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REMARKS

BY

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PRESENTED AT THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON AIDS

WASHINGTON, D.C.

JUNE 1, 1987

(GREETINGS TO HOSTS, GUESTS, ETC.)

I'M VERY PLEASED TO HAVE THIS MOMENT ON THE PROGRAM TO OFFER MY WELCOME TO ALL OF YOU, ALSO.

I WANT TO COMMEND EVERYONE WHO HELPED PLAN THIS CONFERENCE. IT IS CLEAR BY THE ATTENDANCE OF PEOPLE FROM THROUGHOUT THE WORLD AND BY THE EXTRAORDINARY COVERAGE OF THE INTERNATIONAL MEDIA, THAT THIS CONFERENCE IS BEING REGARDED AS A WATERSHED EVENT.

I SINCERELY HOPE IT WILL BE, FOR THE PRESSURE OF EVENTS IS HARD UPON US. AS I'M SURE YOU KNOW, MR. JONATHAN MANN OF THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION ANNOUNCED LAST WEEK THAT 112 COUNTRIES HAD REPORTED A TOTAL OF MORE THAN 51,000 CASES OF AIDS SO FAR. BUT THAT COULD BE AN UNDER-COUNT BY AS MUCH AS HALF.

IN OTHER WORDS, IT IS VERY LIKELY THAT 100,000 MEN, WOMEN, AND CHILDREN IN COUNTRIES AROUND THE GLOBE HAVE BEEN STRUCK BY THE AIDS VIRUS -- AND IT'S ALSO VERY LIKELY THAT A MAJORITY OF THEM HAVE ALREADY DIED OF THE DISEASE.

OVER THE PAST 5½ YEARS, AS THE SURGEON GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE, I'VE BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR MANY ACTIVITIES IN THE FIELD OF INTERNATIONAL HEALTH. IN THAT CAPACITY IT HAS BEEN MY PRIVILEGE TO REPRESENT THE UNITED STATES AT A NUMBER OF INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS, INCLUDING THE ANNUAL WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY IN GENEVA.

THROUGH THOSE MEETINGS, AND THROUGH OTHER OCCASIONS AS WELL, I'VE MET MANY OF YOU AND HAVE GOTTEN TO KNOW MANY OF YOU...TO KNOW YOUR COLLEAGUES...AND TO MEET AND KNOW YOUR LEADERSHIP IN PUBLIC HEALTH AND MEDICINE.

I'VE LEARNED OF YOUR PROFOUND CONCERN ABOUT THE GROWTH OF THE PANDEMIC OF AIDS, NOT ONLY AS IT MAY AFFECT -- OR IS AFFECTING -- YOUR OWN HOMELANDS, BUT AS IT AFFECTS ALL NATIONS EVERYWHERE.

AT THE RECENT 40<sup>TH</sup> WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY, ALL THE MEMBER STATES APPROVED A VERY IMPORTANT RESOLUTION. IN THAT DOCUMENT WE EXPRESSED OUR COLLECTIVE UNDERSTANDING OF THE DANGER OF AIDS AND SOLEMNLY PLEDGED TO FACE IT...AND FIGHT IT...WITH COLLABORATION AND COOPERATION THAT -- LIKE THE DISEASE ITSELF -- KNOWS NO GEOPOLITICAL BOUNDARIES.

THE MEMBERS INDICATED THAT THEY WERE, AND I QUOTE...

"DEEPLY CONCERNED THAT THIS DISEASE, CAUSED BY ONE OR MORE NATURALLY OCCURRING RETROVIRUSES OF UNDETERMINED GEOGRAPHICAL ORIGIN, HAS ASSUMED PANDEMIC PROPORTIONS AFFECTING ALL REGIONS OF THE WORLD AND REPRESENTS A THREAT TO THE ATTAINMENT OF HEALTH FOR ALL."

I'M SURE YOU REALIZE THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THAT STATEMENT, BECAUSE IT LAYS TO REST, ONCE AND FOR ALL, MUCH MISINFORMATION AND DISINFORMATION CONCERNING THE DISEASE OF AIDS.

THE DELEGATES TO THE WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY CARRIED TO GENEVA IN THEIR OWN HEARTS THE FEAR AND HELPLESSNESS THAT PEOPLE EVERYWHERE ARE FEELING. BUT -- TOGETHER -- WE REPLACED FEAR WITH COURAGE AND TURNED OUR FEELINGS OF HELPLESSNESS INTO A UNITED EXPRESSION OF HOPE AND A NEW COMMITMENT TO WIN THIS BATTLE FOR ALL MANKIND.

WE KNOW AIDS AS A DISEASE THAT IS RELENTLESS IN ITS COURSE...IT IS DISDAINFUL OF AGE, ATTACKING BOTH THE OLD AND THE VERY YOUNG...AND IT SPITEFULLY REMAINS A MYSTERY.

THIS IS THE KIND OF CHALLENGE FACING US TODAY, AS WE CONVENE FOR THIS, THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON AIDS. THE PEOPLE WE REPRESENT -- ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO ARE MOST AT RISK -- LOOK TO US FOR HELP...AND WE DARE NOT RESPOND WITH ANYTHING LESS THAN OUR VERY BEST EFFORT.

THANK YOU.

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