

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
UPON ARRIVAL AT  
POPE AIR FORCE BASE  
FAYETTEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA

1:47 P.M. EDT

Thank you very, very much for coming out in such great numbers. I am very, very grateful.

It is a particular pleasure to be here in the great State of North Carolina. It is a pleasure to be, or have come down with me, Senator Jesse Helms, and it is always nice to see an old friend of mine like Congressman Earl Ruth, who I knew a long, long time ago back in the days when both he and I were in the Navy. I guess that is not a good thing to say here with all of you. (Laughter)

As a matter of fact, I got to know Congressman Ruth when we were both stationed here in the Navy over at Chapel Hill. So, I spent a bit of my military career in Chapel Hill before going to sea with the Navy.

It is nice to be in North Carolina because I have had the privilege and pleasure of knowing so many, many good people from this State.

But in addition -- and this is the main point I would like to make -- this Air Base, which is so vitally important, is not one that just belongs to the State of North Carolina, but it belongs to all of us.

I come from the State of Michigan. We are as proud as all of the North Carolinians are of Pope Air Force Base and the people who are here, and Fort Bragg and the others.

We feel that the contribution made by the Defense Department, the 2,200,000, roughly, men and women in the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines, the people who are civilians and work for the Defense Department are an extremely vital part of our security and the security of the free world.

MORE

(OVER)



And when we talk about security today, we are talking not only about security from attack, but we are talking about a deterrence against war. And one major part of my service in the Presidency is to be sure that the Defense Department is strong enough to deter war and to protect our great country from any aggression.

I know there are people who think that we can slash the money for the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, Marines, and spend money for other programs. I don't think we can hurt our military establishment without hurting our security.

And so, to the extent that I have any influence, I am going to make sure that we have adequate funding for the weapon system, research and development, operations and maintenance, personnel, so that all of you feel that the service you are performing is with the best of equipment in the best of environment and for the best interests of 211 million Americans.

Thank you very, very much.

END

(AT 1:50 P.M. EDT)