

stretcher bearers, braved shells and bullets and mines to pull their comrades back from the frontlines when they were wounded.

At the Battle of the Bulge the men of the 3496th Truck Company hauled weapons, soldiers, and prisoners down roads that the rain had turned into rivers of mud and ice. They unloaded their 2.5 ton trucks as mortars fell all around them. And even today, 50 years later, their commander, Colonel Benjamin Layton, says he can still feel the driving snow and the deadening cold of the Ardennes. He's with us tonight, and we honor him and those like him who served their Nation so well. Thank you, Colonel Layton.

And I, too, must say just a word about the legendary Tuskegee Airmen, who flew over 1,500 combat missions and never lost a single bomber under their escort. Some of them are here with us tonight, including Second Lieutenant Luther Smith, who was forced to bail out over Yugoslavia after a successful attack on an ammunition dump, where he was captured and interned as a POW in Austria. He entered that camp weighing 150 pounds. Six months later when the British forces liberated him, he was down to 70 pounds. But he survived, and he's here. God bless you, sir.

After the war, after winning the victories over fascism and intolerance, these heroes came home to a nation that still could not shed its habits of hatred and bigotry. A mayor and a city marshal pulled a young black sergeant from a bus in South Carolina and beat him blind. A mob gang in Georgia dragged a newly returned veteran and his wife from their car and shot them so savagely they could scarcely be identified. These and other horrible acts of violence done to our African-American veterans moved President Truman to desegregate the military and put forward the most sweeping civil rights legislation our country had then known.

So it was that in Korea and Vietnam, African-Americans were able to serve shoulder to shoulder with soldiers of all races for the first time. Beamed by television into America's living rooms, images of their camaraderie and shared sacrifice helped our Nation to act on a truth too long denied: that if people of different races could serve as brothers abroad, putting their lives on the line to-

gether for this country, surely, surely at last they could live as neighbors at home.

It is a measure of the progress we have made as a people that today many of our most revered military leaders are African-Americans. Admiral Gravely and General Davison came in with me tonight. I was proud to look up here at the beginning of the program and see the Commander of our district here, General Gorden. And of course, we heard the 220-year saga tonight that led from Crispus Attucks to General Colin Powell.

Today I say to you, ladies and gentlemen who have served us in uniform, at last our children, without regard to their race, see in you nothing more and nothing less than what you are: American heroes in the proud tradition of George Washington, John Pershing, and George Marshall. You have earned their way into the Nation's hearts, and you are there now forever and ever.

Tonight let me salute you for many things but most of all for never giving up on America. Finally, finally, in the military your country is worthy of you, worthy of the words of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, worthy of the sacrifice that you and your forbearers have given. Let us never forget it. And let us now say: Wouldn't it be nice if the rest of America worked together as well as the United States military?

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:13 p.m. at Constitution Hall. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. Colin Powell, USA, Ret.; Maj. Gen. Frederick Davison, USA, Ret.; Vice Adm. Samuel L. Gravely, Jr., USN, Ret.; Ossie Davis, narrator of the salute; Mrs. Charity Adam Earley, former Lieutenant Colonel, Women's Army Corps; and Maj. Gen. Fred Gorden, Commander, Military District of Washington. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address *February 18, 1995*

Good morning. I'm joined today by the Houston Rockets, last year's National Basketball Association champs. I'm glad they're here to have their recognition and take their tour of the White House, not only because

of what they've achieved but because I believe team sports reflect America at its best.

And in America, as in team sports, anyone can rise as far as his or her God-given talents and hard work will take them. That doesn't mean everyone can lead the NBA in scoring. The American dream doesn't guarantee results for anybody. But it does mean that opportunity is there if you're willing to work and struggle and do your very best. At the same time, for teams to succeed, people have to work hard and work together. Hakeem Olajuwon would probably be the first to admit that stars can break records, but only teams win championship rings.

That's what I mean when I talk about a New Covenant in America. It's about teamwork, partnership among all of our people.

In this country at this time, as we move into a new century and a new economy, the Government's job is to expand opportunity while shrinking Government bureaucracy; to empower people to make the most of their own lives; and to enhance our security, not just abroad but here at home on our streets, too.

At the same time, we must demand more responsibility from every citizen in return, not just for ourselves and our families but responsibility for our communities and our country. We're all in this together—more opportunity and more responsibility.

I know the American people want us to practice that here in Washington, and I've reached out to the Republican Congress. At the end of the cold war as we move into this information age, there are many areas where we can work together to improve the lives of hard-working Americans: reducing the size of the Federal Government, reducing the burden of unfunded requirements on State and local governments, requiring Congress to live under the same laws it imposes on people in the private sector, the line item veto to control unnecessary spending, and giving more flexibility to States to reform their welfare and health care systems.

But we still have our differences as well. And when we do, I'm going to judge a policy not on whether it's a Republican or a Democratic one but on whether it's best for the American people. If it is, I'll support it, fight

for it, sign it into law. But if it isn't, I will oppose it.

Just this week, we've seen where some of these differences lie. When I ran for President, I pledged to cut 100,000 Federal bureaucrats and use the money to put 100,000 new police officers on the street. I did it because one of the jobs of the Federal Government is to enhance our security at home and because crime and violence is a problem all over America in communities small and large.

Well, we're keeping that promise. Last year's crime bill reduces the Federal bureaucracy and takes all the money and gives it to our communities to fight crime. It provides explicitly for 100,000 new police officers. Just since the 4 months since the crime bill took effect, police departments in America have been able to hire over 16,000 police officers. That's in just 4 months. We're going to make the 100,000 goal.

And just so you'll know how much that is, there are only 550,000 police officers in America. So with these 100,000 all going on the streets, that's about a 20 percent increase in the police forces of America to keep our people safer.

Incredibly, Republicans in the House of Representatives voted to replace our guarantee of 100,000 police with a blank check that has no guarantees at all, with money that can be used for all kinds of things other than police. Now, I'm all for cutting bureaucracy. Under our plan, communities can apply for police with a one-page, eight-question application. But I know the American people want more police on the street, and I know the law enforcement officers of this country know it's the best crime-fighting tool there is. I'm going to work with the Senate to fix this proposal. But I will veto any effort to repeal or undermine our promise.

Some are saying that this change is necessary because police departments won't hire 100,000 people because we require them to come up with a little of the money, too. To them I say, in only 4 months one-half of all the communities in the entire Nation have written to us asking for more police. This is popular in the country, and it ought to stay the law here in the Congress.

As we enter the 21st century, the keys to opportunity for every American are education and training. That's another one of our jobs here in Washington, to give people the tools they need to make the most of their own lives. That's why we reformed the student loan system, eliminating middlemen and actually cutting the cost to the taxpayers and making college loans more affordable for all kinds of middle class students all across this country, lower costs and easier to pay back. We also expanded the Head Start program by 30,000 children and made it apply to younger kids. We're helping young people who don't choose college learn the skills they need to get and keep high-paying jobs.

In the last Congress many Republicans supported these things as well as Democrats. But in this Congress, some Republicans want to limit the reach of our college loans so over half the students in the country can't get them. They want to slow down or stop or reverse a lot of these other educational gains.

But creating opportunity for people who take responsibility for themselves is exactly what the Government should be doing at this time in our history. Some of these Republicans see education as just another place to cut and gut. I want to cut Government. I have cut Government. There are already more than 100,000 fewer people working here than there were the day I became President. But I don't want to do it at the expense of our children's skills and education in our future.

Finally, this week our administration opposed Republican efforts in the House of Representatives to force the Government to spend billions on a Star Wars-type defense system, diverting those resources from high priority national security areas and threatening our Anti-ballistic Missile Treaty. I was gratified that the Democrats and some Republicans who joined them had the courage to defeat this unacceptable and unconstitutional infringement on the President's authority. America's security must never be about Republicans and Democrats, about who happens to be President and who happens to control Congress. Our national security should never be a partisan issue. And I will not allow Congress to jeopardize that security by making it one. After all, our job,

no matter what our party is, is to work together, to move America forward, and to preserve the American dream for all Americans in the new global economy.

That's why I proposed the middle class bill of rights to cut taxes for ordinary people to help them invest in their families and in their education, why I want to raise the minimum wage, so people who will take the responsibility to work full-time and stay away from welfare can earn a decent living for themselves and their children while they're doing it.

I will fight for every idea, every proposal, every piece of legislation that strengthens the American dream. And I'll keep doing everything in my power to fight against anything that weakens it.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:06 a.m. from the Oval Office at the White House.

**Remarks Congratulating the 1994
National Basketball Association
Champion Houston Rockets and an
Exchange With Reporters
February 18, 1995**

The President. Good morning, everyone. I am delighted to be here with the Houston Rockets; along with NBA Commissioner David Stern; Congresswoman Sheila Jackson-Lee; the owner of the Rockets, Leslie Alexander; and of course, Rudy Tomjanovich, the head coach.

I want to congratulate the Rockets formally on their championship last year. We've been trying to find a time for them to come to the White House and make their official visit for some time, and as you know, they played the Bullets here last night, and I'm glad to have them here.

I enjoyed last season immensely. I enjoyed watching the Rockets win. It was the first-ever major championship in sports for a Houston team. It opened the season with 15 straight wins, tying an NBA record. And the victories, the number of victories they had, was the best in the team's history. So it was a great season for them. And you all know, I kind of liked basketball last year anyway. And I'm beginning to like it better this year as it goes along.