Harkin Presents Platform

restructuring of the U.S. military. Harkin, a Vietnam-era veteran and former Navy pilot, proposed to "reduce military expenditures by 50 percent within a decade" while still protecting U.S. national security "better than at any time since World War II."

In his speech, Harkin called for bringing most U.S. troops home from Europe and limiting the production of weapons designed primarily to counter threats from the former Soviet Union. He proposed to rely instead on a mix of flexible, mobile forces that could react quickly to flare-ups anywhere in the world. Harkin vowed to make the U.S. military "the best trained and best equipped in the world."

Saying that "military and diplomatic might is predicated on economic might," Harkin recounted the economic problems the United States faces today. He claimed that over the next 10 years, his military restructuring plan would create a peace dividend of $420 billion in 1992 dollars. Harkin proposed to earmark one-third of that money for deficit reduction, and to devote the remainder to a special "fund for peace," which would add one million jobs in the long term.

To further strengthen the economy, Harkin favors stronger free trade agreements and a stronger and more open industrial research and development partnership between universities, the private sector, and the government. His proposal includes the abolition of the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), which would sponsor some research at MIT.

Harkin clearly enjoyed his rapport with the crowd during a lively question-and-answer session. Referring to the Americans with Disabilities Act and to progress in civil rights and women's rights, Harkin said, "when we break down barriers, we become a stronger country." He chided Bush for including only "23 white men, no women, and no minorities" in his recent delegation to the Far East.

Saying that gay rights legislation is "the best equipped in the world."

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