

remarks, he referred to Leland Swenson, president, National Farmers Union, who presented the President with the organization's 1998 Golden

Triangle Award for outstanding leadership on issues affecting rural America.

Remarks to the Military Readiness Conference

September 15, 1998

I'm pleased to have the second opportunity of this year to meet with Secretary Cohen, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the senior operational commanders of our Armed Forces. Today we're going to focus on the steps necessary to preserve and provide for the readiness of our Armed Forces to defend our interests and security.

Readiness must be our number one priority. It is being monitored and addressed every day at every level of command. Our forward deployed and first-to-fight units are highly ready, and our overall force is fully capable of carrying out our national military strategy. But I'm determined that we don't relax our vigilance, to keep our forces ready to protect our security today and well into the 21st century.

In recent months, we've taken some important steps to strengthen our military readiness. This fiscal year we were able to protect important readiness accounts, such as spare parts and flying hours for our pilots, with the help of Congress' support for emergency funding for our peacekeeping mission in Bosnia and its approval of the request I made to reprogram \$1 billion of our defense budget for readiness.

We struck a prudent balance between short-term readiness and longer term modernization, so that our fighting forces will have the cutting edge technology they need to avoid long-term

readiness problems and to dominate the battlefields of the future.

The service chiefs and the commanders in chief have worked tirelessly also to improve the quality of life for our men and women in uniform and to recruit and retain a new generation of Americans for our all-volunteer forces. I want to thank them for that and say that I am well aware that we're going to have to do more in this area as well.

For example, the services have established standards to reduce the burden on our troops of the high tempo of operations and deployments. We've reduced the number and the duration of some deployments overseas, putting units on standby status in the United States instead.

Again, I want to call on Congress to support our ongoing engagement for peace in Bosnia in a way that does not force us to take money away from readiness and training. We will continue to monitor readiness, to deal quickly and effectively with any problems that do arise.

And now I want to hear directly from Secretary Cohen and from our senior military leaders on this critical issue to our security. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:17 p.m. at the National Defense University at Fort McNair.

Statement on the Appointment of the Assistant to the President and Special Counsel and Two Senior Advisors to the President

September 15, 1998

Today I have asked Gregory Craig to join the White House staff as Assistant to the President and Special Counsel, reporting to me in connection with matters arising from the Referral submitted by the Office of Independent

Counsel to Congress. Joining Deputy Chief of Staff John Podesta, the Counsel to the President, Charles Ruff, and my personal attorney, David Kendall, in their representation before House Judiciary Committee, Mr. Craig will

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quarterback the response to the Referral. Mr. Craig currently serves as Director of Policy and Planning at the Department of State. I have known him for many years and have great confidence in his judgment and ability.

The White House has also added former Chief Senate Liaison and executive director of the Senate Campaign Committee Steve Ricchetti and former White House Deputy Director of Legislative Affairs Susan Brophy to work as Senior Advisors to the President.

Message on the Observance of Rosh Hashana, 1998 *September 15, 1998*

Warmest greetings to all who are celebrating Rosh Hashana.

Each year during this season of promise and renewal, the stirring sound of the shofar resonates in the air—a sacred summons calling Jews across America and around the world to celebrate the anniversary of God's creation of the world and the birth of a new year. Jews welcome this time of spiritual reawakening as a means to reaffirm their relationship with God

and to prepare them for the joys and challenges of the coming year.

As the beginning of the High Holy Days, Rosh Hashana is a time of intense prayer and serious reflection; but it is also a time of rejoicing in the promises of the future and of renewed commitment to God and loved ones.

Hillary joins me in extending best wishes to all for a joyous celebration and for a year sweet with happiness and peace.

BILL CLINTON

Remarks at the Welcoming Ceremony for President Vaclav Havel of the Czech Republic *September 16, 1998*

President Havel, Mrs. Havlova, members of the Czech delegation, my fellow Americans. Mr. President, it is a joy to welcome you to the United States and to the White House. Your remarkable life embodies a great lesson, that people who love their country can change it, even against tremendous odds; that words can be powerful instruments of change; and that, together, words and deeds can be the pillars of freedom.

Ten years ago, the world was a very different place. Like half of Europe, Czechoslovakia lay shrouded beneath a failed ideology. Human hopes were suppressed. Debate was stifled. And you spent years in jail for standing up and speaking out for liberty and human rights.

Today we celebrate the dramatic movement out of that very different, darker world, toward freedom and self-determination. We celebrate ideas, not ideologies. From South Africa to

South Korea to South America, societies are redefining themselves, removing barriers to the imagination, struggling to find a new balance in a new world, cultivating the limitless resources of their people. This is a universal phenomenon, neither American nor European but, instead, universal. Nonetheless, it owes a very great deal in our time to the inspiration provided by a single man, Vaclav Havel, who for years spoke when it mattered and often at enormous personal cost.

Now we are poised to build a world of the new century. More people than ever are free to pursue their own destiny. And we are grateful for the unprecedented achievement of this century we are about to leave. We are also aware, however, that far too much of the 20th century saw division and dislocation and destruction, and nowhere more so than in the heart of Europe.