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MRS. REAGAN: DEPARTURE REMARKS
FIRST LADIES CONFERENCE
APRIL 25, 1985

--Before the First Ladies head home to all corners of the earth, let me speak briefly about what has unified us these past two days. Although our languages, customs, and peoples may be different, the one thing each of us holds in common is the deep desire to protect our children. Their lives are so fragile while the world is often so brutal. And one of the world's cruelties is drugs.

--That is why we came together, to learn and discuss and trade ideas about lessening this threat. Over the last two days we've heard about the effects of drugs on our young people, their health, their future, their families. We heard stories of pain and confusion. Yet, I don't think any of the First Ladies will be leaving discouraged; I think we all will head home with hope.

--Because we also saw what can be done. The answer to drug abuse is the same as the answer to so many other problems: commitment. The First Ladies showed their commitment by travelling here from great distances to be part of this conference. In return I think we gained a strength and resolve in being together that will help our children. Each of you has my heartfelt appreciation. And now let me wish you goodbye and a safe journey.

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

MRS. REAGAN'S DEPARTING REMARKS
FIRST LADIES CONFERENCE ON DRUG ABUSE
ANDREWS AIRFORCE BASE - WASHINGTON D.C.

THURSDAY, APRIL 25, 1985

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The Washington Post

AN INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

Nancy Reagan's Drug Campaign

THIS CITY is rough on the spouses of its wielders of power, and most of all on the wife of the president of the United States. Whoever she is, she operates by borrowing the earned authority of her husband, and she is constantly reminded that she is something of an interloper. She has no official duties, but she is accountable unofficially to a vast flight of eagle-eyed observers. In these circumstances, it is hard to do much right.

Nancy Reagan, however, has done something extremely right. She has thrown herself into the fight against drug abuse with vigor and intelligence. If she had simply been shopping for a worthy cause, she might have picked a homier, more heartwarming or more photogenic one. Instead, she picked a relatively ungainly and untended one where her particular contribution could be of special value: to display a personal commitment and to use the public's, the media's and even the bureaucracy's inevitable interest in her to draw others to the cause.

The conference that Mrs. Reagan is running yesterday and today is a good illustration of her work. In an unprecedented initiative, she has brought to-

gether the wives of the leaders of 17 foreign countries in order to publicize the global nature of drug abuse—and of caring about drug abuse. This latter element emerged strongly from the conference yesterday. The women attending seemed quite aware of the limitations of what they in their particular role can do. There was evident, however, an awareness of the human dimension of the drug problems in their respective countries, and of the requirement for a stronger community of concern rooted in family values and family ways.

Does it make a difference in the end? How can it not make a difference for the idea to spread that drug abuse compels the alarm and the informed attention of responsible women like these? Their governments, while all friendly to the United States, are not all equally cooperative and like-minded in the often very political matter of drug cooperation. Such difficulties are not to be swept under the rug, but the personal warmth and the shared purpose evident at the conference are important assets. For using the resources of her position to increase them, Mrs. Reagan deserves gratitude.