

ment and related Protocol and give its advice and consent to ratification.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
September 3, 1996.

**Remarks to the National Guard
Association of the United States**

September 3, 1996

Thank you. Ladies and gentlemen, that was a stunning example of Clinton's fourth law of politics, which is, whenever possible, be introduced by someone you have known all your life. They are prone to exaggerate. [Laughter]

Thank you, General Thrash and Rose, for being here and for your service to our Nation. Thank you, General Freeman, my present Adjutant General here in Washington, for escorting me in. Secretary West, General Alexander, Under Secretary Dorn, Assistant Secretary Lee, Lt. General Baca, thank you for your good work. General Philbin, Terry O'Connell, Senator Akaka, Representative Wicker. And I'd like to say a happy 73d birthday to Lt. General Vern Webber. Happy birthday, sir. Where are you? [Applause]

On you, they look good, those years. They look good. Thank you.

Let me begin by thanking you for dedicating this conference to Congressman Sonny Montgomery. Long before I ever entered public life I knew about Sonny Montgomery because he represented my neighboring State of Mississippi and because one of my best friend's father served with him many years ago and was a close friend of his—in the military, not the Congress, served with him. In all of his long career, he has stood up for many worthy causes. I suppose he'll be remembered most as being the author of the Montgomery GI bill and as being the best friend the National Guard ever had.

I might say that in this political season when I have said I hope that we can change the direction of the last several years and make this contest one of ideas and not insults, Sonny Montgomery has led an entire distinguished political career able to disagree with people while still being their friends,

able to be forthright in what he believed in without demeaning those who disagreed with him. And I will always honor him for that, as well.

Ladies and gentlemen, we come here by pure coincidence at a moment when once again our Nation's military has shown its extraordinary skill and professionalism in a difficult mission in Iraq.

Three days ago, despite clear warnings from the United States and the international community, Saddam Hussein's forces attacked and seized the Kurdish controlled city of Irbil in northern Iraq. This act is part of a broad pattern of violence and recklessness by Saddam against the Kurds, against other ethnic minorities, against Iraq's neighbors. These actions have threatened the stability of the entire region for some years now.

This morning, I ordered America's Armed Forces to strike Iraq, extending the no-fly zone and destroying Iraqi missile defenses in the south to make sure we could safely extend the no-fly zone.

I want to reaffirm to you what I said to all the American people early this morning: Our objectives there are limited, but our interests are clear, to demonstrate once again that reckless acts have consequences, to reduce Saddam's ability to strike out again at his neighbors, to increase America's ability to prevent future acts of violence and aggression. These steps are being taken to further all of these objectives and the policy of containing Iraq that I have pursued for 4 years now, and it was developed before me under President Bush.

We know that if we do not pursue this policy, we might once again be called upon to do more, as we had to do more in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. We do not want that to happen. And therefore, I did what I did today. I hope you will support the decision of the United States.

For the last 5 years and clearly again over the last week, I have had the opportunity to say to the American people that my vision for our country as we stand on the edge of the 21st century is simple but profound. I want us to build a bridge to that century that will keep the American dream alive for every single person responsible enough to work for it. I want this country to come together

across all of our divisions and not be torn apart, as so many other nations are today. And I want America to maintain its role as the strongest force for peace and freedom, for security and prosperity in the entire world, well into the 21st century, into the indefinite future. That is good for us; it is also good for the cause of peace and freedom in the world.

More than anything else, I come here tonight to express the gratitude of our Nation to the men and women of the National Guard for all you have done to help our Nation build that bridge as the strongest force for peace and freedom, security, and prosperity.

Four years ago, when I spoke to you in Utah, I said that one of my proudest duties as Governor was to command the Arkansas National Guard. As Commander-in-Chief of all of our Nation's Armed Forces now, that pride has grown even stronger in all the men and women who make up our total force, from every service branch of the military, those on active duty, and yes, definitely those in the Guard and the Reserves.

Today America's gratitude to the Guard should be greater than ever, for not a day has passed this summer that we could not have looked behind the headlines of the moment to find the Guard hard at work. From enforcing the peace in Bosnia to mounting an emergency response to Hurricane Bertha in the southeast and the Virgin Islands, from building roads in Panama to the difficult and heroic work after the TWA 800 tragedy, the Guard has been on the job.

During the centennial Olympics, the greatest in the modern history of the Olympics, the Guard was there, 11,000 members from 43 States in one of the largest domestic missions ever. Of course, all of us remember the great performances of Michael Johnson, Kerri Strug, and so many others. But the unsung performance of the National Guard upholding a tradition of service stretching back 360 years enabled America to put its best foot forward. And it, too, deserved a gold medal.

I have seen for myself in Bosnia and Haiti, as we know from Somalia and the Gulf War, the Guard has been an essential part of our military success. That is why last month I

signed an Executive order authorizing the award of a Bronze M to all Guard and Reserve members who serve in support of these operations. Last Thursday, Secretary Perry awarded the first 14 of these well-deserved recognitions.

I understand that there are two of the Guard recipients who are here tonight who have received this medal—Captain Drew Sullins and Sergeant First Class Susan Hurrey. If they're here, I'd like to ask them to stand and be recognized. Thank you very much. *[Applause]*

Now, there are—thank you—I am sure there are others in this room who are eligible for this decoration and who will get it. So if you're here, I'd like to ask you to stand and be recognized. Please, all of you who served, please stand up. Thank you very much. *[Applause]* Thank you.

I know something I suspect most Americans don't know and that is that service in the Guard also entails real sacrifice. Since I spoke with you just 4 years ago, more than 200 Army and Air Guard members have died in operational missions and training, including the pilot of the Pennsylvania Air Guard A-10, that crashed near here on the Eastern Shore just a few weeks ago. We owe all of them and their families a debt of gratitude we can never repay.

To honor their memory and the memory of all those who have sacrificed, we must continue to build America strong and secure in the 21st century, to deepen our alliances, to reduce even further the dangers of weapons of mass destruction, to adapt our Armed Forces for the changing times and new missions, to stand strong against terrorism.

Four years ago when I met with you I said that as we reduced our forces in the wake of the cold war, a strong role for the National Guard and the Reserve made more sense, not less. And we kept that promise. We kept that promise. It began with the 1993 Bottom Up Review initiated by the man who introduced me to you 4 years ago as the then Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee and my first Secretary of Defense, the late Les Aspin. And I thank him for his work there.

We have kept that promise in the important Guard-Reserve Offsite Agreement. Our

use of Reserve components has been one of the secrets of our success. As we decrease the number of our forces, but increase their readiness, capabilities and technological edge, we carried through on our pledge to retain the combat role of the Guard. And I reaffirm I will not let the Guard become a backup force of last resort.

Of course, you and I know we all have to work to adapt the Guard for the national security demands of the 21st century. I want to thank the National Guard Bureau, the Adjutants General, Secretary West, the leadership of our active Army for their innovative proposal to redesign the role of the eight Guard divisions, to support our national security strategy and the total force policy, while always protecting the Guard's historic character and tradition.

I'm pleased to announce that I will request the first funding for this redesigned plan in the defense budget to be submitted next February. That is if I get my contract renewed. *[Laughter]* But I think it's important.

You have kept your commitment to America. Also so long as I am President, I will do everything I can to make sure America keeps its commitment to you. Our military readiness is at an historic high. We've increased our original defense spending plans 3 times in 3 years, adding back almost \$50 billion to ensure that we have the equipment, the training, the quality of life our troops deserve. We're equipping our forces with the newest technology, including the F-22 and the FA-18, E-F fighters, the V-22 Osprey, and the Crusader artillery system. My defense budget increases our funding for weapons modernization 40 percent by the year 2000.

Our Armed Forces have won wars of the past. They may be called upon to win them in the future, and if they are, they must be able to win.

Keeping faith with our men and women in uniform entails more than just giving them the means to prevail in battle. It also means providing for the quality of life they deserve. We've set aside funds to ensure that military personnel receive the highest pay raises allowed by law through 2001. I fought against a proposal that would have cut military retirement pay. We increased housing allow-

ances and expanded programs to support military families who sacrifice for our Nation, just like their loved ones in uniform.

I should emphasize here that I have been especially moved by the extra burden on families caused by extra deployments as we have downsized the military. And I know that all of you feel for the families of our full-time service personnel when they go off on those long missions. They deserve all of the support we can give them. And I am proud of the fact that the United States military in all of its aspects has been as strongly pro-family as it has been. But we have to keep working on this because the families should not break apart under the strain of people doing their duty to the United States of America. We must continue to support them.

I'm also pleased that 2 years ago I was able to sign legislation to strengthen your right to return to your civilian job after serving our Nation without losing seniority, status, or pay. That is also very important.

As we move into this new era, you know as well as I do that we confront a web of new threats that know no boundaries, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, organized crime, ethnic rivalries, religious rivalries that quickly descend into murder and can spill across national borders. Tonight I'd like to talk about two of them in particular, drug trafficking and terrorism. Here, too, our Armed Forces are on the job, especially the National Guard.

I was very proud to appoint General Barry McCaffrey, a hero of the Vietnam and Gulf wars who led our military antidrug efforts in South America, to coordinate our Nation's battle against drugs. We have seen to it that the military plays a vital role in this fight. And I'm proud that, as General McCaffrey said to me, and I quote, "The Guard is crucial to our campaign to stop drugs from coming into our country and to keep our young people from using them."

I ask anyone to consider these facts. Last year, the National Guard assisted law enforcement officials in seizing hundreds of tons of drugs that resulted in more than 90,000 arrests. Guard aircraft flew more than 35,000 hours in support of antidrug missions. Guard members are manning radar systems at remote sites in the Andes essential for cut-

ting the flow of drugs from that region. And more than 60,000 volunteers in Guard programs are working with almost 6 million at-risk youth.

You've come a long way, General, since you started that program, all of you. God bless you. We need more of it. And I thank you.

Just today, we announced that the Navy and the Coast Guard recently seized 8,000 pounds of cocaine on a Honduran fishing boat headed for America. That's one of the largest drug busts in history. Our military helps confiscate more than 100 tons of cocaine every year, cocaine otherwise that would be poisoning our communities and our children.

We're working to hit the drug suppliers just as hard as we can. We've helped to bust up the Cali and Gulf cartels in Latin America, crack down on the ring led by the Burmese drug lord, Khun Sa, in Asia, denied assistance to countries such as Colombia that failed to cooperate with our counternarcotics efforts.

In 1994, the crime bill, which was passed amid bitter partisan rancor, not only put 100,000 new police on the street and provided for banning 19 assault weapons, it also provided for the death penalty for drug lords. Congress has consistently—[applause]—thank you. Congress has consistently supported these programs, but has provided funding at levels less than we requested, particularly for the Department of Defense's counterdrug programs.

We still have the biggest antidrug budget ever, and that's allowed us to do a lot of things like increase border patrols along the southwest border. The Customs and the Guard working together increased drug seizures from commercial cargo 125 percent in 1995. That's the good news.

It still is painful for me that for all we are doing and in spite of the fact that drug use among young adults is going down, drug use among children, juveniles, people under 18, is still going up. No one quite knows why this is true. It is also happening in Canada and many European countries. It appears that every few years a group of young people come along and once again decide that they aren't dangerous, or if they are dangerous,

somehow they can evade the risks because, after all, they're young and they're going to live forever.

And that brings me back to the other issue that you work so hard on, your work with at-risk children. It is obvious that every single one of us who care about this is going to have to work even harder to educate our children about the dangers drugs pose. We have to do that. We have dramatically increased the safe and drug-free schools program. It's now reaching 40 million students in 97 percent of our districts. We have now established drug courts across the country because they've proved effective in breaking the cycles of drugs and crime. We are fighting against any attempts to cut back on the safe and drug-free schools program. We are working to pass legislation that would require States to test parolees for drugs and send them back to prison if they get back on drugs.

But we have to stop this from happening in the first place. Your programs for at-risk kids—think what it means to a child who has never had a positive role model to see someone in a uniform who looks like them, who comes from humble beginnings, who has made something of his or her life, saying "There is a future out there for you. This stuff can kill you. It is not just illegal, it is not just wrong, it can kill you. It can kill you in a hurry, depending on what drug it is, or it can just rob you of your ability to concentrate over the long run, or rob you, if you're a young woman, rob you of your ability to have healthy children. They're all terribly dangerous." You can have a big input on that.

And so I hope that when we meet again we'll be able to say that the Guard has helped not 6 million at-risk kids but several million more than that. I know you have lots to do, but this country's children need you. And they will respond to you.

I'd like to say just a word about terrorism. And I'd like to point out that, kind of like the narcotics trade, in an ironic and painful way, many of the things we love about this new post-cold-war global society of ours make us more vulnerable to the things we hate. We like it that we can travel around the world with such great ease. We like it that all borders are more open. We like it that we can transfer information, ideas, tech-

nology, and money across the globe virtually instantaneously.

But the more open our society, the more vulnerable we are to the organized forces of destruction. And that is why I have said repeatedly, finding a way to deal with terrorism, terrorism from which no one is immune—as you saw it from the attack in the subway in Tokyo, you’ve seen it in Great Britain, you’ve seen it on the continent of Europe, you’ve seen it in Atlanta, you’ve seen it in Oklahoma City, you saw it at the World Trade Center, and you hear about it and it sends chills up and down your spine when you discover the things that were planned that have been avoided by the diligence of our law enforcement officials. We have got to continue to work on this. We have got to continue to combat terrorists wherever they are. And I believe that we must continue to try to convince others to do the same thing.

We have followed a three-prong strategy:

First, to rally our friends and allies around the world against terror. We did that at the G-7 meeting in France last summer and at the Summit of the Peacemakers at Sharm al-Sheikh in Egypt, where, for the first time, Arab states, a large number of them, condemned terrorism in Israel or wherever it occurred in the Middle East. We are increasing the isolation of those who sponsor terrorism by maintaining and strengthening our sanctions against Iran, Iraq, Libya, and Sudan.

Second, here at home, we’re working hard to give law enforcement the tools they need to combat modern terrorism, through the antiterrorism bill that we pushed through Congress after Oklahoma City, and with new legislation to help us stop money laundering and tighten our borders against terrorists.

Third, we’re working very hard to increase our security at airports and on airplanes, doing more hand searches and machine screening of luggage, requiring pre-flight inspection for every plane flying to or from the United States, examining all standard aviation security practices so that we can make further changes to increase security.

I might say since most of you probably flew into Washington to attend this meeting, you may have noticed some delay in air travel.

I hope you didn’t but if you did, it’s worth that to make all Americans safer when they board airplanes and others when they come to our country.

This will be a long, hard struggle. It will require discipline, concentration, flexibility, the ability to learn and continuously change. But the most important thing it will require is the same level of will that the American people and the American Armed Forces brought to bear in all of our armed conflicts and through the long twilight struggle of the cold war. We have to understand that this may well be the 21st century’s curse. And we know that as long as human nature is what it is, there will be some amount of misconduct in this old world, some amount of wrongdoing and some amount of downright evil. And as long as that’s around, the United States will be a target, and the United States must take the lead in stamping it out and standing against it.

Let me say in closing, I have seen enormous numbers of Americans face to face in the last 10 days because of the events that you know well. I expect I’ve looked into the faces of right around a half a million people, riding on the train and on the bus, going to the big meetings and passing through the small towns early in the morning and late at night.

This is a very great country because the citizens of this country are good people. And most of our citizens just want to live good, decent, honorable lives, have work that has dignity, raise the children the best they can, enjoy their places of worship and their associations with their friends and neighbors and their family. You have made that possible through your dedication. You who are willing to defend our Nation make it possible for all those little kids to stand out along the side of the road or railroad tracks and wave the American flag and know, even before they’re old enough to explain it, that it really means something special to be an American.

About 200 years ago, when our Nation stood at the dawn of the 19th century, John Randolph of Roanoke, Virginia, one of the great congressional leaders of his time, said it best. Randolph was a great supporter of the militias, out of which this organization grew. He knew the power of the love of lib-

erty. On the floor of the House in January of 1800, John Randolph said, "When citizen and soldier shall be synonymous, then you will be safe."

It was true then, it is true now, and you have made it true. Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:59 p.m. in the ballroom at the Sheraton Washington Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Melvin C. Thrash, Arkansas adjutant general, and his wife, Rose; Richard C. Alexander, president, Edward J. Philbin, executive director, and LaVern E. Webber, former executive director, National Guard Association of the United States; Lt. Gen. Edward Baca, USA, chief, National Guard Bureau; and Terrence M. O'Connell, chairman, Reserve Forces Policy Board.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With the Vice President and an Exchange With Reporters

September 4, 1996

Missile Strikes on Iraq

The President. Good afternoon. I am pleased to report that according to the information I have received from Secretary Perry today, the air strikes, the missile strikes that were conducted over the last 2 days have been successful. The targets were either destroyed or sufficiently damaged so that we can say that our mission has been achieved. That made it possible for us to implement the expanded no-fly zone today, and I want to commend the military once again for the exceptional job they have done in carrying out this mission.

Now, what has happened is that this has changed the strategic situation, particularly in the southern part of Iraq, which Saddam used as a staging ground for his invasion of Kuwait and then in 1994 for the massing of his troops near the Kuwaiti border. He is strategically worse off than he was before these strikes began, and I am satisfied that this was an appropriate measured response.

Obviously, we can't predict entirely what Saddam Hussein will do, but now he knows that there is a price to be paid for stepping over the line that the United Nations resolutions imposed.

The Vice President and I are about to start our weekly lunch, and we'll be discussing this further, but I did want to make this report. I'm very pleased by the results this morning that we have.

Q. Mr. President, there are reports of explosions in Baghdad. Are you aware of anything going on, or——

The President. I have received the reports of the explosions; I do not know anything about them. I can tell you that they are not the product of any action that we have taken.

Q. Are you disappointed, Mr. President, with the lack of public support from the former coalition partners, and does that mean that the coalition is dead?

The President. I don't think it's dead; I think quite to the contrary. We have received good support from the British. The Prime Minister of Canada called me last night. The German Chancellor issued a strong statement. I think that our Arab partners clearly understand what we were doing and what the risks are, and we're still flying the no-fly zone out of bases in Saudi Arabia. So I think things are on track, and I feel good about it.

This was an action that I thought we had to take. It was a measured, strong, appropriate action, and I believe we did the right thing.

Q. Mr. President, after twin missile strikes yesterday, there were two challenges today by Saddam's forces against the United States. Does this raise questions about whether you've really knocked out his ability to hit American planes or allied planes?

The President. There was a fixing on one of our planes that occurred from a site north of the 33d Parallel, but it does not. We believe we can fly this expanded no-fly zone now. It gives us an attempt to measure—or it gives us the capacity to measure what he's doing all the way up to the southern suburbs of Baghdad. So I think we're in good shape there.

Now, we will do whatever we have to do in the future to protect our pilots and to protect their ability to fly the no-fly zone in safety. We will do whatever we have to do. But I'm satisfied that this mission has achieved the objectives we set out for it. And our de-