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with a simple message. They said, ''We are proud of what we did.'' When most of our troops came home last May, General Robert Johnson came to the White House and he said this about you and your colleagues who served in Somalia, ''A lot of 18- and 19-year-old men and women in uniform,'' he said, ''demonstrated enormous discipline, good judgment, and a good deal of patience in performing a rather unique mission.''

That is putting it mildly. People who were not there do not know how much patience was required on how many circumstances under difficult, difficult conditions. And General Johnson said, ''I don't think any other country in the world could have done what we did.'' I say that is true, and we are all proud of what you did.

In this new era, you all know that we may ask our military to undertake a range of missions, fighting aggression in the Gulf, helping to contain the conflict in the Balkans, working to build a democratic peace in Europe through NATO's Partnership For Peace. But whatever the setting, our people in uniform carry the same message of strength and hope and freedom.

That's why our forces must always be the best trained, the best equipped, the best prepared in the world, and the people with the best spirit, the best morale, and the deepest conviction. People like you. That is my commitment, to keep you there and keep you strong.

I want to say one other word about the mission in Somalia. General Shalikashvili just described that work as a great victory as measured in the thousands and hundreds of thousands of children and men and women who are alive today. In that sense, the mission you undertook was without precedent. American soldiers did not go to Somalia to conquer but on a mission of mercy, a mission accomplished, a mission to be proud of. Let history also record that here at Fort Drum and at other bases across our Nation that it was not just the troops who earned their stripes but the spouses, the families, the children, the civilian colleagues and the communities.

I want to say again, I am profoundly grateful to all the families and all the family support groups and all the civilians who made this possible. And these fine people behind me, who spent about an hour talking to me today taught me things and made me see things and understand things from your point of view that I could never have learned otherwise. I am in your debt, and I believe I will be a better President and a better Commander in Chief because of the time they spent to share your lives, your experiences, and your hopes with me. I thank them for that, and I thank you for that.

Finally, let me say, if there are any debates still to be had about our mission in Somalia, let people have those debates with me, but let there be no debate about how you carried out the mission. You answered the call. You did your job. You served your country wonderfully well. More than that no one can ask. So to all the American men and women who have served with honor in this difficult and dangerous mission, I say you have shown the world what Americans are made of. Your Nation is grateful, and your President is terribly, terribly proud of you.

Thank you. God bless you, and God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:02 p.m. in the soldiers' gym.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on International Agreements

March 15, 1994

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. Chairman:)

Pursuant to subsection (b) of the Case-Zablocki Act (1 U.S.C. section 112b(b)), I transmit herewith a report prepared by the Department of State concerning international agreements.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Thomas S. Foley, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Claiborne Pell, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Nomination for Commissioner of the Federal Communications Commission

March 15, 1994

The President today announced his intent to nominate Susan Ness as a member of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

"As a former communications lender, Susan Ness brings to the FCC valuable perspective. Her extensive experience covers many communications industry sectors including telecommunications, radio, television, cable television, programming and publishing," the President said. "She will be an excellent addition to this important Commission."

NOTE: A biography of the nominee was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary.

Memorandum on the White House Conference on Small Business

March 15, 1994

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: White House Conference on Small Business

In September, I appointed the White House Conference on Small Business Commission. The Commission is charged with convening a series of State and regional meetings that will culminate in a national White House Conference on Small Business in June 1995.

These 66 meetings will attract up to 40,000 participants who will discuss the challenges facing small businesses. These representatives—small business owners and entrepreneurs—will develop specific recommendations for executive and congressional action. These recommendations will help constitute the small business agenda for the 21st century.

I ask each of you to support this important effort, by taking the following measures. First, each department and agency should prepare a list of significant policy initiatives affecting small businesses undertaken in the past year. Second, each department and agency should identify one or two potential new initiatives that would improve the economic or regulatory climate for small businesses. These two items should be forwarded to Gene B. Sperling, Deputy Assistant to the President for Economic Policy, no later than April 1, 1994.

The White House Office of Cabinet Affairs, working with the National Economic Council staff, the White House Office of Public Liaison, and the Small Business Administration, will coordinate various departments' and agencies' participation in the Conference. To facilitate that process, please designate a deputy-level contact on your staff to serve as a liaison and to work directly with the White House offices and the Small Business Administration. Each liaison will be asked to attend regular meetings and charged with oversight of the department's or agency's contribution to and participation in the Conference. Please forward your designee's name to Christine A. Varney, Deputy Assistant to the President for Cabinet Affairs, by April 1.

Thank you for your support of this important effort to assist our Nation's small businesses.

William J. Clinton

NOTE: This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 16.

Message to the Congress Transmitting the "Reemployment Act of 1994"

March 15, 1994

To the Congress of the United States:

I am pleased to transmit today for your immediate consideration and prompt enactment the "Reemployment Act of 1994". Also transmitted is a section-by-section analysis. This legislation is vital to help Americans find new jobs and build sustainable careers.

Our current set of programs was designed to meet the different needs of an earlier economy. People looking for help today confront a confusing, overlapping, and duplicative tangle of programs, services, and rules. Job seekers—whether unemployed or looking for better jobs—have a difficult time getting the information they need: What bene-