

June 12 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1995

the State conferences. This is serious business. We did not ask you to do it just so we could cheer and have a good time, although that's important. We want your further ideas. We are doing these things because people like you all over America said they ought to be done.

Lastly, let me say that for all of the challenges and difficulties in this country, I wouldn't swap with any other country in the world as I look to the future and what it holds.

So, in a few moments, the Vice President and I are going back to the White House and we're going to welcome that fine young Air Force captain, Scott O'Grady, and his family there. And I want you to think about everything this country's got going for it.

First of all, and most important, it's got you and people like you, great entrepreneurs, great citizens, people who work hard, make the most of their lives, doing the best that they can with their families, contributing to their communities.

Secondly, we have more diversity in this country, more ethnic and cultural diversity, than any other advanced country. And that's a huge asset in a global economy. It's a huge asset.

Thirdly, we have a phenomenal set of assets and technology and research capability. And we have a Government that can change and can be a partner as we build the economy of the 21st century. We have profound challenges. But what I want you to believe from this experience today is that we can change, we can make it better, and that it comes from you. We will listen. That's why we wanted you to be here. I want you to be screaming and yelling and having a good time. I will not send the DC police after you—[laughter]—as long as you will send me some more good recommendations so we can do this again next year.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:40 a.m. at the Washington Hilton.

Remarks at a Ceremony Honoring Captain Scott O'Grady

June 12, 1995

Thank you very much, Mr. Secretary, General Shalikashvili, to all the members of the Armed Forces here, the distinguished Members of Congress, the members of the O'Grady and Scardapane families, to our distinguished guests.

I am tempted to say that we actually arranged this weather today so that Captain O'Grady would know for sure that he was not going to be left high and dry. [Laughter]

We are all here to thank our men and women in uniform for the rescue of Captain Scott O'Grady. Their mission made all Americans proud, just as Captain O'Grady's courage has made all Americans proud. We know that the skill and professionalism of our Armed Forces and the intelligence that backs them up are unmatched. We know that the months, the weeks, the years in training someday, somewhere will always have to be put into effect. And last week, those of you who brought life to that training and saved one brave man's life said more about what we stand for as a country, what our values are, and what our commitments are than any

words the rest of us could ever utter, and we thank you for it.

Consider this, that an F-16 pilot in Captain O'Grady's "Triple Nickel" squadron picks up a faint radio signal and relays it to an AWACS plane. Within minutes, the AWACS operators positively identify Captain O'Grady and pinpoint his location. Then just hours later, no less than 40 airplanes and helicopters are airborne, led by a combat search and rescue team from the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit, commanded by Colonel Martin Berndt. The AWACS aircraft, a marvel of our technology, guide two Super Stallion helicopters to within 50 yards of Captain O'Grady. In 2 minutes, the marines secure the landing site and whisk the captain to safety under hostile conditions.

When I spoke to Captain O'Grady once he was on board the U.S.S. *Kearsarge*, he told me his rescuers were the real heroes. Well, it can't be done any better than they did it. They showed our Nation and the world the best of our teamwork. When we finished our conversation, Captain O'Grady remarked, "Mr. Presi-

dent, I just want to say one thing: The United States is the greatest country in the world. God bless America.” The men and women of our Armed Forces also bless our America with your service and your skills. Because you do your job so well, our Nation will always be the land of the free and the home of the brave.

Now let me say it was a very great personal honor for me to host Captain O’Grady and all the fine members of his family, beginning with his grandparents and going down to his brother and sister and some of his friends, at the White House for lunch today. I can tell you that he

certifies he got a better meal today than he did in those 6 days in Bosnia. But he gave us something more precious than we can ever give him, a reminder of what is very best about our country.

And I’d like to now ask Captain O’Grady to come up here and say what’s on his mind and heart to the people who gave him back his freedom.

Captain Scott O’Grady.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:42 p.m. at the Pentagon.

Remarks to the United Auto Workers Convention *June 12, 1995*

Thank you very much. Thank you, Owen, for that fine introduction, and thank you for your leadership over the years. I want to congratulate you and the other officers who are retiring. I want to say a special word of hello to all the brothers and sisters of the United Auto Workers throughout the country, especially those from my home State of Arkansas with whom I’ve worked over the years.

I’d like to say a word also to Dennis Fitting, the president of Local 455 out of Saginaw, who was with me last Friday at the White House for a reunion of a group of exceptional Americans whom I met along the campaign trail in 1992. We call this group the Faces of Hope, and I want to thank Dennis for being a member of the group and for his commitment to our efforts to move America forward.

All of you know better than anybody that Owen Bieber has dedicated his entire life to improving the lives of working families. He took over the UAW 12 years ago, during one of the toughest periods in your entire history. In all of the years, he has never wavered, even in the face of administrations here in Washington that were sure less than friendly. He’s always stood strong not only for UAW workers and their families and their incomes and their future but for the kind of broad social progress that has been the hallmark of the UAW since its beginning in the 1930’s. Whether it was in the fight for civil rights or the fight to end apartheid in South Africa, your solidarity with the Amer-

ican farm workers, the UAW has always been there for others as well as for your own interests.

Owen Bieber has truly carried on the legacy of Walter Reuther. And moreover, in a very difficult period in our country’s history, he has set the stage for even greater strength for you in the 21st century. We all owe him our deepest gratitude and our best wishes. And I feel especially indebted to him for his advice, his counsel, and his ferocious support. Thank you very much, Owen. We all wish you well and Godspeed.

Now, I know you haven’t elected your new officers yet, but I wanted to say that I personally would feel a whole lot better about my campaign if we could go into 1996 with poll numbers looking like Steve Yokich’s do right now for you.

One of the most memorable moments in my 1992 campaign, and I had a lot of memorable moments with the UAW, but one of the most memorable was the opportunity I had to walk the picket line with Owen and the striking workers of Caterpillar in Peoria. I looked into the tired but determined faces of men and women on that picket line, and I realized how much was at stake for them and for all the rest of us as well.

I ran for President because I believed we had to do more to help those workers and millions of Americans just like them who had seen their stake in the American dream uprooted during the 1980’s, people who were being aban-