

all Haitians and to set an historic example by peacefully transferring power to a duly elected successor. He knows, as we know, that when you start a democracy, the most important election is the second election.

President Aristide has told me that he will consider his mission fulfilled not when he regains office but when he leaves office to the next democratically elected President of Haiti. He has pledged to honor the Haitian voters who put their faith in the ballot box.

In closing, let me say that I know the American people are rightfully concerned whenever our soldiers are put at risk. Our volunteer military is the world's finest, and its leaders have worked hard to minimize risks to all our forces. But the risks are there, and we must be prepared for that.

I assure you that no President makes decisions like this one without deep thought and prayer. But it's my job as President and Commander in Chief to take those actions that I believe will best protect our national security interests.

Let me say again, the nations of the world have tried every possible way to restore Haiti's democratic government peacefully. The dictators have rejected every possible solution. The terror, the desperation, and the instability will not end until they leave. Once again, I urge them to do so. They can still move now and reduce the chaos and disorder, increase the security, stability, and the safety in which this transfer back to democracy can occur.

But if they do not leave now, the international community will act to honor our commitments; to give democracy a chance, not to guarantee it; to remove stubborn and cruel dictators, not to impose a future.

I know many people believe that we shouldn't help the Haitian people recover their democracy and find their hard-won freedoms, that the Haitians should accept the violence and repression as their fate. But remember: the same was said of a people who, more than 200 years ago, took up arms against a tyrant whose forces occupied their land. But they were a stubborn bunch, a people who fought for their freedoms and appealed to all those who believed in democracy to help their cause. And their cries were answered, and a new nation was born, a na-

tion that, ever since, has believed that the rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness should be denied to none.

May God bless the people of the United States and the cause of freedom. Good night.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9 p.m. from the Oval Office at the White House.

Remarks and an Exchange With Reporters on Haiti September 16, 1994

The President. Thank you for coming in; I'm glad to see you. I wanted to make three quick points. One is, we had a detailed briefing this morning from General Shalikashvili, and I feel good about the extraordinary work and preparation that our military leaders have done. Second, we're up to 24 nations now participating in the coalition, and I feel very good about that. I think there will be more; I think we'll have more before very long. And the third thing that I want to say is, I've seen a copy of the remarks that President Aristide is going to deliver today, and I'm pleased with that. I think it is very important, in light of all the things that have occurred from the time he was elected forward, that this message of reconciliation be genuine, sincere, and straightforward. And I think it will be, and I feel good about that.

And I know some of you have been somewhat skeptical of that. And I would remind you that there's one event which has occurred in recent times which I think will reinforce it, and that is the meeting in Paris which got together the proposed aid package for Haiti to create the economic opportunity for the Haitians, which I think is clearly premised on the right sort of spirit of going forward down there and the whole promise of reconciliation being realized. So I feel good about it. And Admiral Miller's done a marvelous job. I thank you, sir, for what you've done.

Anyway, I didn't mean to interrupt the briefing—[laughter]—see so many—

Q. Are you nervous?

The President. Am I nervous? No, I feel good about it. I don't know if good is the right word. I think the policy is right, and I think that I have done the best I could

to present it to the American people and we have done the best we could to prepare. And I have enormous confidence in the work that others have done. I think they have done the best they could.

We don't live in a risk-free world, and there are risks associated with anything we did or didn't do. But I think we're doing the right thing, and I think we have the right people doing the right thing. That's all I could ever ask for. And I've made the decision, so if it doesn't go right, I'm responsible.

Q. Secretary Christopher says that he expects more public support and more support on the Hill now, Mr. President. Do you expect to get fairly strong support in Congress now?

The President. I don't know; I can't answer that. I hope so. But he may know more about it than I do. All I can tell you is I've done the very best I could, and I hope they'll be supportive for it. I'm encouraged by the indications that the American people are more supportive. My sense is that the important things to a lot of Americans about last night were, first of all, I think, more and more are learning about the human rights abuses and how that reinforces the arguments we made about immigration and democracy. But I think most of the people are focused on that.

But the two things I think that a lot of Americans got last night from an informational point of view were, one, the extraordinary efforts we have made in the diplomatic area and the patience we've shown and the rebuffs we've received over a long period of time. And two, I think a lot of Americans had forgotten about the Governors Island Agreement and that it was broken. And most Americans think when you make a deal with this country, you ought to keep it. And so I feel—all I can tell you is I feel good about it.

Q. Why did you wait so long to make your case to the American people?

The President. Well, I've been talking about this all along, you know. I waited so long to make an Oval Office address because you can only make—I mean, it's only appropriate to make one Oval Office address on a subject like this. And we have done the best we could. We exhausted all other alter-

natives. I thought this was the right time. I did the best I could with it.

Adm. Paul Miller. Mr. President, before you leave, can I just report one thing to you? Yesterday I was at Fort Drum up in New York; that's the 10th Mountain. And one of the commanders mentioned that a battalion of troops are going to be involved. There was 50-some that could leave the army before the projected time was up, and 21 of them said, "We want to stay."

So, that shows support from the uniformed side, from the practitioner, the youngster. They want to be there, and that's what the call to duty was. I just wanted to mention that.

The President. Thank you very much. Two young men—when we were in Berlin a few months ago and cased the colors of the Berlin Brigade and I met with some of the young soldiers there, two of them asked me to please delay any action in Haiti until they got home so they could go. That's very rewarding. Thank you, sir.

Goodbye.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:02 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Adm. Paul D. Miller, Supreme Allied Commander, Atlantic. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Proclamation 6720—Citizenship Day and Constitution Week, 1994

September 16, 1994

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

The Constitution of the United States of America is as forceful and dynamic today as it was on September 17, 1787, the day it was signed by our Nation's Founders. This hallowed document has endured, and, indeed, has grown stronger over the 207 years since its adoption. Today, more than ever, the Constitution stands as a beacon for all who are dedicated to the principles of government by and for the people.

The Constitution provides a framework of both constancy and flexibility in a Nation that