AUTHENTICATED
U.S. GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
GPO

that we anticipated. But if you look at the combined eligibility and the level of funding of Medicaid and CHIP, there's no question that the vast majority of uninsured children in this country could in fact get coverage. And it would make a demonstrable difference—in their health and in their performance in school over the long run.

Well, let me just finally close by saying that, in some ways, these are all high-class problems. If I had come here in '93 and said, ''Now, I'll be back here in a few years, and we'll talk about how to spend the surplus,'' you would have said, ''You know, I thought that guy had good sense, but he's completely lost it.'' This is a high-class problem. But all high-class problems have accompanying high-class responsibilities. This is the last NGA meeting of the 20th century; the 92d meeting of the Governors, or the 92d year in which you've met. I've been to 19 of them. The first one, in 1908, was called by—that's not the one I went to. [*Laughter*] Although some days I feel like I went to it. [*Laughter*] The first one, in 1908, was called by a former Governor, Theodore Roosevelt. He was a great Governor and a great President and a very farsighted man. And he called the meeting, interestingly enough, about the conservation of our Nation's resources.

Now, I'll make you another prediction. When I look around this room and I see how many of you I've visited in natural disasters over the last few years—you and your successors will spend a lot more time in the next 20 years talking about the conservation of national resources in the context of natural disasters and climate change. And so, it will be deja vu again. And Teddy Roosevelt will look even smarter than he does today.

But I want to close with a quote that he gave to the first Governors' meeting. He said, ''Both the national and the several State governments must each do its part, and each can do a certain amount that the other cannot do, while the only really satisfactory results must be obtained by the representatives of the national and State governments working heartily together.''

I think that if we work heartily together, we will turn these high-class challenges into gold-mine opportunities, and our children will live in America's greatest days.

Thank you very much, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:25 p.m. in the St. Louis Ballroom at the Adam's Mark Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Thomas R. Carper of Delaware, chair, and Gov. Michael O. Leavitt of Utah, vice chair, National Governors' Association; Gov. Mel Carnahan of Missouri; Gov. James B. Hunt, Jr., of North Carolina; Gov. Tommy G. Thompson of Wisconsin; Gov. Kenny C. Guinn of Nevada; and Gov. Gray Davis of California. The President also referred to CHIP, the Children's Health Insurance Program.

Remarks on the 50th Anniversary of the Joint Chiefs of Staff at Fort Myer, Virginia

August 9, 1999

Thank you very much. Thank you, Secretary Cohen and Janet. Let me begin by thanking the Secretary for his remarks, his devotion, his remarkable leadership, and his willingness to serve in our administration—to prove that when it comes to the national security of the United States, we are beyond party, and all Americans.

General Shelton, thank you for your leadership and for your remarks. And we are delighted to be joined today not only by your wonderful wife, Carolyn, but also by your mother. We're glad she came up to be with us.

Thanks, Secretary Slater, Secretary West, Senator Thurmond, for being here. Senator Thurmond may be the only person here who served in the military before there was a Joint Chiefs of Staff. He was at D-day, and he's here 55 years later, and we're delighted to have him. In both places, he has served our country well. [*Applause*] Thank you. Thank you, Senator.

I thank the service secretaries, the members of the Joint Chiefs who are here, General Ralston and others, and the former members of the Joint Chiefs, and all the other officers who are here. One in particular I would like to mention, General Wes Clark, because of his extraordinary leadership in our most recent military victory in Kosovo. I thank him and all the men and women of our Armed Forces who have served there. [*Applause*] Thank you.

I especially want to welcome here the former Chairmen and their wives: Admiral and Mrs. Moorer, General and Mrs. Jones, General and Mrs. Vessey, Admiral and Mrs. Crowe, General and Mrs. Shalikashvili, and, of course, Alma Powell. We're glad to have them here.

Fifty years ago—you've heard a lot about already today, but I think it is worth remembering what it was like to be the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff 50 years ago. It was a new job. It was clearly overwhelmingly preoccupied with the onset of the cold war and the need to defend Europe. But soon after General Omar Bradley was summoned to assume the job, war broke out in Korea. So he had not only to defend Europe, but also to defend freedom in South Korea, and fulfill the job description to coordinate the services, and also to coordinate with the State Department and the White House.

We have our White House Chief of Staff, Mr. Podesta, and the National Security Adviser, Mr. Berger, and others who are here. I think we can say with some conviction that sometimes the hardest military job of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs is his coordination with the White House. And it has been so for 50 years. But General Bradley and then 13 other remarkable leaders have found a way to do that, and at the same time, to provide wise and honest counsel at crucial moments to every President and Secretary of the Defense. And I would like to stop a moment and emphasize that.

There will come a time in the service of every President—in my time it has come, unfortunately, on several occasions—when you have to have the honest advice of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. And very often, it is the last thing in the world you want to hear, because he will either tell you that you really can't achieve the objective you want to achieve for the price you're willing to pay, or that you have to do something that you'd rather to go to the dentist without novocaine than do. And I can tell you that, without exception, every time a Chairman of the Joint Chiefs has had to do that to me, he has done it. He has served our country well; he has served the President well; he has served the military and the men and women in uniform well. This institution has worked because the people who are part of it did what they were required to do in times of crisis. And our country should be very grateful to all of them.

Just think what has happened over the last 50 years. We look back on 50 years of constant vigilance, of two hot wars and a long cold war, of military victories in the Persian Gulf and the Balkans, of difficulties like the Cuban missile crisis and many others too numerous to mention. But through it all, and though new threats emerged continuously, we see the march to freedom and we see the depth of America's security.

We can look forward to the 21st century with genuine confidence, in no small measure because of the 14 leaders we honor today. So again, I say, along with the Secretary of Defense, to those who are here, to the surviving families of those who are not, and to those who could not be with us today, our Nation is grateful. You have served it well.

I was very privileged to work with three Chairs—Colin Powell, John Shalikashvili, and Hugh Shelton; to work very closely with the previous Chairman, Bill Crowe, who has been my Ambassador to Great Britain and has done a lot of important work to alert us to the continuing dangers to our Embassies and their personnel from terrorists. I had the privilege of getting good counsel on the very difficult POW–MIA issue from General Vessey, and on our efforts to save innocent civilians from the dangers of landmines by General Jones. Of course, I still hear from General Powell on a regular basis about his work with America's Promise and our shared interest in it.

The more I know the people who are involved in these endeavors, the more my esteem for them grows. I always have separation anxiety when someone important leaves. When Shali walked out the door and went all the way across the country, I thought Joan would never let him come back. But I've even found something for him to do from time to time that doesn't get him in too much trouble at home.

These people are unique. They have these unique experiences that they blend with their abilities and their patriotism. And I think we should think just a moment about the position beyond the question of advice to the

President. If you think about it, with the world changing as much as it is today, and with the United States occupying the rather unique position we occupy at this moment in history, there are few positions which require the occupant to think harder about the threats the Nation faces and will face. There are few which force a leader to weigh more soberly the costs of action—which in a world where people are comfortable, are very high—against the costs down the road of inaction. There are few which require a person to spend as much time thinking about how to avoid war as how to win one if it should become necessary.

General Bradley said a long time ago that the way to win a nuclear war is to make sure it never starts. I would like to thank the former Chairs of the Joint Chiefs who have endorsed the ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty to end nuclear testing forever, proposed by President Eisenhower, championed by President Kennedy, signed now by the United States and over 150 other countries—41 of them have ratified it. Four of our former Chairs—General Jones, Admiral Crowe, General Powell, General Shalikashvili—have issued a statement endorsing the treaty, agreeing with the current Chair, General Shelton, that it is in America's interest.

Why? Because we have already stopped testing; our leading experts say we can maintain a safe and reliable nuclear deterrent without further tests; and the only remaining question is, will we join or lose a verifiable treaty that can prevent other countries from testing nuclear weapons. If we don't ratify it, by its terms the treaty can't enter into force. And countries all around the world will feel more pressure to develop and test weapons in ever more destructive varieties and sizes, threatening the security of everyone on Earth.

So today, once again, as we honor the Joint Chiefs, the individuals and the institution, I ask the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to hold hearings on the treaty this fall, and the full Senate to vote for ratification as soon as possible. This will strengthen national security not only of the United States but of people around the world. This will help the new Chairs of the Joint Chiefs in the future not only to prepare for war but to avoid it.

Let me finally say that as we approach a new century, we can still be proud, indeed, never prouder, of our men and women in uniform. Thanks to their courage and skill in the most recent campaign in Kosovo, a brutal campaign of ethnic cleansing has been reversed; our alliance has been preserved and strengthened; there is new hope for a world where people are not murdered or uprooted because of their ethnic heritage or the way they choose to worship God.

Operation Allied Force was a truly remarkable military campaign. Over 30,000 sorties flown; no combat casualties. Still we must not indulge the illusion of a risk-free war. In Kosovo, our pilots risked their lives every day. They took enemy fire, faced enemy aircraft, time and again put themselves in even greater danger just to avoid hitting civilians on the ground. And we know not every conflict will be like Kosovo; not every battle can be won from the air.

We must remember, too, that the rigorous training we require of our men and women in uniform is in itself dangerous. We lost two helicopter pilots training in Kosovo. In every single year, we lose a good number of men and women in uniform just doing their duty.

Our job from the top down is to reduce the risks of their service as much as we can and to send our service men and women into harm's way only when we're certain that the purpose is clear, the mission is achievable, and all peaceful options have been exhausted.

When we do send them, we have to make sure they have the tools to do the job. We must always match their skill and courage with a high level of readiness. And we must always prepare today for tomorrow's threats. All those jobs, in the end, fall on the shoulders of the Chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

In his remarkable memoir of World War II, Omar Bradley wrote the following words. He said, ''No matter how high an officer's rank, it's important to scoff at the myth of the indispensable man. For we have always maintained that Arlington Cemetery is filled with indispensable men.''

Now, that statement is a tribute to his decency and his humility. Nevertheless, for 50

years now, the role of Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff has been indispensable to the preservation of life on this planet from nuclear holocaust, to the security of the United States, and to the march of freedom across the world.

Fourteen Americans of great ability and even more intense patriotism have occupied that office and made it indispensable. So, too all of those who are here, and their families, and those who are not here today, a grateful nation says, thank you, thank you, thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10 a.m. at Summerall Field. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary Cohen's wife, Janet Langhart Cohen; General Shelton's mother, Sarah Laughlin Shelton; Gen. Wesley K. Clark, USA, Supreme Allied Commander Europe; former Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Adm. Thomas H. Moorer, USN (Ret.), and his wife, Carrie; Gen. David C. Jones, USA (Ret.), and his wife, Lois; Gen. John W. Vessey, Jr., USA (Ret.), and his wife, Avis; Adm. William J. Crowe, Jr., USN (Ret.), and his wife, Shirley; Gen. John M. Shalikashvili, USA (Ret.), and his wife, Joan; and Gen. Colin Powell, USA (Ret.), and his wife, Alma.

Remarks at the AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps Graduation Ceremony

August 9, 1999

Thank you. When I came up here, Josh said, ''I warmed them up for you.'' [*Laughter*] He certainly did that. Now he's sitting in my seat, which might be—[*laughter*]—might be a good omen. [*Laughter*]

Let me thank all of you for being here today. I want to say a special word of thanks to Harris Wofford, who, as you heard from his own speech, his public service to America goes all the way back to World War II. He was a major player in the civil rights revolution, the establishment of the Peace Corps. He served in the United States Senate. He agreed to come back and run our national service program and to do it in a way that reached out to all Americans from all walks of life and all political backgrounds. And he has done a superb job. I'm very grateful to Senator Harris Wofford for his leadership of AmeriCorps. He's been great in our whole national service program.

I want to thank General Chambers and Kate Becker for their leadership, and welcome all of you here, but especially the AmeriCorps NCCC graduates. Senator Wofford mentioned that on the morning you were sworn in with great symbolism in front of the FDR Memorial, it was quite cold. But within, literally 24 hours, many of you were already off to Texas and Puerto Rico to help the victims of a hurricane and a flood. After a year of such duty—I think you call them spikes, just like these fellows did so many years ago—you have fulfilled your AmeriCorps pledge. You have made a difference; you have gotten things done for America.

So to all the parents and family members and friends here today, let me say that your sons and daughters may look about the same as they did a year ago, but they have grown in remarkable ways. They are now firefighters, homebuilders, relief workers, community organizers, mentors, educators. They are confident. They are leaders; they are also servants as they lead.

Congratulations to Class Five of DC. Like the CCC alumni here today, you have touched lives and changed communities in ways that will be remembered and appreciated for years and years to come.

You know, in so many ways, AmeriCorps is the embodiment of the deal I struck with the American people in 1992. At the time, unemployment was high; the debt had quadrupled in the previous 12 years; social division was increasing; political stagnation was the order of the day in Washington. And I wanted our country to change course and come together. I acknowledged that Government can't solve all the problems, but we can't leave the people that you've been helping out there to sink or swim on their own, either. And so I wanted to create a Government that would give people the tools to solve their own problems and live their own dreams and to basically have a new compact in which we said, we will attempt to create opportunity for all Americans who are, themselves, responsible, and we will attempt to build an American community of all responsible citizens.

AmeriCorps embodies that. You go out there creating opportunity every day. You are