

world, in bases all over the United States, I have seen the sacrifices and the support of our military families. I'm so grateful to all of you who have brought your children here today. I hope I get to shake hands with as many of them as possible. Those of you in the back who have your children on your shoulders, I thank you for that. I hope they will always remember that their parents served their country with pride and honor and that they had a chance to see the President thank their parents for their service.

To all of you in our families—I know here at Elmendorf alone there are 10,000 dependents—I know that the national security would not be possible without you. I was so moved by General McCaffrey's story of his own experience. I have seen that in military support families, in accidents which cost the lives of our military personnel, and in losses in active-duty service. But every day I see it in the support you give in countless ways to make it possible for families to stay together, for children to be raised properly, for families to support each

other so that our country can be properly defended.

So on this Thanksgiving Day, for all of our many blessings—and I've got a lot of things to be thankful for, including having my contract renewed—*[laughter]*—I want you to know when our family, including a lot of our extended family, gathers on Thursday at Camp David, we will be thanking God for all of you who make our country the greatest, strongest force for freedom in human history.

God bless you, and thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:17 p.m. Alaska time (after crossing the international dateline) in Hangar One. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Tony Knowles of Alaska and his wife, Susan; Lt. Gen. Patrick K. Gamble, USAF, Commander, Alaskan Command; Col. William J. Lake, USAF, Commander, 3d Wing; Mayor Rick Mystrom of Anchorage; Lt. Gov. Fran Ulmer of Alaska; and Gen. Barry R. McCaffrey, USA (Ret.), Director, Office of National Drug Control Policy.

## Remarks at the Thanksgiving Turkey Presentation Ceremony November 27, 1996

Please sit down. You can hear I'm hoarse. I just got back from a long trip. But if you'll bear with me, I will—I'll do my best to talk. *[Laughter]*

I want to, first of all, thank the chairman of the National Turkey Federation, Jim Cooper, and his family for bringing the turkey here, all the way from Oakwood, Ohio. His Congressman, Representative Paul Gillmor, is here; I welcome him as well. I want to thank Stuart Proctor, the president of the National Turkey Federation, and Joel Brandenberger, the executive director. I want to thank the volunteers and young people from the Big Brothers and the Big Sisters program and the Boys and Girls Club of America for being here.

You all know why we're here. Tomorrow 45 million turkeys will play the supreme sacrifice for our Thanksgiving. So, continuing a tradition

begun 50 years ago by President Truman, I am going to keep at least one turkey off of the Thanksgiving dinner table by giving a pardon to a turkey from Ohio that will now go to the petting zoo that Kidwell Farms maintains in Fairfax, Virginia. We can all be grateful, therefore, that there will be one less turkey in Washington, DC, tomorrow. *[Laughter]*

Let me thank the turkey farmers in Ohio, in my native State of Arkansas, and throughout the country for the fine job that they do all year long, and say how very grateful I am to see all the children here. Now let's pardon this bird.

Thank you for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:35 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House.