

ons in general and specifically ending North Korea's nuclear program. I will also use these meetings to talk about the advance of human rights, worker rights, and democratic values. We must continue to pursue this path with patience, persistence, and determination.

Two other crucial events will follow this trip to Asia: the Summit of the Americas in Miami, with 33 other democratically elected leaders in the Caribbean and Latin America, and the congressional vote on GATT. GATT is the largest and most advantageous trade agreement in our history. The congressional vote will be a defining decision for our economy and our working people well into the next century. I believe both parties will come together to vote for open markets, free and fair trade, and most importantly, more high-wage jobs for the American people.

This week the American people told us, all of us here in Washington, to work together, to put politics aside to create a stronger, a more secure America. This trip to Asia and the other events of the next 6 weeks give us a unique opportunity to join hands and do just that. By reaching across oceans and borders, we can help to build peace and prosperity around the world and more security and prosperity for our own people here at home.

Thank you very much.

Q. Mr. President, how would you describe the prospects for GATT to the Asian leaders?

The President. Good.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:25 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House.

Remarks at a Veterans Day Ceremony in Arlington, Virginia *November 11, 1994*

Thank you very much. Thank you. Commander Sioss, distinguished leaders of our veterans organizations, Secretary Brown, Secretary Perry, General Shalikashvili, officials of the Veterans Administration, to our men and women in uniform and their families, our veterans, my fellow Americans, I am proud to share this Veterans Day with you in this magnificent place of rest and reverence.

Today we honor all those who gave their lives and all those who have risked their lives so that our Nation might remain free. And we honor, of course, all those who at this very moment are standing watch for freedom and security, from our bases across the United States to our mission around the world. To each and every American who has worn the uniform of the United States Armed Forces, we say simply, from the bottom of our hearts, thank you.

Over the past few months at home and abroad, I have had the privilege of saying that thank-you in person to men and women who are keeping our Nation's commitment. Today we say a special word of thanks to our troops who are helping the Haitian people turn from fear and repression to hope and democracy and a special word of thanks to our troops in the Persian Gulf who are insuring that Iraq does

not again threaten its neighbors or the stability of the vital Gulf region. All over the world our military is providing that kind of support to freedom and proving that when America makes a promise, we will keep it.

A few hours from now I leave for the Far East, where we will celebrate the keeping of another historic promise, General MacArthur's vow to return to the Philippines to help its people restore their freedom. In the 50 years since, we have forged remarkable partnerships for peace and prosperity in Asia, but we know that these blessings are the fruit of our veterans' sacrifice 50 years ago. And we know they endure to the present day because of the vigilance of thousands of Americans who are still in uniform and still there to help maintain the security, the peace, and the freedom in Asia.

This morning I was honored to start the day with veterans of that Pacific campaign and, I might add, a remarkable, jaunty group of parachuters who jumped into Normandy in 1944 and then jumped in again in 1994. There they are back there. To all of them and to all of you here assembled who have worn our Nation's uniform, you must know that America will never forget the service you have rendered.

And America will never forget those who did not return from our battlefields. Today we renew the commitment of this administration to obtain the fullest possible accounting for their fate.

For all of you who have helped America live up to its promises, your Nation has a special obligation to keep its commitments to you. That means, in the beginning, making sure that our military remains the best equipped, the best trained, and the best prepared in the world. We are keeping that commitment.

I'd like to say two things about that this morning. The first is that the success of the operations in Haiti and in the Gulf are due in no small measure to the advances which have been made just in the last couple of years in preparation, in pre-positioning, in mobility, in training—fresh evidence that we can never again afford to erode the confidence, the strength, and the ever-growing capacity of our military.

The second point that I'd like to make is that maintaining the best trained and prepared military in the world also has its very high human price. And every year, men and now women we may not know as battlefield heroes give their lives so that we can continue to do the kind of training that makes it less necessary for us to have to fight in battle. And I ask especially that we remember them, for their training and their sacrifice and their lives helped to make us so strong that we did not have to fight again in the Gulf and that we were able to enter Haiti without military incident. We thank them as well for their sacrifices, and their families.

I'd like to say a personal word of thanks to Secretary Brown, to Secretary Perry, to General Shalikashvili, and the other military leaders, without whom I could not carry out my duties and from whom I draw strength, wisdom, and advice to try to make the right decisions to keep our commitments to all of you.

Our obligation also includes, as Commander Sioss said and as Secretary Brown said, continuing the service this country owes our veterans after your service in uniform ends. That

is why it has given me particular pleasure in recent weeks to address concerns that are important to thousands upon thousands of our veterans. I was pleased to sign into law a bill that authorizes compensation to Gulf war veterans suffering from undiagnosed illnesses possibly incurred during their service there. Sometimes even the most sophisticated tools don't enable us to diagnose certain illnesses. The lack of a diagnosis must not stop us from responding both quickly and compassionately to veterans' needs. Now it will not.

At the same time, we've required the VA to evaluate the health of the families of Gulf war veterans. We know that the spouses and children of our troops may not wear the uniform, but they, too, bear the burden of defending our Nation. And today we say thank you to the children and the spouses and the families as well.

Finally, we extended the VA's authority to provide care to veterans of the Gulf war, Vietnam, and World War II for disabilities they may have incurred through exposure to toxic substances. We set aside nearly \$400 million for the VA to build, lease, and repair major medical facilities around this country.

I know these actions—indeed, no actions can ever fully repay the service and the sacrifice of those of you who are here and those who never returned whom you represent. There are no words equal to the task of expressing just what your devotion and your sacrifice have meant to our Nation. But let me say at least we have this beautiful day God has given us which belongs entirely to you, to your commitment to our freedom, our prosperity, and our security. A grateful nation thanks you with this day and with all our hearts for what you have done and what you continue to do.

God bless you all, and God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:35 a.m. at Arlington National Cemetery. In his remarks, he referred to Donald A. Sioss, national commander, Disabled American Veterans.