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REMARKS FOR THE NANCY REAGAN CENTER RECEPTION
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 1, 1988

-- THANK YOU AND A WARM WELCOME TO THE WHITE HOUSE. BEFORE I DO ANYTHING ELSE, I WANT TO THANK SUZANNE MARX, WHO AS YOU KNOW IS OUR NATIONAL CAMPAIGN CHAIRMAN. I DON'T KNOW WHAT I WOULD DO WITHOUT HER. SUZANNE IS ABSOLUTELY TIRELESS ON BEHALF OF THE CAUSE THAT'S BROUGHT US ALL TOGETHER. AND, SUZANNE, I JUST WANT YOU TO KNOW HOW DEEPLY I APPRECIATE ALL YOU'RE DOING. THANK YOU.

-- AND, OF COURSE, I WANT TO THANK ALL OF YOU, TOO, FOR BELIEVING IN WHAT WE'RE DOING. I KNOW A COUPLE OF YOU HAVE LOST

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CHILDREN TO DRUGS. AND AS YOU ALL REALIZE, DRUG ABUSE IS A TRAGEDY THAT CAN BEFALL ANY FAMILY. THAT'S HOW I FIRST GOT CONCERNED -- WHEN WE LIVED IN CALIFORNIA, I SAW WHAT WAS HAPPENING TO CHILDREN OF FRIENDS. I HAD NO IDEA BACK THEN OF THE SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM. AND, OF COURSE, IT IS MANY TIMES WORSE TODAY.

-- WHAT I'M STUNNED BY -- TO THIS VERY DAY -- IS HOW CRUEL DRUGS ARE, ESPECIALLY TO YOUNG CHILDREN. I CAN'T TELL YOU THE THINGS I'VE SEEN OR HEARD. IN CHICAGO, A BABY IS SOLD FOR A BAG

OF COCAINE. IN NEW YORK, A FOUR-YEAR-OLD BOY IS SHOT IN A BATTLE BETWEEN DRUG DEALERS. IN HOSPITALS ALL OVER THE COUNTRY, BABIES ARE BEING BORN ADDICTED TO DRUGS. ONE NURSE SAID, "THEY'RE LIKE LITTLE CAGED ANIMALS TRYING TO GET OUT . . . CRYING, TREMBLING AND PERSPIRING." SHE SAID, "I'VE SEEN SO MANY OF THESE BABIES AND I'M STILL TRYING TO COPE. IT'S STILL VERY PAINFUL."

-- DRUGS ARE PAINFUL IN SO MANY WAYS TO SO MANY PEOPLE.

-- OVER THE PAST EIGHT YEARS IN THIS HOUSE, I'VE TRIED TO

MAKE A DIFFERENCE. I HOPE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE WHEN I LEAVE, AND THIS CENTER IS THE WAY I'M GOING TO DO THAT. IT WILL BE THE MAJOR FOCUS OF MY WORK WHEN WE RETURN TO CALIFORNIA. SO WHILE MY WORK IN THE WHITE HOUSE AGAINST DRUG ABUSE IS COMING TO AN END, MY WORK AT THE CENTER AND WITH PHOENIX HOUSE, THANKS TO THE HELP OF MITCH ROSENTHAL, IS JUST BEGINNING.

-- WE'LL HAVE A RESIDENTIAL HIGH SCHOOL FOR TREATMENT. WE'LL HAVE EDUCATION, PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION PROGRAMS. I'M VERY

OPTIMISTIC ABOUT WHAT WE CAN ACCOMPLISH AND I'LL TELL YOU WHY I'M SO HOPEFUL ABOUT OUR PLANS. AS PHOENIX HOUSE HAS SAID BEFORE, WE KNOW HOW TO CURE DRUG ABUSE. IT'S NOT A MYSTERY. YOU CHANGE BEHAVIOR BY CHANGING ATTITUDES AND VALUES AND SELF-PERCEPTIONS.

-- AND I'M PROMISING YOU TODAY WE ARE GOING TO CURE AS MANY KIDS AS WE CAN. WE ARE GOING TO PREVENT AS MANY KIDS FROM GETTING ON DRUGS AS WE CAN. WE ARE GOING TO SAVE LIVES AND HEARTACHE. WE'RE GOING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE, AND YOU'RE VERY MUCH A PART OF THAT. THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY AND THANK YOU FOR CARING.

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