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

MRS. REAGAN'S REMARKS
PRIDE CONFERENCE
ATLANTA, GEORGIA

THURSDAY, APRIL 25, 1985

-- Thank you. On behalf of my friends, the First Ladies of 15 countries, let me say we are proud to be here. We came to learn and listen and take ideas home. And in the case today, home is anywhere from Bonn to Buenos Aires to Karachi.

-- I feel very much at home this morning because three years ago I attended my first PRIDE Conference. It was during that trip that my thinking on drug abuse began to crystallize. I'd already seen the pain that our children were suffering, but I hadn't seen the way we could save our children from drugs. I saw it in the faces of the mothers and fathers of PRIDE. That visit genuinely marked a turning point for me, and I believe the founding of groups such as this mark the turning point in the very, very long battle against drug abuse.

-- I wanted the First Ladies with me today to see what I saw on my first trip here, because conferences like this are possible in their homelands, too. Each First Lady here also has a representative of her country attending. Overall, representatives of 40 nations are present. They came because the mothers and fathers in their countries are just as concerned about losing their children as we in the United States are concerned about losing ours. Mothers and fathers are the same the world over -- they love their children.

-- Parent groups are forming in the Americas, Australia,

Europe and Asia. We in the U.S. sometimes think that when we've got a problem, we're the only one who has it. This conference is a means of letting parents in the United States, as well as around the world, know that they are not alone. There are other parents -- in Dublin and Buenos Aires and Kuala Lumpur -- also fighting to keep their children safe from drugs.

-- George Bernard Shaw said, "Life is a flame that is always burning itself out; but it catches fire again every time a child is born." The flame of future generations must continue to burn brightly. That is why these First Ladies have traveled so far to be here today. And it is why you are here, as well. I think I speak for all parents when I say that the only gift more valuable than our own lives is that of our children's. The work of PRIDE and of this conference is to protect the gift of a child's life and future. So let us begin, we have no time to spare. Thank you.

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