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USO AWARDS DINNER

THURSDAY, MARCH 14, 1985

-- THANK YOU. I'M SO HONORED TO RECEIVE THE USO
DISTINGUISHED AMERICAN AWARD, AND I'M ESPECIALLY GLAD DELORES
DID THE PRESENTING, NOT JUST BECAUSE SHE IS A FORMER RECIPIENT,
BUT BECAUSE SHE'S AN OLD AND DEAR FRIEND. AND I'M DELIGHTED BOB
IS GOING TO PERFORM.

John always like to come home but he's got to come back at
-- OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES WROTE, "WHERE WE LOVE -- IS

HOME/HOME OUR FEET MAY LEAVE, BUT NOT OUR HEARTS." THE USO FOR

1

MANY YEARS HAS UNDERSTOOD THE IMPORTANCE OF HOME TO OUR MEN AND
WOMEN IN UNIFORM. LIKE ANY OF US WOULD, UNDER THE
CIRCUMSTANCES, OUR MILITARY PEOPLE MISS THEIR HOMES AND
FAMILIES. ^{of course} YET THESE ARE THE VERY THINGS THEY ARE PROTECTING BY
SERVING IN THE ARMED FORCES. ^{but} THE USO BRIDGES THE GAP TO HOME.
IT EASES THE LONELINESS OUR ~~MILITARY~~ PEOPLE SOMETIMES FEEL AND,
IN A WAY, HELPS THEM TO REMEMBER WHY THEY WEAR A UNIFORM.

-- OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS, I'VE SEEN LONELINESS FROM

2

ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE. FROM TRAVELING AND TALKING TO YOUNG PEOPLE ALL OVER THE COUNTRY, I'VE LEARNED ONE REASON THEY TURN TO DRUGS IS THE NEED TO BELONG. DRUGS SOMEHOW SEEM TO EASE ALIENATION AND ISOLATION, BEFORE EVENTUALLY MAKING IT MUCH WORSE. IT SHOULD COME AS NO SURPRISE TO YOU THAT YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE MILITARY, JUST AS YOUNG PEOPLE IN CIVILIAN LIFE, SOMETIMES FEEL ALIENATED. THEY SOMETIMES TURN TO DRUGS.

-- THE USO BY PROVIDING A PLACE TO BELONG HELPS EASE THAT

3

SENSE OF ISOLATION. BY PROVIDING A PLACE TO MEET PEOPLE, TO WATCH TV, OR TO PLAY PING PONG, THE USO IS EXTENDING A HAND FROM HOME TO THOSE WHO WILL TAKE IT. NOW, PING PONG CAN'T DEFEAT POT, BUT THE SENSE OF BELONGING AND SUPPORT THAT THE USO OFFERS CAN ASSIST IN THAT CAUSE.

Not so
-- ~~IN CLOSING~~, I WANT TO THANK THE USO FOR GIVING OUR YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE MILITARY THIS KIND OF POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT. I THANK YOU, MY HUSBAND THANKS YOU, AND MILLIONS OF AMERICAN PARENTS WHOSE CHILDREN ARE SERVING THEIR COUNTRY THANK YOU.

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THE WHITE HOUSE
OFFICE OF THE FIRST LADY'S PRESS SECRETARY

MRS. REAGAN'S REMARKS

USO AWARDS DINNER

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA - THURSDAY, MARCH 14, 1985

Thank you. I'm so honored to receive the USO Distinguished American Award, and I'm especially glad Delores did the presenting, not just because she is a former recipient, but because she's an old and dear friend. And I'm delighted Bob is going to perform.

Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote, "Where we love -- is home/home our feet may leave, but not our hearts." The USO for many years has understood the importance of home to our men and women in uniform. Like any of us would, under the circumstances, our military people miss their homes and families. Yet these are the very things they are protecting by serving in the armed forces. The USO bridges the gap to home. It eases the loneliness our military people sometime feel and, in a way, helps them remember why they wear a uniform.

Over the past few years, I've seen loneliness from another perspective. From traveling and talking to young people all over the country, I've learned one reason they turn to drugs is the need to belong. Drugs somehow seem to ease alienation and isolation,

Mrs. Reagan's Remarks
USO Awards Dinner
March 14, 1985
Page Two

before eventually making it much worse. It should come as no surprise to you that young people in the military, just as young people in civilian life, sometimes feel alienated. They sometimes turn to drugs.

The USO by providing a place to belong helps ease that sense of isolation. By providing a place to meet people, to watch TV, or to play ping pong, the USO is extending a hand from home to those who will take it. Now, ping pong can't defeat pot, but the sense of belonging and support that the USO offers can assist in that cause.

In closing, I want to thank the USO for giving our young people in the military this kind of positive environment. I thank you, my husband thanks you, and millions of American parents whose children are serving their country thank you.

USO AWARDS DINNER
THURSDAY, MARCH 14, 1985

Handwritten signature

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