

Remarks to the Military Community at Hickam Air Force Base in
Honolulu, Hawaii
November 16, 1994

Thank you so much. It's good to be home. Thank you. Admiral Macke, General Kealoha, Senator Akaka, Congresswoman Mink, Congressman Abercrombie, Governor and Mrs. Waihee, to Governor-elect Cayetano, and Lieutenant Governor-elect Hirono, and Mayor Harris. Hillary and I and our distinguished Secretary of Commerce, Ron Brown, we're all very glad to be here with all of you.

I want to say a special word of thanks and appreciation to the service members and the spouses, the families of the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, the Marine Corps, the Coast Guard, all of you stationed here in Hawaii. And I'd like to say a special word of thanks to the Marine Corps Band for making me feel so very at home when I got off the airplane. Thank you.

I'm glad to be back at Hickam. I want all of you to know that while you're a long way from the mainland, you're never far from the hearts of every American who understands what you're doing here to keep our country safe and strong. I thank all of you for that.

As you know, I have just returned from a trip to Asia, a trip that began on Veterans Day at Arlington National Cemetery, where on behalf of the American people I was able to express our gratitude for those who paid the ultimate sacrifice to keep our Nation free. I then stopped at our airbase in Alaska. It was rather different than here. [Laughter] It was about 23 degrees. The snow was already knee-deep and coming down, but it was very warm. And the men and women there in uniform are also doing a very important job for America. And I went to Manila in the Philippines to honor those who fought in World War II.

It has been an immensely rewarding time for me to serve as the President and Commander in Chief. Just a few days ago I was in the Persian Gulf with our forces there who got there so quickly and stopped the aggression of Saddam Hussein before it ever got started, thanks to the United States.

So to all of you here and all of your counterparts around the world, I say the world knows that the skills of our fighting men and women

have never been higher. Your capacity to carry out our missions has never been greater. Your commitment to liberty has never been stronger. The world is more peaceful and secure because of you. And the most important thing I came here to say tonight is thank you.

You know, the world is changing profoundly. There are still threats out there, and they are significant, threats of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, threats of terrorism, the growing international drug trade, and the rise of international organized crime in the wake of communism's fall.

But if you really look around the world, you'd have to say that security, peace, and freedom are on the march, that all these children here today holding their American flags will in all probability grow up in a world where they will have less fear than their parents and their grandparents faced because of you.

If you look at what's happened from the Persian Gulf and the Middle East to north Africa and Northern Ireland and South Africa to Haiti, if you look at the fact that with North Korea we just concluded an agreement to make certain that that nation becomes a nonnuclear nation, not selling nuclear materials to others, if you look at the agreement we reached with China to stop the proliferation of missiles, and if you look at the fact that in Russia for the first time since nuclear weapons came on the face of the Earth, there are no Russian missiles pointed at American children, you'd have to say we're on the move.

Our forces in the Pacific are at this moment undertaking critical missions from Haiti to the Sinai, from joint exercises with Japan to your role in deterring Iraq. I appreciate all of that. I know well that the success of our diplomatic efforts depends in large measure on our military strength. It is imperative that you remain the best fighting force in the world. And we are determined to do everything we can to make sure that that is exactly what happens.

Let me say, too, that all of you know, even though your role as workers might be in our national defense, that the world of America at home is changing, too, in ways that are both

good and troubling. We've had problems in our system that are profound: 60 percent of American wage earners are earning the same or less today that they were earning 15 years ago when you adjust for inflation. We know that this has been especially hard on working men with limited educations. We know that our country still has rates of crime, violence, and family and community breakdown that are too high and unacceptable. We know that a lot of people have a deep sense that our Government, except for you, in which they have confidence, only works for organized special interests and is too often unable to protect the interests or the values of the ordinary Americans. The deep concern and frustration of our people about these conditions led to the changes they voted for in both 1992 and in 1994.

But just because the Congress changed hands, I think I can say for these Members of Congress here behind me, we don't think the message of the American people is, "We want more gridlock. We want an enhanced role for organized interests over ordinary citizens, which is what always happens when we have gridlock." I think what the American people said is, "You've got to keep working together until you change this enough to make it right, until you turn the difficult trends around, until America is going in the right direction at home as well as abroad." And I can tell you that I am committed to doing that.

If you look at what makes a strong country, it's a lot of what makes a strong military: strong families, good schools, safe streets, good-paying jobs, the kind of things that allows people to live up to the fullest of their God-given potential.

We've made a beginning on that, and we've got to keep going. We've got more jobs, a smaller deficit, a smaller National Government doing more for the American people than we had 2 years ago, thanks to Senator Akaka and Senator Inouye, Congressman Abercrombie and Congresswoman Mink, and a lot of other people who helped.

We've taken some stands for strong families. The family and medical leave law will help about 200,000 people in this State to keep their jobs if they have to take a little time off when there's a baby born or a sick parent. That's something good the Government did to stand up for strong families, and we ought to be proud of that.

They worked for better education when we reorganized the student loan law so that now all over America middle class working families can have their children borrow money to go to college at lower interest rates and better repayment terms so that no one need ever walk away from a college education because of the cost again.

And even though there was great controversy about it in the election, I know that we will be able to make our streets safer because we passed the Brady bill and the crime bill and we're putting more police officers on the street and in getting military assault weapons off the street. You should have them, not people walking up and down the streets of our cities.

And we now have in this economy over the last 22 months more than 5 million new jobs. Our industries are operating at the highest capacity in 14 years. We have the lowest inflation in 29 years. And finally—slowly, slowly—we are beginning to see trends which may indicate that people will begin to get wage increases again. This year, there have been more high-wage jobs come into the American economy than in the last 5 years combined. We have to build on these changes, not tear them down. There is still a lot of change that needs to be done to reward people who get up every day, care for their families, obey the law, do the best they can to be good citizens. We have to keep that momentum going.

You know, let me just say one other thing in Hawaii. A lot of the problems we face today are because of big, sweeping trends in the world. A lot of the reasons a lot of Americans have trouble getting pay increases is because of the pressure of the global economy and competition from people who work for wages that Americans couldn't live on. That's been developing for 20 years now. We have to make a choice, whether we're going to embrace these changes and make them work for us or try to run away from them. One thing I want to say in Hawaii, that is on the frontier of America militarily and economically, is that you know that global change can be our friend. The reason I went to Asia is because whether we like it or not, the Asian economies are going to be a big part of the world's future. They are the fastest growing economies in the world. A third of our exports already go to Asia, supporting 2 million American jobs today.

Now, we have to decide. I believe as strongly as I can say that just as your military strength permits America to have diplomatic strength, so that national security is both military and diplomatic, national security is also being strong at home as well as being strong abroad. And there is no longer a clear dividing line between what is foreign policy and what is domestic policy, not when everybody's job depends on whether we can compete in a global economy.

If we educate our people well, that's good foreign policy. If we raise our kids well, that's strong national security. And if we can sell more American products abroad, then that means better jobs at home. That's good domestic policy. If we do not accept any other lesson in this calendar year, let us say there is no easy dividing line between our role in the world and our role at home. We must be strong at home and strong abroad. They are two sides of the same coin.

And so, let me say that I went to Indonesia, a long way from America, because I thought it was good for Americans, because we made an agreement in Indonesia that we would by a date certain take down all the barriers to trade and investment in all the countries of the Asian-Pacific region that were there. And that is a big deal, because we already have the most open markets in the world. So if others lower their markets, it means more sales for Americans, more jobs, and higher incomes.

The United States this year at the world economic forum in Switzerland was voted the most productive economy in the world for the very first time in 9 long years, 9 years. We are coming back. We need a fair chance to sell America's products and services around the world, just as we can promote America's ideals and values around the world. And that's what this trip was all about. That's what my work is all about.

And without regard to our party, let us agree, there's no easy line between our role in the world and our role at home. We can't be strong abroad if we're not strong at home. We'll never be strong at home if we withdraw from our responsibilities around the world. What really makes us strong is strong families, good education, safe streets, good jobs, and national security. You, as much as any group in America today, embody all those, and all Americans are in your gratitude.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:05 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Adm. Richard C. Macke, USN, commander in chief, U.S. Pacific Command; Brig. Gen. Dwight M. Kealoha, USAF, base commander; Gov. John Waihee of Hawaii and his wife, Lynne; Governor-elect Benjamin Cayetano; Lieutenant Governor-elect Mazie Hirono; and Mayor Jeremy Harris of Honolulu.

Remarks at the Children's Discovery Center Benefit and Tribute to Governor John Waihee in Honolulu November 18, 1994

Thank you very much. Governor Waihee, Lynne, Governor-elect Cayetano, Lieutenant Governor-elect Hirono, Senator Akaka, Congressman Abercrombie, Congresswoman Mink, Mayor Harris, Admiral Macke, ladies and gentlemen: I wanted very much to be here tonight, but I was worried when I heard that John was going to be canonized; I thought maybe he was desperately ill or something. *[Laughter]* Then I realized that you really did just want to do something nice for him and for Lynne and that you were going to do it in a wonderful cause.

This Children's Discovery Center, to me, is a symbol of what is best in our public life: people working in partnership, people working in a positive way, trying to light the flame of an imagination in each child's life and eyes. It is so very different from so much of what dominates our public discussion today, but it is so very like what I will always think of when I think of John Waihee.

He didn't tell you that a couple of years ago when the Democratic Governors had a meeting in Washington and we talked about my running for President, that he—it's true that he thought