

May 9 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1996

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:25 p.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Foreign Minister

Theodoros Pangalos and Education Minister Yeoryios Papandreou of Greece, and Michael S. Dukakis, former Governor of Massachusetts.

Remarks on Presenting the Commander in Chief Trophy to the United States Air Force Academy Football Team

May 10, 1996

The President. Good morning. Secretary Widnall, to our distinguished military leaders: General Shalikhvili, General Moorman, General Stein, other distinguished military leaders here, members of the Board of Visitors of the Air Force Academy, Coach DeBerry, and the seniors from the Falcons football team. We gather together for another happy occasion; but for the United States and especially for members of our military family, this is a sad day, for early this morning, two Marine helicopters crashed at a massive training exercise at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina.

At this time, we know that 16 service members were killed and 2 others very seriously injured. Our hearts go out to the families, the friends, and the loved ones of those who lost their lives. Our prayers are with those who were injured for a speedy recovery.

Day-in and day-out, our service men and women put themselves on the line so that our country can remain free and secure. We ask so much of them, to travel far from home, to be apart from their loved ones, to do difficult and often dangerous work. One of the things I confess I did not fully appreciate until I became President was how dangerous the day-in and day-out, year-in and year-out work of our military, just training, just doing the defense of our country, is, and our citizens should know that.

The seniors here behind me will soon become the guardians of our liberty, just like those fine people who lost their lives last night. And though you have been very well prepared for the job you will do, you still must assume the risks of defending that liberty. Every American owes every one of you who will become an officer or a member of the United States military a tremendous debt of gratitude.

I'm happy to see all you here today. I'm beginning to wonder if I can make it interesting.

If you ever have really needed proof that we have a joint planning and operation and we're really building a joint culture in the United States military, we're going to give it today with General Shali congratulating the Air Force for another victory over the Army. [*Laughter*]

The friendly but fierce interservice rivalries should mean that almost anything can happen in competition, but at least lately, only one thing happens: The Air Force always wins. This is the 7th year in a row the Falcons have come to the White House to collect this prize. I hope the thrill isn't gone.

I understand this past November you actually lost the Commander in Chief's Trophy for a short time when there was a sneak attack masterminded by Army pranksters invading your field house before the game. Well, that didn't work, either. [*Laughter*] You played a great game this year against Army. I was especially impressed that you came back from a 14-point deficit to win decisively.

I've learned a little something about what it takes to overcome large deficits—[*laughter*]—and I was mightily impressed. I know there were other outstanding highlights of this year's season: beating Brigham Young's Cougars for the first time in a dozen tries, being cochampions of the Western Athletic Conference, going to the Copper Bowl. The Falcons had a very good year.

If the way you played is any indication of what is to come, coach, we expect to see the Air Force back here this time next year. I hope I'll be here to greet you. [*Laughter*] And I should note that, to the best of my knowledge, unlike me, you are not term-limited.

Finally, let me just say that I was most impressed by something that Coach DeBerry said earlier in the season. He said that through football the players on his team are helped to become better people. That is what we need more

of in college athletics and, indeed, in all of our endeavors. It's so important that young people be taught not only to take responsibility for becoming the best they can be in every endeavor, but also doing that in working with a team. That's what makes our military work. That's what makes our country work. And I think sometimes we forget that that is the ultimate object of all of our human endeavors. Winning is wonderful, but everybody who does his or her best and who tries to do it with a genuine spirit of cooperation with others is a winner. In that sense, the Air Force will always be a winner. But today, for the 7th year in a row, you're still the possessor of the Commander in Chief's Trophy.

Coach DeBerry. Let's give him a hand. [Applause]

Coach Fisher DeBerry. Mr. President, I appreciate it. Thank you very much, kind words, thank you very much. We are honored to be here, a great big honor for us because it's your trophy.

Thank you, sir.

The President. Thank you.

[*Coach DeBerry, Lt. Gen. Paul Stein, USAF, Superintendent, United States Air Force Acad-*

emy, and LeRon Hudgins, Falcons team captain, made brief remarks and presented the President with a team jersey and a hat. Mr. Hudgins stated that when the President was elected in 1992, he and his classmates knew they would get a chance to visit through the Commander in Chief Trophy.]

The President. That's a high level of confidence, that 1992 remark. [Laughter] Well, I thank you very much. I will run in the jersey, I'll play golf in the cap, and I'll always remember this day.

One thing I do want to say again is that, as confident as these young people are, I've never heard any of these young men say in the last 4 years anything that could be roughly interpreted as, "When we're not around they won't have a great team anymore." [Laughter] And I think again that's a real tribute to the spirit of teamwork that prevails.

So I thank you, I'm glad to be here, and I think we're going to take a couple of pictures, and then we'll break up and shake hands.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:30 a.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House.

Remarks at the Pennsylvania State University Graduate School Commencement in State College, Pennsylvania May 10, 1996

Thank you very much. Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for that very warm welcome. Thank you, President Spanier. Thank you, Mr. Arnelle, Dr. Brighton, Dr. Erickson, Mr. Hollander. I thank the University Brass for playing so well for me. It made me want to take them back to the White House.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am delighted to be here for many very personal reasons, many of which are obvious. I'm very honored to receive the University Scholars Medal and to be the first non-Penn State alumnus to receive it.

As was said earlier, my family has a long history with this State and with this great university. Hillary's family is from Scranton and both my father-in-law and brother-in-law attended Penn State and both played football here. Back in the thirties, according to my father-in-law,

he had to play offense and defense. [Laughter] That's sort of what I do, so I understand that. [Laughter]

I have had some other good personal associations with this university, and for all those I am very grateful. I am grateful for the establishment of a scholarship at the college of education in my late father-in-law's name. It means a great deal to my wife and to me and to our daughter. And I am grateful to be here because of what Penn State represents.

This school was made a land-grant school in the darkest hours of our Nation's history, because President Lincoln and his contemporaries knew even then that our Nation's future depended upon the widest possible dispersion of knowledge. Though faced with the possibility of the very union of our States breaking up,