

Henry J. Hyde, chairman, House Committee on Intelligence. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 12.

Remarks to the Troops at Fort Stewart, Georgia February 12, 2001

The President. Thank you. Thank you, General Sharp. Before I begin my remarks today, I want to ask for your prayers for those still missing after the tragic accident involving one of our naval submarines and a Japanese fishing vessel off the coast of Hawaii. Please join me in a moment of silence for those missing, their families, and our friends, the people of Japan.

[A moment of silence was observed.]

The President. Amen.

Major General, thank you for your kind introduction and your outstanding leadership. Secretary Rumsfeld, Senator Cleland, and Senator Miller—of the great State of Georgia—other Members of the United States Senate; Representative Kingston and other Members of the House, thank you all for traveling with me today.

General Hendrix, Major General Poythress, Command Sergeant Major McFowler, Command Sergeant Major Ruo, soldiers of the 3d Infantry Division, the 48th Infantry Brigade—as importantly, family members—and all those who make up the Fort Stewart home. It's a great privilege for me to be here today.

You're among the first in the Army to hear me extend "Hooah!"

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. I proudly do so, for there is no greater duty for the President and no higher honor than to serve as the Commander in Chief.

I'm especially honored to be here at Fort Stewart with the "dog-faced soldiers" of the 3d Infantry Division. You've written history with your courage, from the forests of the

Marne to the frontlines of the cold war, from Casablanca to the Balkans, from Korea to Kuwait.

Today, you carry on this proud tradition, ready to project American power wherever America's interests are threatened. You've been called the most highly trained and rapidly deployable mechanized force in the world. That is high praise, and you have earned it.

I deeply respect your service. I appreciate your sacrifice. And I know what your service and sacrifice achieve for our Nation. In a dangerous world, our men and women in uniform give America safety. In a world of fast changing threats, you give us stability. Because of you, America is secure. Because of you, the march of freedom continues.

The freedom and security you make possible improve the quality of our life every day. Our Nation can never fully repay our debt to you. But we can give you our full support, and my administration will.

We owe you and your families a decent quality of life. We owe you the training and equipment you need to do your jobs. And when we send you into harm's way, we owe you a clear mission with clear goals. You and your families are the foundation of America's military readiness. But while you're serving us well, America is not serving you well enough. Many in our military have been overdeployed and underpaid. Many live in aging houses and work in aging buildings.

You see some of this right here at Fort Stewart. Twenty-four thousand troops have been processed through Hunter Airfield in