

and repair our equipment as rapidly as we should. Number three, married people in the military who have families and children and who need to live in military housing have not seen any significant improvements in their military housing. Number four, we have not done as much as we could have done, and as much I think we'll have to do in the years ahead, in modernizing the weapons that we have. And as you saw in the recent military action in Iraq, where we did a terrific amount of damage to the military infrastructure and the weapons of mass destruction infrastructure—while causing the deaths, the unintended deaths of far, far, fewer civilians than were lost even in the Gulf war a few years ago—the technological edge the United States has is very important.

Finally, in certain critical areas, we just can't keep up with recruitment. We have a lot of pilots leaving because the airlines are doing very well, and they can get jobs making a lot of money working for the airline companies. And I don't blame them, but it would bother you if you knew I needed the American Air Force and there weren't enough people to go fly the planes.

So when I say we're going to spend \$100 billion over 10 years, you should know that some of that money is coming out of savings the Defense Department has achieved. And when inflation is lower than we thought, when fuel costs are lower than we thought, normally they'd have to give up that money—we're just letting them have money that they were budgeted for anyway. Some of that money will be new money. But we have to raise pay, we have to improve living conditions, we have to make sure that people are on safe equipment.

You know, not a single one of those planes that flew in Iraq came down, not a single bolt came loose, because people that you will never see worked like crazy, maintaining those planes in tip-top shape condition. They should—no American pilot, no man or woman that flies those airplanes should ever have to worry about getting into an airplane, worrying about whether it's been properly maintained, whether the equipment was there and all of these things.

So that's what this is all about. And we are going to invest some more money in modernized equipment. I hope you will support this. I know everybody would like to see more money spent everywhere else, but they deserve it.

*White House/Nelson Mandela*

Q. Mr. President, we are out of time, but as a presiding officer I always attempt to try to reach to our young people who have tried to ask—and they do ask some very interesting and challenging questions. I close with these two combined, one written by a person who is age 13 and the other by the age 12.

Mr. President, are there horses and a horse barn at the White House; if so, could you please send me a picture? And who is the most interesting person you have met during your Presidency?

*The President.* There are no horses or horse barns in the White House. There is a place where Socks and Buddy sleep. However, the President can ride horses either in Rock Creek Park or up at Camp David, and the National Park Service keeps horses, wonderful horses, which my family and I sometimes ride. And if we have friends come spend the weekend with us, we can ride. So we do have access to horses, but they're not right there on the premises.

It's very difficult to answer who is the most interesting person I've met since I've been President, because I meet all different kinds of people. For example, some of you know I love music very much, and one of the big perks about being President is that if you ask somebody to come perform, they'll pretty well do it. [*Laughter*] So it's been a real kick, you know.

And I've met a lot of very fascinating people in public life. But among the most interesting people I've met are the President of China, who is a fascinating man; Boris Yeltsin, who is a fascinating man—remember, he got up on a tank alone when they tried to take democracy back in Russia, and he said to all the soldiers all around him in the threat to take democracy away, "You may do this, but you'll have to kill me first," and he was standing on that tank all by himself; the late Prime Minister of Israel, Yitzhak Rabin, who was assassinated by one of his own citizens for working for peace with the Arabs, after he'd spent a lifetime protecting the people of Israel in uniform.

But I think among the politicians, the political leaders I've met, I could mention many more, but I think the most interesting one I've met, for me, for a particular reason, is Nelson Mandela, the President of South Africa. And I say that for this reason, to the young people: