

Guard, for example, has been activated for disaster relief 15 times in the last 6 years. All Americans have learned to count on the National Guard in times of crisis to lend a strong and helping hand.

The Guard reservists also provide for the common defense. This has always been so, but it has never been more important than today. During the last few years, American active forces have been reduced in size, even as American commitments have increased. The Guard and Reserves have stepped up to the challenge.

More than ever, you find yourselves a part of overseas missions, serving with your active duty counterparts. In Bosnia and Kosovo, reservists make up 15 to 20 percent of the force. You know firsthand. Less than 2 months ago, a number of airmen from the 130th Airlift Wing came home from Operation Joint Force after flying missions from Germany to the Balkans.

During my tenure as Governor of Texas, hundreds of National Guardsmen and reservists were sent to Bosnia, and I was enormously proud of them. They did what they always do: They performed their duty, just as you performed your duty.

As threats to America change, your role will continue to change. The National Guard and reservists will be more involved in homeland security, confronting acts of terror and the disorder our enemies may try to create. I welcome the important part you will play in protecting our Nation and its people. The National Guard and Reserves are a vital part of America's national defense. And I want you to know that you not only have a former guardsman in the White House; you have a friend.

Beyond the role you play in the Armed Forces, America's citizen soldiers display values that are central to our Nation: character, courage, and sacrifice. You demonstrate the highest form of citizenship. And while you may not be full-time soldiers, you are full-time patriots.

In his book "Citizen Soldier," the distinguished historian Stephen Ambrose wrote this: "At the core, the American citizen soldiers knew the difference between right and wrong. And they didn't want to live in a world in which wrong prevailed. So they fought,

and they won. And we, all of us living and yet to be born, must be forever profoundly grateful."

Professor Ambrose was writing about the soldiers of World War II. But his words apply to this audience and to the men and women around the world who proudly wear the uniform. Your uniform shows that you are living your life for others, for your fellow West Virginians in time of suffering and crisis, for your fellow Americans when our safety is threatened, and for the values and ideals our country represents when our allies and friends ask for help.

All Americans benefit from your service, and we'll always be grateful. Thank you for coming, and God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:47 a.m. at Yeager Field at the West Virginia National Guard Headquarters. In his remarks, he referred to Maj. Gen. Allen E. Tackett, Adjutant General of West Virginia; Gov. Robert E. Wise of West Virginia; Com. Sgt. Maj. John J. Leonard, Jr., Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs; and M. Sgt. David (Mike) Eshbaugh, 167th Airlift Wing, West Virginia Air National Guard.

### Telephone Remarks on Former President Ronald Reagan's 90th Birthday

February 15, 2001

**The President.** Mrs. Reagan, hi, how are you today?

**Former First Lady Nancy Reagan.** [*Inaudible*]

**The President.** Good, thank you. Listen, I'm honored. I'm here in the Oval Office—

**Mrs. Reagan.** [*Inaudible*]

**The President.** Well, thank you. And I'm getting ready to sign a birthday card to the President, my first document I'll sign as the President, which is a joint resolution from the Congress—

**Mrs. Reagan.** Oh, how nice.

**The President.** —which expresses our deep gratitude and admiration for President Reagan.

**Mrs. Reagan.** How nice.

**The President.** We honor him with his greatness and his goodness. And we honor

you, as well, for your strength of character and your service.

So I'm getting ready to sign right now—

**Mrs. Reagan.** Oh, this is very exciting.

**The President.** Well, thank you, ma'am. It's exciting for me, as well. It's an honor. And I look forward to sending the document and the pen that I use to you.

**Mrs. Reagan.** Oh, how nice. How nice.

**The President.** At any rate, it's great to talk to you.

**Mrs. Reagan.** Well, it's great to talk to you, too. And I can't thank you enough.

**The President.** Well, thanks a lot.

**Mrs. Reagan.** It's wonderful. Wait until I tell Ronnie.

**The President.** Give the President a hug and a kiss.

**Mrs. Reagan.** I will.

**The President.** Thanks a lot.

**Mrs. Reagan.** Thank you.

**The President.** Bye-bye.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:35 a.m. from the Oval Office at the White House. H.J. Res. 7, approved February 15, was assigned Public Law No. 107-1.

## Remarks to State Department Employees

February 15, 2001

**The President.** Mr. Secretary, thank you very much. It's an honor to be here with you, and thank you all for that warm welcome.

As the Secretary mentioned, I'm focusing this week on America's national security. And few are more important to that mission than the people of the State Department, both foreign service and civil service. Our gathering here will be seen by some 10,000 State Department personnel in the Washington area. It will be seen by 37,000 committed men and women, including many foreign service national employees in 250 posts all over the world.

So to those in this room, those around the town, those across the world, thank you for what you do on behalf of the American people. You do so much to sustain America's position in the world and so much to foster freedom. And for that, we are grateful.

In a few moments I'll go upstairs to witness the swearing-in of 38 new foreign service officers. Our hope is that they draw strength and inspiration from your example, because you all are the finest diplomats in the world.

The flags that surround us here represent every country with whom the United States has diplomatic relations. They are a powerful reminder that you are one department of our Government that literally never sleeps. America's commitments and responsibilities span the world in every time zone. Every day you fulfill those responsibilities with quiet excellence. You solve problems before they become headlines. You resolve crises before a shot is fired. And when tragedy or disaster strikes, you are often the first person on the scene.

The other markers that surround us speak even more directly of your devotion to duty. They memorialize your colleagues who gave their lives to our country. The earliest are from the 18th century, understanding your long record of service and the long march to freedom. Others are all too recent, bitter reminders of the dangerous times we live in, like the ones marked Kenya. I know the example of these American heroes inspires you, just as seeing you all here today inspires me.

It's sometimes said that State is the one Federal department that has no domestic constituency. Well, whoever said that is wrong. Let me assure you that between me and Secretary Powell, you do have a constituency.

Speaking of the Secretary, I chose him to be our Secretary of State because he is a leader whose dignity and integrity will add to the strength and authority of America around the world. He is the absolute right man for the job.

The Secretary and I are counting on you, on your help, as we pursue a clear and consistent and decisive foreign policy, a foreign policy that serves both our vital interests and our highest ideals. Our goal is to turn this time of American influence into generations of democratic peace. This requires America to remain engaged with the world and to project our strength with purpose and with humility.

America will set its own priorities, so that they're not set by our adversaries or the crisis