

Europe's democracies, strengthen NATO, and adapt it to the missions of the 21st century.

Your presence here today has made our success much more likely, and therefore, you will have something else to celebrate tomorrow on our Independence Day.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:29 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Joseph J. Frank, national commander, American Legion; Herb Harmon, president, Reserve Officers Association of the United States; and Laughlin Edward Waters, Senior Judge, U.S. District Court for the Central District of California.

## Statement on the Resignation of Ambassador Molly Raiser as Chief of Protocol

*July 3, 1997*

It is with great sadness that I accepted today Ambassador Molly Raiser's resignation as Chief of Protocol, effective July 24. But it is with even greater thanks and pride that I look back upon her years of service and the extraordinary job she has done to ensure effective American engagement in the world.

No one knows better than Ambassador Raiser the amount of planning and the attention to detail that goes into our Nation's foreign policy. And no one has done more to make the conduct of that policy professional, precise, and smooth.

From the war-torn streets of Sarajevo to Denver's gleaming city center, Ambassador Raiser brought elegance and energy to the business of foreign affairs and set a standard for all who worked with her. She made foreign guests feel welcome when they visited the United States and helped me feel at home whenever I traveled abroad. She represented me and the interests of our Nation with insight, judgment, and grace.

I extend Ambassador Raiser my warmest thanks for a job well done, and wish her every possible success in all her future endeavors.

## Statement on the Landing of the *Mars Pathfinder* Spacecraft

*July 4, 1997*

On this important day, the American people celebrate another exciting milestone in our Nation's long heritage of progress, discovery, and exploration: the first landing on the surface of Mars in over 20 years.

Our return to Mars today marks the beginning of a new era in the Nation's space exploration program. The *Mars Pathfinder* is the first of a series of probes we are sending to Mars over the next decade. The information we gather on our neighbor planet will help us better understand our own world and perhaps provide further clues on the origins of our solar system. This mission also underscores our new way of

doing business at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). We were able to accomplish this mission in one-third the time and at a fraction of the cost of the first *Viking* mission to Mars.

I congratulate the *Mars Pathfinder* team at NASA and the Jet Propulsion Laboratory for their pioneering vision and spirit in accomplishing this remarkable feat. Their success in developing the *Pathfinder* mission is a testament to the ingenuity and can-do attitude of the American people.