

**REMARKS BY THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF AND COAST GUARD
COMMANDANT FOLLOWING STATEMENT BY PRESIDENT CLINTON
ANNOUNCING POLICY ON GAYS IN THE MILITARY INTRODUCED BY
SECRETARY OF DEFENSE LES ASPIN**

(July 19, 1993)

SEC. ASPIN: Following the President's address here, I thought it would be appropriate to give everybody a chance to hear from each of the individual services on this matter, so we will -- I will call upon each of the service chiefs here and the various people here to say a few words following the announcement of the new policy by the President. Let me start with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Colin Powell.

GEN. COLIN POWELL: Thank you, Mr. Secretary. I think the best characterization is the characterization the President gave to the new policy, and that was he called it an honorable compromise. It was a very difficult issue for all of us. There were strong feelings on both sides. And I think we have come up with a solution that we can all live with, that protects the force, that protects the privacy rights of all of those serving in the force, and yet moves in the direction of those who wanted to have a more liberal policy with respect to homosexuals serving in the military. It is a policy that I believe all of the Joint Chiefs of Staff can fully, fully support and will be testifying to that effect before the Congress on tomorrow and the day after, and it is a policy that I also believe we will be able to implement. And over the next several months, we will be working with the Secretary and his staff to put together the necessary implementing instructions. And so I am very, very pleased with this decision of the President, and it's one we can fully support. Thank you.

SEC. ASPIN: Let me next call upon the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, David Jeremiah, Admiral Jeremiah.

ADM. DAVID JEREMIAH: As General Powell said, this was a difficult choice, a difficult problem for all of us to work through over these last few months. I think it reflects the great strength of America in the decision-making process in this country that we can take hard problems like this, work them through to a conclusion, and come to an answer that is a workable solution, that may not satisfy everyone but is a working process that will allow us to continue with the military mission and the readiness of the armed forces of the United States, and we think we've got a good answer here. Thank you.

SEC. ASPIN: Let me call upon each of the services now, and we'll start with the Army, General Gordon Sullivan, Chief of Staff of the Army.

GEN. GORDON SULLIVAN: Well, in keeping with everything that everyone else has said, I also am proud to have represented the Army through this process which began back here on the 21st of January of this year. It's been a long process. Fully supportive of the policy as it was published today by the Secretary of Defense. We believe we can

implement this policy. It's one that the troops down in the field will understand, their commanders will be able to handle, and we think we will be able to maintain a trained and ready force.

SEC. ASPIN: The Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Kelso.

ADM. FRANK KELSO: Thank you, Mr. Secretary. I fully support this policy. I'm sure we can implement it and it will work. I'd like to thank the Secretary and the President for giving us the opportunity to continue to work with us during this process, and that we have a process that we can go forward and continue to have a ready Navy to go anywhere in the world. Thank you.

SEC. ASPIN: Next is the Marine Corps Commandant, General Mundy. GEN. CARL

MUNDY, JR.: Thank you, sir. This is a good policy. It's a policy that can be implemented, and it is a courageous policy. What you've seen in process is the military advice, the best we can give and the best thought-out we can give, being rendered to the commander-in-chief, who took that advice and took all the factors that weigh in this very difficult equation and made a courageous decision. I respect our commander-in-chief, and I implement the policy.

SEC. ASPIN: The next is the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, Tony McPeak.

GEN. MERRILL A. MCPEAK: Mr. Secretary, the Air Force supports the policy you published today and the President announced today, and we are -- we're very grateful to you to have been given the opportunity you gave us to participate fully in drafting the new rules that will apply. The Air Force will not have a problem implementing this new policy, so I look forward to no problem whatsoever.

SEC. ASPIN: Also covered by the policy although not always recognized as such is the Coast Guard, and so I'd like to ask the Commandant of the Coast Guard here to say a word or two, Commandant Kime.

ADM. J. WILLIAM KIME: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This, too, is a policy that the Coast Guard can support. It's a policy that we can implement and maintain our readiness. I'd like to thank Secretary Aspin and Chairman Powell for allowing the Coast Guard to participate as an equal partner in the negotiations that led to the policy announced by the President today. Thank you.

SEC. ASPIN: Thank you. We will be all appearing in the next couple of days before the Congress. The tentative schedule is for the Senate Armed Services Committee tomorrow and the House Armed Services Committee on Wednesday, and we will have a fuller talk about it then and have a chance for members of the Joint Chiefs to answer questions. We thank you all very much. Thank you.