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**OA/ID Number:** 13627  
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**Folder Title:**  
UN Conference on the Environment 6/12/92 [OA 5809]

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Week Ending Friday, June 19, 1992

**Address to the United Nations  
Conference on Environment and  
Development in Rio de Janeiro,  
Brazil**

*June 12, 1992*

President Collor, Mr. Secretary-General, heads of delegation, may I first express my admiration to Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali and my gratitude to Secretary General Maurice Strong for his tireless work in bringing this Earth summit together. This is truly an historic gathering.

The Chinese have a proverb: If a man cheats the Earth, the Earth will cheat man. The idea of sustaining the planet so that it may sustain us is as old as life itself. We must leave this Earth in better condition than we found it.

Today this old truth must be applied to new threats facing the resources which sustain us all, the atmosphere and the ocean, the stratosphere and the biosphere. Our village is truly global. Some find the challenges ahead overwhelming. I believe that their pessimism is unfounded.

Twenty years ago, at the Stockholm conference, a chief concern of our predecessors was the horrible threat of nuclear war, the ultimate pollutant. No more. Upon my return from Rio, I will meet with Russian President Yeltsin in Washington, and the subject we will discuss is cooperation, not confrontation. Twenty years ago, some spoke of the limits to growth. Today we realize that growth is the engine of change and the friend of the environment.

Today, an unprecedented era of peace, freedom, and stability makes concerted action on the environment possible as never before. This summit is but one key step in the process of international cooperation on environment and development. The United States will work to carry forward the promise of Rio. Because as important as the road to

Rio has been, what matters more is the road from Rio.

There are those who say that cooperation between developed and developing countries is impossible. Well, let them come to Latin America, where debt-for-nature swaps are protecting forests in Costa Rica and funding pollution control in Chile.

There are those who say that it takes state control to protect the environment. Well, let them go to Eastern Europe, where the poisoned bodies of children now pay for the sins of fallen dictators, and only the new breeze of freedom is allowing for cleanup.

There are those who say that change can never come because the interests of the status quo are too powerful. Well, let them come right here to Brazil, where President Collor is forging a new approach that recognizes the economic value of sustaining the rainforest.

There are those who say that economic growth and environmental protection cannot be compatible. Well, let them come to the United States, where, in the 20 years since Stockholm, our economy has grown by 57 percent, and yet we have cut the lead going into the air by 97 percent, the carbon monoxide by 41 percent, the particulates by 59 percent. We've cleaned up our water and preserved our parks, wilderness, and wildlife.

There are those who say that the leaders of the world do not care about the Earth and the environment. Well, let them all come here to Rio.

Mr. President, we have come to Rio. We've not only seen the concern, we share it. We not only care, we're taking action. We come to Rio with an action plan on climate change. It stresses energy efficiency, cleaner air, reforestation, new technology. I am happy to report that I have just signed the Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Today, I invite my colleagues from the industrialized world to join in a prompt start on the convention's implementation. I pro-

pose that our countries meet by January 1st to lay out our national plans for meeting the specific commitments in the Framework Convention. Let us join in translating the words spoken here into concrete action to protect the planet.

We come to Rio with a proposal to double global forest assistance. We stand ready to work together, respecting national sovereignty, on new strategies for forests for the future. As a downpayment, we will double U.S. forest bilateral assistance next year. And we will reform at home, phasing out clear-cutting as a standard practice on U.S. national forests and working to plant one billion trees a year.

We come to Rio with an extensive program of technology cooperation. We stand ready, Government and private sector, to help spread green technology and launch a new generation of clean growth.

We come to Rio recognizing that the developing countries must play a role in protecting the global environment but will need assistance in pursuing these cleaner growths. So we stand ready to increase U.S. international environmental aid by 66 percent above the 1990 levels, on top of the more than \$2.5 billion that we provide through the world's development banks for Agenda 21 projects.

We come to Rio with more scientific knowledge about the environment than ever before and with the wisdom that there is much, much we do that's not yet known. And we stand ready to share our science and to lead the world in a program of continued research.

We come to Rio prepared to continue America's unparalleled efforts to preserve species and habitat. And let me be clear. Our efforts to protect biodiversity itself will exceed, will exceed, the requirements of the treaty. But that proposed agreement threatens to retard biotechnology and undermine the protection of ideas. Unlike the climate agreement, its financing scheme will not work. And it is never easy; it is never easy to stand alone on principle, but sometimes leadership requires that you do. And now is such a time.

Let's face it, there has been some criticism of the United States. But I must tell you,

we come to Rio proud of what we have accomplished and committed to extending the record on American leadership on the environment. In the United States, we have the world's tightest air quality standards on cars and factories, the most advanced laws for protecting lands and waters, and the most open processes for public participation.

Now for a simple truth: America's record on environmental protection is second to none. So I did not come here to apologize; we come to press on with deliberate purpose and forceful action. Such action will demonstrate our continuing commitment to leadership and to international cooperation on the environment.

We believe that the road to Rio must point toward both environmental protection and economic growth, environment and development. By now it's clear, to sustain development, we must protect the environment; and to protect the environment, we must sustain development.

It's been said that we don't inherit the Earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children. When our children look back on this time and this place, they will be grateful that we met at Rio, and they will certainly be pleased with the intentions stated and the commitments made. But they will judge us by the actions we take from this day forward. Let us not disappoint them.

Mr. President, once again, my congratulations to you, sir. Mr. Secretary-General, our sincere thanks. And thank you all very, very much.

*Note: The President spoke at 3:19 p.m. in the Assembly Hall at the Riocentro Conference Center. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.*

### **Statement on Signing the Framework Convention on Climate Change**

*June 12, 1992*

I have today signed the Framework Convention on Climate Change on behalf of the United States of America. This landmark

CLOSE HOLD

Document No. 332597SS

WHITE HOUSE STAFFING MEMORANDUM

DATE: 6/11/92 ACTION/CONCURRENCE/COMMENT DUE BY: ----

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT, RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL
SUBJECT: JUNE 12, 1992

Table with columns for names and checkboxes for ACTION and FYI. Names include VICE PRESIDENT, SKINNER, SCOWCROFT, DARMAN, BRADY, BROMLEY, CALIO, DEMAREST, FITZWATER, GRAY, HOLIDAY, HORNER, MCBRIDE, MOORE, PETERSMEYER, PORTER, SMITH, YEUTTER, DELAND, BOSKIN, FINDLAY, GRADY. Most FYI boxes are checked.

REMARKS: MCGROARTY (with red arrow pointing to the name)

The attached has been forwarded to the President.

RESPONSE:

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PHILLIP D. BRADY
Assistant to the President
and Staff Secretary
Ext. 2702

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS:

Grady  
June 6, 1992  
02 JUN 11 10:23  
UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON  
ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT  
RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL  
JUNE 12, 1992  
3:00 p.m.

President Collor, Mr. Secretary General, Heads of Government,  
Delegates:

Allow me to begin by expressing my admiration to Secretary General Boutros-Ghali for his leadership of these United Nations and my gratitude to Secretary General Maurice Strong for his tireless work in bringing this "earth summit" together. The world is in their debt.

The book of Genesis speaks of a covenant between man and the earth. The Chinese have a proverb: if man cheats the earth, the earth will cheat man.

The idea of sustaining the planet, so that it may sustain us, is as old as life itself. In every generation the challenges change, but the obligation does not: we must leave this earth in better condition than we found it.

Today we find these old truths amidst new realities. Our ancestors worried about preserving the health of their own plot of land. Today we must address the health of assets which sustain us all -- the atmosphere and the ocean; the stratosphere and the biosphere. Our village is truly global.

There are those who find these new challenges overwhelming. Their pessimism is unfounded.

Twenty years ago, at the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment, a chief concern of our predecessors was the horrible threat of nuclear war -- the ultimate pollutant. That threat is now calmed.

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Upon my return from Rio, I will meet with Russian President Yeltsin in Washington. And the subject we will discuss is cooperation -- not competition.

Twenty years ago, some spoke of limits to growth. Today we realize that growth is the engine of change, and the friend of the environment.

So let me offer a note of hope, and some proposals for action.

I believe that this summit meeting is an important step in a process that holds much promise. A process of international cooperation on environment and development. Today, freedom and openness are thriving as never before. Freer trade is opening the door to expanded economic opportunity. An unprecedented era of peace and stability makes concerted action on the environment possible today as never before.

So the United States will work to carry the promise of Rio forward - - through institutions, through partnerships, and through actions. Because as important as the road to Rio has been, what matters more is the road from Rio.

There are those who say that cooperation is impossible, that the interests of the developed and the developing worlds are at odds. Let them come to Latin America, where debt-for-nature swaps are protecting forests in Costa Rica and funding pollution control in Chile.

There are those who say that it takes state control to protect the environment. Let them go to Eastern Europe, where the poisoned bodies of children now pay for the secrets of fallen dictators -- and only the new breeze of freedom is allowing for cleanup.

There are those who say that change can never come, because the interests of the status quo are too powerful. Let them come to Brazil, where President Collor is forging a new approach to the problems of the

rainforest, that recognizes the economic value that sustaining these forests can provide.

There are those who say that economic growth and environmental protection cannot be compatible, that one precludes the other. Let them come to the United States -- where, in the twenty years since Stockholm, our economy has grown by 57%, yet we have cut the lead going into the air by 95%, the carbon monoxide by 41%, and the particulates by 59%. We have brought fish back to our rivers and streams, and cleaned enough contaminated soils and toxic wastes to fill a football stadium a mile high.

There are those who say that the leaders of the world do not care about the earth and its environment. Let them come to Rio, and see this unprecedented outpouring of official and human concern about the future of the planet.

Mr. President, and Mr. Secretary, we have come to Rio. We have not only seen the concern, we share it. We not only care -- we are prepared to act.

We have come because for development to be sustained, the environment must be protected -- and for the environment to be protected, development must be sustained.

We come to Rio with a plan of action to address climate change. Our plan stresses energy efficiency, and cleaner air. Reforestation, and new technology. We stand ready to join in a climate agreement -- and to launch a "prompt start".

Action is the most important result of this conference. So I invite my colleagues from the industrialized world to join in this prompt start. I propose that our countries meet in Geneva, by January 1st, to lay out our national plans for meeting the "specific commitments"

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portion of the Framework Convention. Let us join in translating the words spoken here into concrete actions to protect the planet.

We come to Rio with a proposal to double global forest assistance. We stand ready to work together, respecting national sovereignty, to launch new strategies for forests for the future.

As a downpayment, we will double U.S. forest bilateral assistance next year. And we will reform at home -- phasing out clearcutting as a standard practice on U.S. Federal forestlands.

We come to Rio with an extensive program of technology cooperation. We stand ready to help launch a new generation of clean growth -- working to spread green technology through a private sector Technology Cooperation Corps, through our government agencies and Federal labs, and through new regional partnerships.

We come to Rio recognizing that the developing countries will need assistance in pursuing this cleaner growth. So we stand ready to increase U.S. international environmental aid by 66% above 1990 levels -- and this is on top of the more than two and a half billion dollars a year we are providing through the world's development banks for projects in support of Agenda 21.

We come to Rio with more knowledge about the environment than in any previous era, and with the wisdom that there is much we do not yet know. We stand ready to share our science, and to lead the world in a program of continued research.

We come to Rio proud of what we have accomplished, and committed to extending the record of American leadership on the environment. In the United States, we have developed the tightest air quality standards on cars and factories, the most advanced laws for protecting lands and

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waters, and the most open processes for public participation in the world.

And now for some truth: that record is second to none. If the world is to tackle the complex environmental challenges ahead, we need less emotion, and more deliberate purpose. Less divisive rhetoric, and more unified action.

The path to strengthening both environment and development lies before us, if we choose to take it.

That path is the way of market incentives built on ambitious objectives to spur innovation, and performance standards measured and judged to ensure progress. On that path, the road from Rio can point toward both environmental protection and economic growth.

When our children look back on this time and this place, they will be grateful we have met at Rio. They will certainly be pleased with the intentions stated, and the commitments made. But they will judge us by the actions we take from this day forward. Let us not disappoint them.

Thank you, Mr. President, and Mr. Secretary General. Thank you very much.

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