

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY
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THE WHITE HOUSE
REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT
LUKE AIR FORCE BASE

12 NOON MST

Thank you very much, Governor Williams, Senator Fannin, Congressman John Rhodes, General Jones, General Dixon, Mr. Haeffner, Mr. McDonnell, Mr. Graft, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen:

This is the month of the pioneer in America. It is the month of the Mayflower and of our earliest settlers. And this is the day of a new pioneer, a pioneer of the skies, a pioneer of peace, the F-15 fighter.

According to history, there were 102 passengers on the Mayflower when it crossed the Atlantic. The crossing from England to the new world took more than two months, and the end of the journey was freedom.

The F-15 can fly across the same Atlantic in a matter of hours, and the end of its journey is still the one of the Mayflower more than 350 years ago -- freedom.

That is what really matters, the purpose of a journey, and I am here today to underscore to you and to the world that this great aircraft was constructed by the American people in the pursuit of peace. Our only aim with all of this aircraft's new maneuverability, speed and power is the defense of freedom.

I would rather walk a thousand miles for peace than to have to take a single step for war.

I am here to congratulate you, the United States, the United States Air Force, McDonnell Douglas, Pratt and Whitney, all of the many contractors and workers who participated in this very, very successful effort, as well as the pilots who have so diligently flight-tested the F-15 Eagle. All of you can underline my feeling that we are still pilgrims on this effort, and there is still a place for pioneers in America.

MORE

(OVER)

The challenges involving our country here at home and abroad we all recognize are enormous, but I am confident that the F-15 and your example here today is that this Nation is a Nation of limitless horizons. There is no boundary to the energy, the ingenuity of the American people. Frankly, that is why we will whip inflation, conquer our energy problems and win the battle to make a stable economy.

It is the job of all of us, it is our job, in this last quarter century of the 20th century, to prepare our country for leadership in the 21st century, and we can do this by economic strength at home and by peaceful partners abroad. These are my aims, my goals and the goals of America now and in the future.

As I said, in a Thanksgiving message which I made just a few days ago, and I quote: "Let us pray for the courage, resourcefulness and sense of purpose we will need to continue America's saga of progress and to be worthy of the pilgrim spirit. May we, too, find the strength and the vision to leave behind us a better world and an example that will inspire future generations to new accomplishments."

So, I say to you, congratulations, best wishes to all who had any part whatsoever in this great accomplishment. It will serve the purpose of freedom and peace for a generation and more.

Thank you very, very much.

END (AT 12:05 P.M. MST)