

*Remarks to the
Mississippi Military Communities Council
Press Conference
July 3, 2001*

Good morning. Tomorrow we celebrate our nation's independence and the freedoms we hold so dear.

Each and every one of the freedoms we enjoy today has been made possible because someone made the ultimate sacrifice to protect them.

On battlefields scattered all over the world, the men and women of our military forces have committed themselves to the sanctity of our freedoms.

I want to be sure we commit ourselves just as strongly to those men and women, a commitment that says we will honor them and support them in every way possible.

Today, I'm proud to share part of that commitment, through an executive order to establish the "Mississippi Military Communities Council."

Since 1990, communities in Mississippi have been threatened by potential base closures and realignments. Those threats, which came as part of the work of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission, have been headed off before.

And now, it is time to take them on again.
The Commission has recommended another
round of base closures in 2003.

The Department of Defense is seeking to
close more bases and cut personnel and
funding – actions which would have a
terrible effect on the Mississippians who
serve in the National Guard and Reserves.

The Mississippi Military Communities Council will serve to advise the executive and legislative officials of the state regarding potential actions on our military bases.

The members of the Council will bring a wide array of expertise, which will play an invaluable role in the efforts of the state to protect its military bases and the soldiers who work and live on them.

Tomorrow we celebrate the Fourth of July.

Today, through this executive order, I
celebrate the men and women who have
made tomorrow possible.

Thank you.