

the Armed Forces of the United States, protecting our Nation's interest by keeping a fire out that has threatened the heart of Europe's stability. On behalf of all the American people, I come here most of all to thank you for the superb job you are doing on this historic mission.

As you did in Operation Deny Flight and Operation Deliberate Force, the 31st Fighter Wing and all of the units here at Aviano, including the Guard and the Reserve, are showing in Operation Decisive Edge the professionalism, the skill, and the dedication that make America's military the greatest on Earth, and make NATO a force for peace throughout Europe.

The American people know that the burden of America's leadership weighs heavily on you and on the families that are here. Many of you who are here have been a long way from home for a good long while. Others have just arrived. Because of the sacrifices you are making here and in the Balkans and the strength of the families that stand behind you, your country is able to stand up for its values and its interests.

I particularly want to thank Colonel Wald, who has done a tremendous job in commanding Aviano and the 31st Fighter Wing. America is proud of the way this base has met the challenge of this operation. He told me just before we came in here that he'd been here about 6 months, and the very first day he was on the job was one of the days that our bombing campaign was underway.

Today, as a part of my visit here and in recognition of Colonel Wald's fine performance and his outstanding career over 25 years in the United States Air Force, I am pleased to promote him to brigadier general. *[Applause]*

Colonel, it sounds like if we were doing this by popular opinion, I wouldn't stop there. *[Laughter]*

I would like to ask Mrs. Wald and their daughter, Marissa, to come up and stand with me. And I'd like to ask Mrs. Wald to help me as we put the stars on the general's shoulder.

General, our Nation and I look forward to many more years of your service. We thank you and congratulate you.

Let me say a special word of thanks to the Italian Defense Minister, Mr. Corcione, the Italian Government, and the people of Italy for the hospitality that all of them have shown our forces and for their help in coordinating this difficult operation. All of you know that all of our efforts over the last several years to contain the conflict in Bosnia, to deliver humanitarian aid, and in the end, to bring an end to it, would not have been possible without the partnership of the Italian Government and the Italian people. And the United States is very grateful for it, and we thank you.

I also want to say a word of appreciation to all the other countries, especially those of our NATO allies participating in Decisive Edge. I know that distinguished units from Britain and Spain are here today; they, too, are playing a vital part in keeping our alliance strong and making sure this mission will succeed. And we thank them.

Men and women of Decisive Edge, let me say now, good luck and Godspeed. You are heroes for peace. Our Nation is very proud of you. And as long as you live I hope you will always look back on this mission as something of historic importance and fundamental human decency.

Thank you. God bless you, and God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:21 a.m. in Hangar One. In his remarks, he referred to Minister of Defense Domenico Corcione of Italy; U.S. Ambassador to Italy Reginald Bartholomew; Gen. George Joulwan, USA, Supreme Allied Commander, Europe; Gen. Michael Ryan, USAF, Commander, 5th Allied Tactical Air Forces; Col. Charles Wald, USAF, Commander, Aviano Air Base; M. Sgt. Michael Myers, USAF, Senior Enlisted Adviser, 31st Fighter Wing; and Col. David L. Moody, USA, Vice Commander, 31st Fighter Wing.

Remarks to American Troops at Taszar Air Base, Hungary January 13, 1996

Thank you very much, General Joulwan, and General Shalikashvili, General Crouch, and especially General Abrams. This is—he was saying on the way in, this is about the third time we have done this, and we're about

to get the hang of it. I like General Abrams because he's not bashful about his enthusiasm. *[Laughter]* He might be out there—if he were out there, he'd be cheering louder than all of you.

Let me say also I am delighted to be here with our United Nations Ambassador, Madeleine Albright; Brian Atwood, the Director of the Agency for International Development; Dick Holbrooke, who did such a fine job in making this peace that you are here to help enforce; Ambassador Hunter. And I'd like for the Members of Congress who have come with me to be recognized. I want you to make them welcome. If it weren't for them, none of us would be here today. Thank you, gentlemen, and—*[applause]*—thank you.

I also want to say a special word of regard for General Bill Bell, who had to leave because of his wife's illness. I know he's here in spirit. And I know that all of you will send him your thoughts and prayers.

Men and women of the 21st Theater Army Area Command, 1st Armored Division, the 29th Support Group, the 30th Medical Brigade, all of you who are taking part in Operation Joint Endeavor, I am very, very proud to be here with you today.

A few moments ago, General Abrams briefed me on all you have achieved here in Hungary. As many of you know, General Abrams' father gave his name to the M1-A1 tank that is helping you to keep the peace in Bosnia. I have just reviewed a company of those tanks that are about to convoy to Tuzla. And when I look out at you, I can't help but think that those tanks are a good symbol for this whole operation. The Abrams is the best all-around tank in the world, and you are the best all-around fighting force. Like the tank, you are proven, fast, tough, and, if you have to be, lethal.

But I did find one difference between the Abrams and the men and women of Operation Joint Endeavor; the Abrams is very, very quiet. *[Laughter]* I'm going from here to Tuzla. You know, I meant to go from Tuzla to here, but the clouds made it impossible for us to land, and I had to come here, and that's why you had so much advance notice of our being here. *[Laughter]* I can't believe you got up such a crowd, General, on such

short notice, but I think, speaking for all of us, we're delighted to see you.

I want to say for those of you heading to Tuzla, I have been fully briefed on the operation there. I'd like to be able to report that when you get there, you will find deluxe accommodations. *[Laughter]* I'd like to be able to report that. But even for a political leader that's stretching the truth a little more than it will bear. *[Laughter]*

I do understand they've got showers and heaters and Red Horse tents with hard floors and electricity. Some soldiers have turned their MRE boxes into dressers, shelves, and tables. They're even doing some custom conversions on Humvees, complete with car stereos. And I was told just before I got off the plane that with a little bit of ingenuity and a lot of plywood, duct tape, and sand bags, some of our soldiers are making Tuzla the next best thing to Tazsar.

The most important thing I can say to you, seriously, is that Task Force Eagle is heavily armed and very well prepared. The airfield and communications are up and running. J-STAR aircraft are patrolling high above the clouds. The Navy and the Marines are keeping watch from the Adriatic. Apache gunships are flying the treetops. The Special Forces are everywhere. The operation in Bosnia is moving ahead, step by step, steadily, surely, and safely.

Let me say to those of you who are based here in Hungary, none of this could happen without you. You know that. You provide the beans, the bullets, the black oil that keep our people fed, armed, and ready to roll. As of today, in just a single month—think of it—12,000 troops, 700 trucks, 200 trains have passed through this point.

Our airplanes have flown 400 sorties. You've got a 300-bed hospital up and running that I just drove by and a tent city for 7,000 troops. That's a pretty impressive track record. You should feel proud of the job you're doing. I am very proud of the job you are doing.

I came here also to tell you that this is a very important job. Just before I left Washington I signed an Executive order that creates a new campaign medal. It's called the Armed Forces Service Medal, to be awarded to all those who serve our Nation in signifi-

cant noncombat military missions, such as peacekeeping operations. And I'm pleased to announce that as participants in Operation Joint Endeavor, each of you will receive America's newest military honor.

While I'm here, I also want to express my gratitude to the people of Hungary, to their government and their military for their hospitality, their cooperation, their professionalism. Remember that just 6 years ago, Hungary was still part of the Warsaw Pact. Now it's home to the largest American military operation in Europe since World War II. And that, too, is a tribute to the people who wore these uniforms before you, and for all America has stood for the last 50 years.

I am proud of the hard work that we have done in the last couple of years with Hungary and other nations getting the Partnership For Peace off the ground and preparing to open NATO's doors to new members. In Bosnia itself, those of you who are going will be joined by other new friends, Polish and Czech combat battalions, Hungarian engineering corps, soldiers from the Baltic States, and a Russian brigade.

When your mission is completed, all of you will be able to look back at this new partnership with former adversaries and say: We made history. We did something that really mattered. And you will be able to be proud of it for as long as you live. I thank you for that, and I hope you will always feel that deep pride.

I know you've been trained to fight wars and to win them. You are the best in the world at that. This mission is different. We have asked you not to fight a war but to give a people exhausted by war the strength to make and stay at peace. You will succeed because you're the finest fighting force in the world, and your presence in Bosnia can and will make the difference between a war that starts again and a peace that takes hold.

All over the world, people look to America for help, for hope, for inspiration. We can't be everywhere. Even you can't do everything. But where we can make a difference and where our values and our interests are clearly at stake, we must act, and they are clearly at stake in Bosnia.

All of its people are looking to America, and America looks to you, the men and

women of our Armed Forces. I know that you and your families bear the heaviest burden of our leadership. We ask you to travel far from home, to be apart from your loved ones for long periods of time, to take on difficult and sometimes dangerous missions. We ask all these things, and time and time and time again, you deliver.

So I really come here with one very simple message: The American people are proud of what you're doing. They're proud of how you're doing it. They're proud of you. And your Commander in Chief is very, very proud of you. To each and every one of you, I say: Godspeed, and God bless our United States of America.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:23 a.m. in the dining facility. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. William W. Crouch, USA, Commanding General, U.S. Army Europe; Gen. John N. Abrams, USA, Commander, 5th Corps; U.S. Ambassador to NATO Robert E. Hunter; and Brig. Gen. Burwell Bell, USAF, Assistant Division Commander, 3d Infantry Division.

The President's Radio Address

January 13, 1996

Good morning. I'm speaking to you today from Taszar, Hungary, the main staging base for America's soldiers in Bosnia. I've just visited with our commanders and troops. The American people should be very proud of the job they're doing.

Our Armed Forces are giving the Bosnian people, exhausted by 4 years of war, the strength to make peace. I wish every American could see firsthand what the men and women of our military are accomplishing under very difficult conditions, both here and in Bosnia.

Here in Taszar, our troops are providing the beans, bullets, and black oil that are keeping our people in Bosnia fed, armed, and ready to roll. In Tuzla, the headquarters for our troops in Bosnia, the weather report is pretty much the same every day: mud, mud, and more mud. But despite that and the snow and the freezing rain, in less than a month our soldiers have built a base camp with more than 100 hard-backed tents, com-