

military. And for that we are all very grateful. Many of you have spent your entire careers in uniform, your service profound, often putting you at risk of providing what President Lincoln called "the last full measure of devotion." We honor you more than we can say.

And many of you are the young people here in AmeriCorps. When I was inaugurated President, I called America to a season of service, and I asked our young people to lead the way. Thankfully, Congress has given them that opportunity, and they have responded with their responsibility in the national service program. And so we honor them for their service as well.

Later today, 40 of these young people, those in the yellow outfits, will be leaving to fight the forest fires that are raging in the West, that have already claimed so much of our natural heritage and, unfortunately, the lives of some of our finest citizens. To them and to all the other corps members who are here and to the tens of thousands who will take the pledge of service with us tomorrow at the White House and all across America as we formally kick off the first full year of AmeriCorps with 20,000 young people across this country, let us say to them, we honor your service as well, and we thank you for the high calling you have answered.

These young people will be doing a lot of things, working in education, working to help the environment, working to deal with people's human needs, working to help to increase the safety and security of our neighborhoods and our schools and our streets. Some may be working with the veterans now at Perry Point Hospital or connecting young students to the world

of knowledge in Baltimore classrooms right here in Maryland. Some will be tying service and science together as they work to reclaim the Chesapeake Bay or deal with the problems of the Anacostia down in the District of Columbia.

Every one of you represents the oldest and best of America's traditions. This country really got started by a bunch of volunteers. Nobody made them do what they did. They all had to sign up on their own accord. Now we are run, from our national security all the way down to our most elemental function in every community in this country, by a nation of volunteers, not by Government edict, not by large bureaucracies but by the spirit of service and devotion that burns within the heart of every American.

So for all of you, and especially for these young people who may launch a whole generation of renewal of service all across this country, I say God bless you and all who serve, and thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:25 a.m. in the base chapel at Aberdeen Proving Ground, where AmeriCorps volunteers in the National Civilian Community Corps had received training. In his remarks, he referred to Chaplain (Lt. Col.) O. Wayne Smith; Maj. Gen. Richard W. Tragemann, commander, Aberdeen Proving Ground, and his wife, Kathy; Maj. Gen. James Monroe, chief of ordnance and commander, U.S. Army Ordnance Center and School; Brig. Gen. Don Scott, USA (Ret.), president, National Civilian Community Corps; James M. Bosley, deputy installation commander, Aberdeen Proving Ground; and congregation members celebrating special occasions.

Remarks to Organizations of the Jewish Community *September 12, 1994*

Prime Minister Rabin, ladies and gentlemen, I'm very pleased to have this chance to address all of you, gathered from some 70 communities across the United States.

It is with thanks for the remarkable year we have just lived and optimism for the New Year that I wish you peace, health, and happiness in the months ahead. *Shana Tova!*

What a year it's been. Twelve months ago tomorrow I was privileged to host Prime Minister Rabin and Chairman Arafat on the South Lawn of the White House. Many of you were there to witness their historic handshake, which marked the dawn of a new era in the Middle East, one of conciliation and hope. Their brave, historic act paved the way for others.

This summer, King Hussein of Jordan and Prime Minister Rabin at the White House came here to end the state of war between Israel and Jordan and to start down the road of warm friendship and cooperation. As Prime Minister Rabin stated then so eloquently, "A million eyes all over the world are watching us now with great relief and great joy. Yet another nightmare of war may be over. At the same time, millions of eyes in the Middle East are looking at us now with great hope, heartfelt hope, that our children and grandchildren will know no more war."

I applaud Israel's courage, and I salute the Arab leaders—including the King of Morocco, who last week began the process of establishing diplomatic relations with Israel—for standing up for the naysayers and embracing change. By working to secure a future of peace and prosperity, these far-sighted statesmen will fulfill their people's hopes and their yearnings for the quiet miracle of a normal life.

Already we see the fruits of their efforts. Palestinians and Israelis are learning every day how to live side by side in peace. Jordanian planes may now fly over Israel. Tourists visiting the Dead Sea can cross from Eilat to Aqaba. These are small steps, but they lay the foundation for much greater strides to come.

Now, the international community must do all it can to ensure that Arabs and Israelis realize the full benefits of peace. At the same time, we have a right to expect that the participants in the peace process live up to their commitments. And we also hope that all those in the region who have been urging us to continue to play an energetic role will do their part, too, in particular by taking steps now to dismantle the Arab boycott of Israel.

As we look to the year ahead, I hope and I believe that we'll see even greater progress toward a comprehensive peace in the region, a peace that joins Israelis, Palestinians, Jordanians, Syrians, and Lebanese so that all their children will come to know a better future. More than 100 of these children, participants in the 1994 Seeds for Peace program that have met at the White House this past Friday before returning to their homes, they just spent a month together in Maine, learning about one another, breaking down barriers, building ties.

These young men and women told me that in just a few short weeks, first names replaced ethnic and religious labels. Mistrust turned into curiosity. Fear gave way to friendship. These kinds of person-to-person relationships, multiplied thousands of times through business ventures, joint projects, trade, and regional cooperation, will help ensure that the olive branch of peace stretches its bough across the entire Middle East.

Nurturing peace is hard work. The dark forces of terror remain deeply entrenched, as horrible attacks against Jews in Argentina, Panama, and England recently demonstrated. But despite these terrible acts, it's essential that the American Jewish community continue its support for peace and the peace process.

As we move ahead, I urge you to keep the faith, because Israel, for the first time in its history, has the opportunity to achieve real peace. And I pledge to you that we will do our part to make sure that it is a lasting and secure peace.

I understand that in a few moments my friend Prime Minister Rabin will speak to you from Jerusalem. I want to reiterate to him my admiration for all he's done for his people and for the cause of peace.

Yitzhak, I wish you and your people a very Happy New Year. And remember, you've got an open invitation to visit the White House, because every time you come here we seem to move a step closer to lasting peace in the Middle East.

My fellow Americans, I hope that 12 months from now when we take stock of the year ahead, we'll have even more happy events to celebrate. Working together for peace, I believe we will.

Thank you.

NOTE: The address to the Council of Jewish Federations and the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations was taped on September 10 at 10:45 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House and was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 12. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this address.