

Remarks Celebrating the 200th Anniversary of the United States
Marine Corps Band
July 10, 1998

Thank you, ladies and gentlemen. Please be seated. Thank you so much, General Krulak. Colonel Foley, to the officials of the Pentagon, the leaders of our military services, Members of Congress, the Medal of Honor winners, and especially to the Ingram family—all of you who are here today—it's a great honor for Hillary and I to welcome you to the White House on what is not only a very important occasion for our Nation but which, as you have heard from my wife and others, is one of the most important occasions for me personally since I've been President. We're also delighted to have a number of distinguished composers in the audience, of music which has been played by our Marine Band.

And I can't let the moment go by without noticing that this is also the birthday of the wife of the Commandant of the Marine Corps. Mrs. Krulak, happy birthday to you. We hope you have a great day.

On July 11, 1798, my predecessor and the first President to live in the house just behind me, John Adams, approved the bill establishing this band. As a footnote, I might also add it established the Marine Corps itself. Of course, the Marines had already been proudly serving our people, starting back in 1775.

Since its founding, the Marine Band's history has been in large measure the history of America. The band played at Thomas Jefferson's Inauguration in 1801 and hasn't missed a single one since. Jefferson was a violin player who loved music almost as much as he loved freedom. He named the band "The President's Own," and it has stuck ever since.

The Marine Band was there to play "The Marseillaise" when President John Quincy Adams, in 1825, gave the first White House toast ever, in honor of General Lafayette and his services to the American Revolution. The Marine Band was by President Abraham Lincoln's side when he delivered the Gettysburg Address.

The Marine Band were among the first musicians ever to be captured for posterity on Thomas Edison's revolutionary phonograph. The Marine Band's broadcasts were a highlight of ra-

dio's first years. The Marine Band was at MIT in 1949 to accompany Winston Churchill as he proudly sang every single word of "The Marines' Hymn." And the Marine Band led us in mourning in the funeral procession for President Kennedy.

You have played for kings and prime ministers in great halls overseas, for people in parks and theaters across our country, nearly every day, in so many different musical styles, which you've shared with us on this day. You've accompanied great artists, from Sinatra to Baryshnikov. It is entirely fitting that our Marine Band was among the very first class of inductees into the American Classical Music Hall of Fame. Through long summers you play in oppressive heat, as you have today. And you're always ready to go on Inauguration Day, no matter how bitter the cold.

As time has marched on, you have commemorated changes in band leadership by the passing of a cherished symbol, a gold-tipped baton owned by your most famous conductor. John Philip Sousa was born just two blocks from the band's home at the Marine Barracks here. He was a determined young man who joined the band as an apprentice musician at the age of 13, after his father, one of the band's trombonists, had foiled his plot to run away with the circus. Thank goodness Dad succeeded.

At age 25, after 5 years of touring with orchestras and vaudeville shows, Sousa returned to become the Marine Band's director, and he served there for 12 years. But until his dying day, he never stopped conducting or promoting music education or fighting for composers' rights. Just weeks before his death, at the age of 77, Sousa rose at a gathering here in Washington to lead this band in his greatest march, "The Stars and Stripes Forever."

John Philip Sousa's drive, his love of innovation, his desire to thrill the crowd while taking musical excellence to new heights, that legacy still guides the United States Marine Band. That spirit still keeps your music soaring on the edge of a new century and a new millennium. No President could fail to be proud to say you are "The President's Own."

July 10 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1998

Happy birthday. Congratulations to all of you. God bless you, and God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:34 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. Charles C. Krulak, USMC,

Commandant, U.S. Marine Corps, and his wife, Zandra; Lt. Col. Timothy W. Foley, USMC, Director, United States Marine Band; and Congressional Medal of Honor recipient Robert R. Ingram.

Statement on Senate Action on Higher Education Reauthorization Legislation

July 10, 1998

The bill passed last night by the Senate will help my effort to usher more Americans through the doors of higher education, doors we have opened wide since 1993. There are still serious fiscal and policy issues that need to be resolved, and I am committed to working with Congress to do that. But I am pleased that the Senate bill endorses the new low interest rate for student loans that I proposed to save students \$11

billion; improves teacher recruitment and training provided by our colleges; takes important steps in response to my call for colleges to help children at high-poverty schools prepare for and attend college; expands access to quality distance learning technologies; and creates what would be the Government's first performance-based organization, an innovation recommended by our reinventing Government effort.

Joint Statement on United States-Polish Relations

July 10, 1998

President Bill Clinton and Prime Minister Jerzy Buzek of Poland met today at the White House to discuss Poland's anticipated entry into NATO, common efforts to advance regional cooperation in Central and Eastern Europe and steps to deepen the close bilateral relations between the United States and Poland. Vice President Gore met separately with the Prime Minister earlier today and hosted a luncheon for the Prime Minister, his delegation and members of the Polish-American community.

The President and Prime Minister Buzek stressed the paramount importance of the U.S. Senate vote on NATO enlargement. They welcomed Poland's entry into the Alliance. Prime Minister Buzek declared that this step will fulfill the aspirations of the Polish people to belong to the Transatlantic community, guaranteeing the security of a sovereign and democratic Poland. President Clinton responded that Poland's membership in the Atlantic Alliance will advance the interests of the American people in a secure, undivided Europe. Both leaders agreed that

NATO is the essential foundation of transatlantic security and reaffirmed their support for NATO's "open door" policy for aspiring new members, as an indispensable instrument to strengthening stability and eliminating the old dividing lines in Europe.

President Clinton expressed strong support for Poland's strides in building ties with its neighbors and efforts to promote stability, democracy, and free market economics throughout Central and Eastern Europe. The two leaders discussed efforts already under way to establish trilateral economic cooperation among the United States, Poland and Ukraine, as well as Poland's efforts to establish peacekeeping battalions with Ukraine and Lithuania. They resolved that, as allies, they should expand such common efforts to strengthen democracy and regional stability.

The President applauded Poland's active role as Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and thanked Prime Minister Buzek for Poland's strong contribution to the international effort