every POW and MIA. We will not have normal relations with Hanoi until we are totally satisfied on that account.

I speak of these matters this morning to this very special group because these matters are important. They're important to America. They're important to the whole world.

Like every nation, America today is challenged by a global economic transition. I have outlined my Agenda for American Renewal. It's a comprehensive series of actions that we must take to match our military supremacy by remaining the world's largest

export superpower and economic superpower. Yet I hope that in our zeal to concentrate on these problems here at home, we do not forget America's unique role abroad. Other nations still look to us for leadership: military leadership, moral leadership, and economic leadership.

As one who has held this office for 4 years, I hope that when evaluating the two men who want this job, Americans will not ignore the President's role as Commander in Chief.

There's been a lot of controversy swirling around about service to country, about using influence to avoid the military. I've read a great deal of speculation saying that I was going to come out here and use this forum to attack Governor Clinton. I want to tell you, I do feel very strongly about certain aspects of the controversy swirling around Governor Clinton, but I didn't come here to attack him. I came to defend and support the National Guard and those who serve in it.

Four years ago, Dan Quayle was savagely attacked and ridiculed by the national press for going into the National Guard. His critics attacked the Guard as a haven for draft dodgers. Those critics are wrong. Dan Quayle spent 6 years in the Indiana National Guard. He was not sent to Vietnam, but some of his fellow Guardsmen were. And four of them never came back.

No candidate has ever been attacked more unmercifully than Vice President Quayle, but he stood his ground, and he answered every question calmly and with candor. He told the truth. This is service to country, and I am very proud of the Vice President, and I am very proud of the National Guard.

But why do these questions even matter? Why are they part of our national debate? They matter because despite all our problems at home, we can never forget that we ask our Presidents to lead the military, to bear the awful authority of deciding to send your sons and daughters in harm's way.

I remember the night of Desert Storm. Barbara and I had Dr. Billy Graham over for dinner there in the White House. And our family—we still say the blessing at night. So we said our little prayer together,

enjoyed some conversation, but my mind, I will confess, was thousands of miles away.

And after dinner—I don't know if you can picture the White House complex—I went down the elevator in the White House and then walked across by the Rose Garden over to the Oval Office, waiting to hear the results of the initial strike. I remember walking along the Rose Garden and thinking. I was wondering if our military estimates were really accurate—General McPeak having briefed me in detail, an amazing briefing of what he was confident the Air Force could do—wondering if it was accurate, if our smart bombs were as smart as Tony McPeak and other experts told me they were. But mostly, I wondered how our young men and women in the sands of Kuwait felt and about their parents back home.

In the months after that fateful night, I received letters from proud parents, and I tried to read as many as I could. But I lingered longest on the occasional note from the parent whose son or daughter had not returned.

This summer, I got a letter from a woman in Illinois. And her son had been lost in a helicopter accident, no body ever discovered. On the day she received word, she received a letter from her son. He said, "Mom and Dad, don't worry about me. I love the Marines, and I love my country." And this July, the mother wrote, "As a Gold Star Mother it is difficult to accept my son's death, but he is alive in my heart. And I could be bitter with the military and God, but my son would never want me to."

I know the commanders here know I feel a little emotional about this. But you get letters like these, and you can almost see the faces, faces of youth and innocence. You feel the weight of the job. Sending a son or daughter into combat, believe me, is the toughest part of the Presidency. Most Presidents never learn that lesson because,

thank God, most don't have to ask others to put their lives on the line. But every President might.

Does this mean that if you have never seen the awful horror of battle, that you can never be Commander in Chief? Of course not. Not at all. But it does mean that we must hold our Presidents to the highest standard because they might have to decide if our sons and daughters should knock early on death's door.

I hope that I am reelected President this November. Like my opponent, I believe I'm best qualified. But I wish for something else even more. I hope that whomever is elected to this office, at whatever time in the future, he doesn't have to face the awful decision that I had to face twice. I hope that the next 4 years will pass, indeed, I hope that the next four decades will pass without the blood of young Americans being shed on foreign shores.

Today, we can say this future is possible, but no one can say for sure it will happen. So I commit to you, the proud members and families of the National Guard, that as long as I am fortunate to hold this office, I will fight for a strong defense, for a strong America, for an America that, despite our troubles at home, remains the last beacon of hope and strength around the world.

The Guard has always been a proud part of America's world leadership, and I know you'll continue to help us lead in this new world that we have forged together.

Thank you all, and may God bless the United States of America. Thank you very, very much.

Note: The President spoke at 9:03 a.m. at the Salt Palace Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Maj. Gen. Robert F. Ensslin, Jr., Ret., president, National Guard Association, and Gen. Merrill A. McPeak, Chief of Staff, U.S. Air Force.