

faith that God will continue to guide our steps through adversity until we can all rejoice in the light of peace.

Hillary and I extend best wishes for a joyous Hanukkah and a wonderful holiday season.

BILL CLINTON

Statement on the Nomination of General Joseph W. Ralston to be Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff *December 15, 1995*

I am pleased to announce that I have nominated Gen. Joseph W. Ralston, U.S. Air Force, for assignment as Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, succeeding Adm. William A. Owens, who is retiring.

General Ralston currently serves as the Commander, Air Combat Command. In this capacity, he is responsible for training and equipping all active Air Force, Air National Guard, and Air Force Reserve combat wings and squadrons in the United States and Panama. During his distinguished career, General Ralston flew more than 2,500 flying hours, including 147 combat missions over Laos and North Vietnam. He also served as the Air Force's Director for Tactical Programs and its Director for Operational Requirements. In the latter capacity, his championing of the rapid transition of advanced technology to the battlefield was instrumental in determining the shape and force structure of tomorrow's Air Force. General Ralston brings to the job of Vice Chairman a wealth of experience in the development of military requirements and an in-depth knowledge of the defense acquisition

process. These and other attributes provide General Ralston the requisite leadership and management necessary for the post of Vice Chairman at a critical time in the history of the Armed Forces.

I will depend upon General Ralston to continue the initiatives of Admiral Owens which are designed to ensure that our Armed Forces best determine their warfighting requirements and capabilities. I commend Admiral Owens for his exemplary service to his Nation. His sound military advice on the use of military power to back U.S. diplomacy, his crucial role in shaping our forces to fight as a joint team, and the superlative leadership he provided in harnessing the information and technological revolution to our current and future defense posture will ensure that our military will remain the best in the world as we enter the 21st century. Admiral Owens will truly be missed in the senior decisionmaking ranks of our national security structure. Hillary and I join in wishing him the very best as he begins a new phase of his life.

The President's Radio Address *December 16, 1995*

Good morning. At midnight last night, for the second time in a month, the Republican Congress shut down the Federal Government in an effort to force through their unacceptable cuts in health care, education, and the environment.

For weeks, my administration and the Republicans in Congress have been in serious negotiations over how to reach common ground on balancing the budget. A week ago, I forwarded to them a plan that would protect our principles and balance the budget in 7 years. I had hoped

that this time would be different, that we were past the Republican threats to shut down the Government just to get their way.

But yesterday, they broke off our talks. Unbelievably, they actually said that as a condition for our talks to continue, we had to agree right now to make deep and unconscionable cuts in Medicare and Medicaid. That is unacceptable.

The cuts they propose would deprive millions of people of health care: poor children, pregnant women, the disabled, seniors in nursing homes.