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REMARKS AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY VICE PRESIDENT AL GORE
UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL OPENING SESSION
Monday, January 10, 2000

I call to order this first meeting of the United Nations Security Council in the 21st Century.

Let me thank the distinguished members of the Council for the honor of presiding, and for your willingness to greet the dawn of this new millennium by exploring a brand new definition of world security.

Today marks the first time, after more than 4,000 meetings stretching back more than half a century, that the Security Council will discuss a health issue as a security threat.

We tend to think of a threat to security in terms of war and peace. Yet no one can doubt that the havoc wreaked and the toll exacted by HIV/AIDS do threaten our security. The heart of the security agenda is protecting lives) and we now know that the number of people who will die of AIDS in the first decade of the 21st Century will rival the number that died in all the wars in all the decades of the 20th Century.

When 10 people in sub-Saharan Africa are infected every minute; when 11 million children have already become orphans, and many must be raised by other children; when a single disease threatens everything from economic strength to peacekeeping) we clearly face a security threat of the greatest magnitude.

This historic session not only recognizes the real and present danger to world security posed by the AIDS pandemic) which I will discuss in further detail during my remarks as head of the U.S. delegation) this meeting also begins a month-long focus by this Council on the special challenges confronting the continent of Africa. The powerful fact that we begin by concentrating on AIDS has a still larger significance: it sets a precedent for Security Council concern and action on a broader security agenda. By the power of example, this meeting demands of us that we see security through a new and wider prism, and forever after, think about it according to a new, more expansive definition.

For the past half century, the Security Council has dealt with the classic security agenda) built upon common efforts to resist aggression, and to stop armed conflict. We have witnessed wars among nations, and violence on the scale of war within nations, for many reasons:

--Because of claims of religious or racial superiority.

--Because of lust for power, disguised as ideology or rationalized as geo-strategic doctrine.

--Because of a sense that a small place or a larger region) or the whole world itself) was too small to allow for the survival and prosperity of all, unless the powerful could dominate the weak.

--Because of the tendency of too many to see themselves solely as separate groups, celebrating and defending their exclusivity, by demonizing and dehumanizing others.

--Because of poverty, which causes the collapse of hopes and expectations, the coming apart of a society, and makes people first desperate, then freshly open to evil leadership.

But while the old threats still face our global community, there are new things under the sun -- new forces arising that now or soon will challenge international order, raising issues of peace and war. As our world enters the year 2000, it is not the change in our calendar that matters. What matters is that in this symbolic transition from old to new, we find one of those precious few moments in all of human history when we have a chance to become the change we wish to see in the world) by seeking a common agreement to openly recognize a powerful new truth that has been growing just beneath the surface of every human heart: it is time to change the nature of the way we live together on this planet. From this new vantage point, we must forge and follow a new agenda for world security, an agenda that includes:

--The global environmental challenge, which could render all our other progress meaningless, unless we deal with it successfully.

--The global challenge of defeating drugs and corruption, which now spill across our borders.

--The global challenge of terror -- magnified by the availability of new weapons of mass destruction so small they can be concealed in a coat pocket.

--The new pandemics, laying waste to whole societies, and the emergence of new strains of old diseases that are horrifyingly resistant to the anti-biotics that protected the last three generations.

Our new security agenda should be pursued with determination, adequate resources, and creative use of the new tools at the world ,s disposal that can be used to bring us together in successful common efforts) tools such as the Internet and the emerging Global Information Infrastructure) which, if used imaginatively, will enable new depths of insight and cooperation by nations, non-governmental organizations, and citizens at all levels.

Our task is not merely to recognize and confront these challenges, but to rise to our higher ideals, and work together to make our brightest dreams real in the lives of our children. In order to succeed, I believe, along with growing billions around this planet, that we must create a world where people ,s faith in their own capacity for self-governance unlocks their human potential, and justifies their growing belief that all can share in an ever-widening circle of human dignity and self-sufficiency. A world of freedom and free markets. A world where the free flow of ideas and information, and freer access to education, sustain our more fundamental freedoms. A world in which parents are free to choose the size

of their families with the confidence that the children they bring into this world will survive to become healthy adults, with economic opportunity in prosperous and peaceful communities. A world where we educate girls as well as boys, and secure the rights of women everywhere, as full members of the human family.

All this and more constitutes the great global challenge of our time: to create and strengthen a sense of solidarity, as we seek a newer world of security for all -- security not only from loss of life and the ravages of war, but security from constant fear and degradation, and from a loss of the quality of life and liberty of spirit that should belong to all.

If we are to succeed in addressing this new security agenda, we must recognize that because of our rapid growth in population, and the historically unprecedented power of the new technologies at our widespread disposal, mistakes which once were tolerable can now have consequences that are multiplied many-fold.

For example, for almost all the years of recorded history, people could do whatever they wished to their environment, and do little to permanently harm it. People could wage war in the world, and do nothing to destroy it. But now, threats that were once local can have consequences that are regional or global; damage once temporary can now become chronic and catastrophic.

As a world community, we must prove to our citizens that we are wise enough to control what we have been smart enough to create. We must understand that the old conception of global security -- with its focus almost solely on armies, ideologies, and geopolitics -- has to be enlarged.

We need to show that we not only can contain aggression, prevent war, and mediate conflicts, but that we can work together to anticipate and respond to a new century with its new global imperatives.

The human mind -- our ingenuity, our dreaming, our restless quest to do better -- created this moment. Now the human will -- not of one individual, not of one nation or group of nations -- but the collective will of truly united nations, must master this moment. We must bend it in the direction of life, not death; justice, not oppression; opportunity, not deprivation -- a new security for the new world we now inhabit.

The future is not something that we merely try to predict. The future is something that we make. For ourselves. Together. It is up to us to move forward -- with faith in our principles, in our foresight, and in our common humanity. The Spanish poet Antonio Machado once said: & Pathwalker, there is no path, we create the path as we walk. 8

There is great hope in this pathmaking meeting. It is an honor to open it. And my hope is that the first days and years of the millennium -- and all those that follow -- will be guided by the vision that marks this first meeting. We live in a new time. We face new and larger responsibilities. Meet them we can, and meet them we must -- for the new threats to humanity are as grave as war itself -- and the new hopes we have are as precious as peace.

Now I am pleased to present the distinguished Secretary General of the United Nations, who has given so much to the cause of peace and security, Kofi Annan.

REMARKS AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY VICE PRESIDENT AL GORE
 U.N. SECURITY COUNCIL SESSION ON AIDS IN AFRICA
 Monday, January 10, 2000

Mr. Secretary General, Members of the Security Council, Distinguished Guests, and, in particular, Honored Delegates from the Nations of Africa:

&HIV/AIDS is not someone else ,s problem. It is my problem. It is your problem. By allowing it to spread, we face the danger that our youth will not reach adulthood. Their education will be wasted. The economy will shrink. There will be a large number of sick people whom the health will not be able to maintain. 8

Mr. Secretary and Members of the Council: These are not my words. They were not uttered in the United States or the United Nations. They were spoken by my friend, President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, as he declared South Africa ,s Partnership Against AIDS more than a year ago. The same words should be spoken out not only in South Africa, not only in Africa, but all across the earth. In Africa, the scale of the crisis may be greater, the infrastructure weaker, and the people poorer, but the threat is real for every people and every nation, everywhere on earth. No border can keep AIDS out; it cuts across all the lines that divide us. We owe ourselves and each other the utmost commitment to act against AIDS on a global scale) and especially where the scourge is greatest.

AIDS is a global aggressor that must be defeated.

As we enter the new millennium, Africa has crossed the first frontiers of momentous progress. Over the past decade, a rising wave of African nations has moved from dictatorship to democracy, embraced economic reform, opened markets, privatized enterprises, and stabilized currencies. More than half the nations of Africa now elect their own leaders -- nearly four times the number ten years ago -- and economic growth in sub-Saharan Africa has tripled, creating prospects for a higher quality of life across the continent.

Tragically, this progress is imperiled, just as it is taking hold, by the spread of AIDS which now grips 20 million Africans. Fourteen million have already died) one quarter of them children. Each day in Africa, 11,000 more men, women, and children become HIV positive) more than half of them under the age of 25.

For the nations of sub-Saharan Africa, AIDS is not just a humanitarian crisis. It is a security crisis) because it threatens not just individual citizens, but the very institutions that define and defend the character of a society.

This disease weakens workforces and saps economic strength. AIDS strikes at teachers, and denies education to their students. It strikes at the military, and subverts the forces of order and peacekeeping.

The United States is profoundly moved by the toll AIDS takes in Africa. At the same time, we know that our own country has not achieved as much as we should or must in our own battle against AIDS. I am pleased that our Surgeon General is here today; his recent report tells us that we have not overcome the ignorance and indifference that lead to infection. We must continue to study the success of others, while we seek to share our

progress with them.

As Vice President, I have journeyed four times to sub-Saharan Africa. I have taken along top health officials, AIDS specialists, corporate leaders, and physicians. We have spent long hours with African leaders, heard their ideas, and discussed their difficulties with the fateful crisis of AIDS.

It is inspiring to see so many in Africa -- not only leaders, but health care workers and community workers, mothers and fathers, and countless ordinary citizens -- fighting to save the lives of the people they love. Ten years ago, Uganda was suffering the world's highest infection rates. Today -- because the whole nation has mobilized to end stigma, urge prevention, and change behavior -- Uganda is now recording dramatic drops in the infection rate. Uganda, which used to be proof of the problem, is now powerful proof that we can turn the tide against AIDS.

We know that the first line of defense against this disease is prevention. And prevention depends on breaking down the barriers against discussing the extent and risks of AIDS. That is one purpose of this historic Security Council meeting. Today, in sight of all the world, we are putting the AIDS crisis at the top of the world's security agenda. We must talk about AIDS not in whispers, in private meetings, in tones of secrecy and shame. We must face the threat as we are facing it right here, in one of the great forums of the earth -- openly and boldly, with urgency and compassion. Until we end the stigma of AIDS, we will never end the disease of AIDS.

We also must do much more to provide basic care and treatment to the growing number of people who, thank God, are living, instead of dying, with HIV and AIDS. This requires affordable medicine, but also more than medicine; it requires that we train doctors, nurses, and home-care workers, that we develop clinics and community-based organizations to deliver care to those who need it. Today, fewer than 5 percent of those living with AIDS in Africa have access to even basic care. We know we can prolong life, reduce suffering, and allow mothers with AIDS to live longer with their children, if we offer treatment for opportunistic infections like tuberculosis and malaria.

Our ultimate goal, our best hope, is to prevent AIDS by vaccination, and we are committed to the maximum possible research. But we need to do more to harness the talent and power of the private sector. In September, in his speech to the General Assembly, President Clinton said it was wrong that only two percent of all biomedical research is directed to the major killer diseases in the developing world. He pledged America to a new effort to speed the development and delivery of vaccines for AIDS, malaria, TB, and other illnesses that disproportionately afflict the poorest nations.

This three-part strategy of prevention, treatment, and research is the right fight. And the United States has contributed more than a billion dollars to wage it worldwide -- more than half of that for sub-Saharan Africa. But we must do more.

Last year, I announced the largest-ever increase in the U.S. commitment to international AIDS programs -- \$100 million to fight AIDS in Africa, India, and other areas.

Today, I announce America's decision to step up the battle. The budget the Clinton-Gore Administration will send to our Congress next month will

include an additional increase of \$100 million for a total of \$325 million to fund our worldwide fight against AIDS. This new funding will include efforts:

- To reduce the stigma and prevent the spread of AIDS;
- To reduce mother-to-child transmission;
- To support home and community based care for people with AIDS;
- To provide care for children orphaned by AIDS;
- And to strengthen health infrastructure to prevent and treat of AIDS.

I would also like to announce here this morning that the budget we will send to our Congress next month will include \$50 million for the United States , contribution to the Vaccine Fund of the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunizations. This contribution) in fulfillment of the promise President Clinton made to the General Assembly) will help fund the research, purchase, and distribution of lifesaving vaccines in developing nations.

I am also announcing today an initiative for an expanded public-private partnership in the battle against AIDS. Indeed, in the coming months, I will convene a meeting of U.S. business leaders active in Africa, to develop a set of voluntary principles for corporate conduct to make the workplace an effective place for the education and prevention of AIDS. Let us also set this goal: through public and private efforts, in partnership with partner nations, we will attack the cycle of infection at one critical point) its most heartbreaking point -- the moment of mother-to-child transmission.

In addition, I announce that our budget request for next year will) for the first time ever) offer specific funding for the U.S. military to work with the armed forces of other nations to combat AIDS. Inside our own country, our armed forces have acted effectively to prevent the spread of AIDS in the military. Secretary of Defense Cohen is ready to share our experience with our military counterparts in Africa.

We are also committed to helping poor countries gain access to affordable medicines, including those for HIV/AIDS. Last month, the President announced a new approach to ensure that we take public health crises into account when applying U.S. trade policy. We will cooperate with our trading partners to assure that U.S. trade policies do not hinder their efforts to respond to health crises.

But to win the ongoing global battle against AIDS, we must also fight the poverty that speeds its spread. In June, in Cologne, we joined with our G-7 partners in the Cologne Debt Initiative, a landmark commitment to faster and deeper debt relief for the heavily-indebted poor countries.

We will continue to engage our G-7 partners to bring greater resources to this effort. Today I challenge the world ,s wealthier, healthier nations to match America ,s increasing commitment to a worldwide crusade against AIDS.

But more money is not enough. We must also make sure that more money has more impact. Next July, the global community will gather in Durban, South Africa for the 13th International AIDS Conference. There are many inspiring efforts to fight AIDS all around the world. Right now, they

amount to many isolated efforts, not a single focused assault. We must knit together the separate initiatives by local, national, regional, and global organizations, to take maximum advantage of their synergy and success. We will work with the organizers of the Durban Conference to advance this essential objective. It is essential, because how we speed the money, and how effectively we target it, not just how much we spend, will determine how many lives we save.

AIDS is one of the most devastating threats ever to confront the world community. Many have called the battle against it a sacred crusade.

The United Nations was created to stop wars. Now, we must wage a great and peaceful war of our time) the war against AIDS. For all, here and around the world, willing to enlist in this cause, let us hear and heed and take heart from the words of an African poet, Mongane Wally Serote:

&remember
the passion of our hearts
the blinding ache and pain
when we heard the hysterical sobs
of our little children crying against fate

we heard these, we knew them, we absorbed them
but we surged forward
knowing that life is a promise, and that that promise is us... 8

That promise is us. We here in this room) representing the billions of people of the world -- we must become the promise of hope and of change. We must become the promise of life itself. We have the knowledge, the compassion, and the means to make a difference. We must acknowledge our moral duty and accept our great and grave responsibility to succeed.

We must make the promise and keep the promise to prevail against this disease -- so that when the story of AIDS is told to future generations, it will be a tale not just of human tragedy but of human triumph. And the moral of that story will be the capacity of the human spirit to summon us in common cause, to defeat a common foe, and secure the health and hopes of so many of our fellow human beings.

May God bless all who have suffered from this disease. May God bless the united effort of our united nations to end it) soon and forever.

RECORD TYPE: PRESIDENTIAL (NOTES MAIL)

CREATOR: Jena V. Roscoe (CN=Jena V. Roscoe/OU=WHO/O=EOP [WHO])

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TEXT:

Noah and Barbara: I have a wonderful photograph from the National Summit on Africa's Opening Session with President Clinton and Noah on the podium. How would you like for me send it to you via mail or messenger service? I will be in the office late tomorrow afternoon.

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

February 17, 2000

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
TO OPENING OF NATIONAL SUMMIT ON AFRICA

Washington Convention Center
Washington, D.C.

10:50 A.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very, very much. It's a wonderful thing to be introduced by an old friend. Old friends and people you have appointed to office will tell false, good stories about you every time. (Laughter.)

Africa never had a better friend in America than Andrew Young, and I thank him. (Applause.) I want to say I'm honored to be in the presence today of so many distinguished Africans. Secretary Salim, thank you for your visionary remarks and your leadership. President Moi, thank you for coming to the United States and for giving me another chance to visit with you and for the work we have done together. Vice President Abubakar, thank you for what you are doing in Nigeria to give that great country its true promise at long last. We thank you, sir. (Applause.)

I welcome all our distinguished guests from Africa: Mrs. Taylor, foreign ministers, ambassadors. I thank all the Americans who are here,

beginning with Andy's wife, who puts up with this relentless travel of his around Africa. Mayor Williams, thank you for welcoming us to Washington. There are three members of our Congress here today representing what I hope will be a stronger and stronger bipartisan commitment to the future of Africa: Congressman Royce and Congresswoman Barbara Lee and Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee, I thank you for being here. (Applause.)

I want to thank Leonard Robinson and Herschelle Challenor and all the people responsible for this remarkable conference. Thank you, Noah Samara and thank you, Bishop Ricard, for being here. And I want to say a special word of appreciation to all the people in our administration who have worked so hard to give us an Africa policy that we can be proud of, that I hope will light up the path for America's future.

I know that Secretary Slater has already spoken here. Our AID Director, Brady Anderson, will speak. Our Vice President will be here. You said, Secretary Salim, you hope future administrations will follow our lead in Africa. I know one that would. (Laughter and applause.)

I want to thank Susan Rice at the State Department, Sandy Berger, Gayle Smith, all the people in our White House, all the ones who have helped us here. (Applause.)

Secretary Salim said Africa lacks a strong constituency in the United States. Well, I open this National Summit on Africa with a simple message: Africa does matter to the United States. (Applause.)

Of whatever background Americans claim -- Leonard Robinson told me when I came here, we even have 17 delegates from Utah here. There they are, you see? (Laughter and applause.) Africa matters not simply because 30 million Americans trace their heritage to Africa, though that is profoundly important. (Applause.) Not simply because we have a strong interest in a stable and prosperous Africa -- though 13 percent of our oil comes from Africa, and there are 700 million producers and consumers in sub-Saharan Africa, though that is important. Africa's future matters because the 21st century world has been transformed, and our views and actions must be transformed accordingly.

For most of history, the central reality in international relations was that size and location matter most. If you were a big country or on a trade or invasion route, you mattered. If not, you are marginalized. The average American child growing up in the past saw African nations as colorful flags and exotic names on a map, perhaps read books about the wonderful animals and great adventures. When colonialism ended, the colors on the flags were changed and there were more names on the map. But the countries did not seem nearer to most Americans.

That has all changed now. For the central reality of our time is globalization. It is tearing down barriers between nations and people; knowledge, contact and trade across borders within and between every continent are exploding. And all this globalization is also, as the barriers come down, making us more vulnerable to one another's problems: to the shock of economic turmoil, to the spread of conflict, to pollution and, as we have painfully seen, to disease; the terrorists, the drug traffickers, the criminals who can also take advantage of new technologies and globalization, the openness of societies and borders.

Globalization means we know more about one another than ever before. You may see the Discovery Channel in Africa. I was thinking of

that when that little film was on. The Discovery Channel followed me to Africa and talked about how they were building communications networks in African schools to share knowledge and information. We can find out within seconds now what the weather is in Nairobi, how a referendum turned out in Zimbabwe, how Cameroon's indomitable Lions performed in the latest soccer match. (Laughter and applause.) We can go online and read the Addis Tribune, the Mirror of Ghana, the East African, or dozens of other African newspapers. We sit in front of a television and watch people in a South African township line up to vote.

We also, now, bear witness to the slaughter of innocents in Rwanda, or the ravages of AIDS in scores of lands, or the painful coincidence of remarkable growth and abject poverty in nation after nation. In other words, it is no longer an option for us to choose not to know about the triumphs and the trials of the people with whom we share this small planet. Not just America and Africa; I would imagine millions of Africans identified with the Muslims of Kosovo when they were run out of their country, all of them at one time. We know about each other; we can no longer choose not to know. We can only choose not to act, or to act. (Applause.)

In this world, we can be indifferent or we can make a difference. America must choose, when it comes to Africa, to make a difference. (Applause.) Because we want to live in a world which is not dominated by a division of people who live on the cutting edge of a new economy and others who live on the bare edge of survival, we must be involved in Africa. Because we want to broaden global growth and expand markets for our own people, we must be involved in Africa. Because we want to build a world in which our security is not threatened by the spread of armed conflict, in which bitter ethnic and religious differences are resolved by the force of argument, not the force of arms, we must be involved in Africa.

Because we want to build a world where terrorists and criminals have no place to hide, and where those who wish harm to ordinary people cannot acquire the means to do them harm, we must be involved in Africa. Because we want to build a world in which we can harness our natural resources for economic growth without destroying the environment, so that future generations will also have the chance to do the same, we must be involved in Africa. (Applause.)

That is why I set out in 1993, at the beginning of my presidency, to build new ties between the United States and Africa; why we had the first White House conference, the ministerial and that wonderful trip in the spring of 1998, that I will remember for the rest of my life. (Applause.)

I went to Africa as a friend, to create a partnership. And we have made significant progress. There are challenges that are profound, but in the last two years we have seen thousands of triumphs large and small. Often, they don't make the headlines because the slow, steady progress of democracy and prosperity is not the stuff of headlines.

But, for example, I wish every American knew that last year the world's fastest-growing economy was Mozambique. Botswana was second, Angola fourth. (Applause.) I wish every American knew that and understood that that potential is in every African nation. It would make a difference. We must know these things about one another.

People know all about Africa's conflicts, but how many know that

thousands of African soldiers are trying to end those conflicts as peacekeepers -- and that Nigeria alone, amidst all its difficulties, has spent \$10 billion in these peacekeeping efforts? (Applause.)

For years, Africa's wealthiest country, South Africa, and its most populous, Nigeria, cast long, forbidding shadows across the continent. Last year, South Africa's remarkable turnaround continued as its people transferred power from one elected president to another. Nigeria inaugurated a democratically elected president for the first time in decades. It is working to ensure that its wealth strengthens its people, not their oppressors. These are good news stories. They may not be in the headlines, but they should be in our hearts and our minds as we think of the future. (Applause.)

No one here, no one in our government, is under any illusions. There is still a lot of work to be done. Hardly anyone disagrees about what is needed: genuine democracy, good government, open markets, sustained investment in education and health and the environment -- and more than anything, widespread peace. All depend, fundamentally and first, on African leadership. (Applause.) These things cannot be imported, and they certainly cannot be imposed from outside.

But we must also face a clear reality: even countries making the right policy choices still have to struggle to deliver for their people. Each African government has to walk down its own road to reform and renewal. But it is a hard road. And those of us who are in a position to do so must do our part to smooth that road, to remove some of the larger barriers, so that Africa can fully share in the benefits and the responsibilities of globalization.

I tell the American people all the time, and they're probably tired of hearing it now, that I have a very simple political philosophy: everybody counts, everybody has a role to play, everybody deserves a chance. And we all do better when we help each other. That is a rule we ought to follow with Africa. (Applause.)

There are five steps in particular I believe we must take. First, we must build an open world trading system which will benefit Africa alongside every other region in the world. (Applause.) Open markets are indispensable to raising living standards. From the 1970s to the 1990s, developing countries that chose trade grew at least twice as fast as those that chose not to open to the world.

Now, there are some who doubt that the poorest countries will benefit if we continue to open markets, but they should ask themselves: what will happen to workers in South Africa and Kenya without the jobs that come from selling the fruit of their labors abroad? What will happen to farmers in Zimbabwe and Ghana if protectionist farm subsidies make it impossible for them to sell beyond their borders?

Trade must not be a race to the bottom, whether we're talking about child labor, harsh working conditions or environmental degradation. But neither can we use fear to keep the poorest part of the global community stuck at the bottom forever. Africa has already taken important steps, forming regional trade blocks like ECOWAS, the East Africa Community, and SADC. But we can do more. That is why our Overseas Private Investment Corporation in Africa is working to support three times as many business projects in 1999 than it did in 1998, to create jobs for Africans and, yes, for Americans as well. That is why we are working with African nations to develop the institutions to sustain future

growth -- from efficient telecommunications to the financial sector.

And that is why, as soon as possible, we must enact in our Congress the bipartisan Africa Growth and Opportunity Act. (Applause.) This bill has passed in one version in our House and another version in our Senate. I urge the Congress to resolve the differences and send me a bill for signature by next month. (Applause.) And I ask every one of you here who just clapped -- and those who didn't, but sympathize with the clapped -- (laughter) -- to contact anyone you know in the United States Congress and ask them to do this. This is a job that needs to be done. (Applause.)

We must also realize that trade alone cannot conquer poverty or build a partnership we need. For that reason, a second step we must take is to continue the work now underway to provide debt relief to African nations committed to sound policies. (Applause.) Struggling democratic governments should not have to choose between feeding and educating their children and paying interest on a debt. (Applause.) Last March, I suggested a way we could expand debt relief for the world's poorest and most indebted countries, most of which are African, and ensure the resources would be used to improve economic opportunity for ordinary African citizens. Our G-7 partners embraced that plan.

Still, I felt we should do more. So in September, I announced that we would completely write off all the debts owed to us by the countries that qualified for the G-7 program -- as many as 27 African nations in all. The first countries, including Uganda and Mauritania, have begun to receive the benefits. Mozambique, Benin, Senegal and Tanzania are expected to receive benefits soon. Mozambique's debt is expected to go down by more than \$3 billion. The money saved will be twice the health budget -- twice the health budget -- in a country where children are more likely to die before the age of five than they are to go on to secondary school.

Last year, I asked Congress for \$970 million for debt relief. Many of you helped to persuade our Congress to appropriate a big share of that. Keep in mind, this is a program religious leaders say is a moral imperative, and leading economists say is a practical imperative. It's not so often that you get the religious leaders and the economists telling us that good business is good morals. (Applause.) It's probably always true, but they don't say it all that often. (Laughter.) We must finish the job this year; we must continue this work to provide aggressive debt relief to the countries that are doing the right thing, that will take the money and reinvest it in their people and their future. I ask you, especially the Americans in this audience, if you believe in what brought you here, help us to continue this important effort. (Applause.)

A third step we must take is to give better and deeper support to African education. Literacy is crucial -- to economic growth, to health, to democracy, to securing the benefits of globalization. Sub-Saharan Africa has the developing world's lowest school enrollment rate. In Zambia, over half the schoolchildren lack a simple notebook. In rural parts of Tanzania, there is one textbook for every 20 children. That's why I proposed in our budget to increase by more than 50 percent the assistance we provide to developing countries to improve basic education, targeting areas where child labor is prevalent. I ask other nations to join us in this. (Applause.)

I'll never forget the schools I visited on my trip to Africa -- the

bright lights in the eyes of the children, how intelligent they were, how eager they were. It is wrong for them to have to look at maps of nations that no longer exist, without maps of nations in their own continent that do exist. It is wrong for them to be deprived the same opportunities to learn that our young people have here. If intelligence is equally distributed throughout the human race -- and I believe it is -- then every child in the human race ought to have a chance to develop his or her intelligence in every country in the world. (Applause.)

A fourth step we must take is to fight the terrible diseases that have afflicted so many millions of Africans, especially AIDS and also TB and malaria. Last year, ten times as many people died of AIDS in Africa as were killed in all the continent's wars combined. It will soon double child mortality and reduce life expectancy by 20 years.

You all laughed when Andy Young said that I was going to get out of the presidency as a young man. Depending on the day, I sometimes feel young or I feel that I'm the oldest man my age in America. (Laughter.) The life expectancy in this country has gone from 47 to 77 in the 20th century. An American who lives to be 65 has a life expectancy in excess of 82 years. AIDS is going to reduce the life expectancy in Africa by 20 years. And even that understates the problem, because the people that escape it will live longer lives as African economies grow and strengthen.

The worst burden in life any adult can bear is to see a child die before you. The worst problem in Africa now is that so many of these children with AIDS have also already lost their parents. We must do something about this. In Africa there are companies that are hiring two employees for every job on the assumption that one of them will die. This is a humanitarian issue, a political issue and an economic issue.

Last month, Vice President Gore opened the first-ever United Nations Security Council session on health issues, on a health issue, by addressing the AIDS crisis in Africa. I've asked Congress for another \$100 million to fight the epidemic, bringing our total to \$325 million. I've asked my administration to develop a plan for new initiatives to address prevention, the financial dimensions of fighting AIDS, the needs of those affected, so that we can make it clear to our African partners that we consider AIDS not just their burden but ours, as well.

But even that will not be enough. Recently, Uganda's Health Minister pointed out that to provide access to currently available treatments to every Ugandan afflicted with AIDS would cost \$24 billion. The annual budget of Uganda is \$2 billion.

The solution to this crisis, and to other killer diseases like malaria and TB, has to include effective and expensive vaccines. Now, there are four major companies in the world that develop vaccines, two in the United States and two in Europe. They have little incentive to make costly investments in developing vaccines for people who cannot afford to pay for them. So in my State of the Union address, I proposed a generous tax credit that would enable us to say to private industry, if you develop vaccines for AIDS, malaria and TB, we will help to pay for them. So go on and develop them, and we'll save millions of lives. (Applause.)

But I have to tell you, my speech -- and I don't want anybody else but me to be responsible; my speechwriters were so sensitive, they didn't put this in the speech. But I want to say this: AIDS was a

bigger problem in the United States a few years ago than it is today. AIDS rates are not going up in African countries, all African countries. They're actually going down in a couple of African countries.

Now, I know that this is a difficult and sensitive issue. I know there are cultural and religious factors that make it very difficult to tackle this issue from a preventive point of view. We don't have an AIDS vaccine yet. We have drugs that will help to prevent the transmission from pregnant mothers to their children, which I want to be able to give out. We have other drugs that have given people with AIDS in our country normal lives, in terms of their health and the length of their lives. I want those to be available.

But the real answer is to stop people from getting the HIV virus in the first place. (Applause.)

I got to see firsthand some of the things that were being done in Uganda that were instrumental in driving down the AIDS rate. Now, I don't care how hard or delicate or difficult this is; this is your children's lives we're talking about. (Applause.) You know, we who are adults, when our children's lives are at stake, have to get over whatever our hang-ups or problems are and go out there and do what is necessary to save the lives of our children. (Applause.)

And I'll help you do that, too. That's not free; that costs money. Systems have to be set up. But we shouldn't pretend that we can give injections and work our way out of this. We have to change behavior, attitudes. And it has to be done in an organized, disciplined, systematic way. And you can do more in less time for less money in a preventive way, to give the children of Africa their lives back, and the nations of Africa their futures back, with an aggressive prevention campaign than anything else. And there is no excuse for not doing it; it has to be done. (Applause.)

Finally, let me say there is one more huge obstacle to progress in Africa, that we are committed to doing our part to overcome. We must build on the leadership of Africans to end the bloody conflicts killing people and killing progress. (Applause.)

You know the toll: tens of thousands of young lives lost in the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea; thousands killed and disfigured at unbelievably young ages in the civil war that nearly destroyed Sierra Leone; 2 million killed by famine and war in Sudan, where government sees diversity as a threat rather than a strength, and denies basic relief to citizens it claims to represent.

Most of the world's conflicts pale in complexity before the situation in the Congo. At least seven nations and countless armed groups are pitted there against each other in a desperate struggle that seems to bring no one victory, and everyone misery -- especially the innocent people of the Congo. They deserve a better chance. Secretary Albright has called the Congo struggle Africa's first world war. As we search for an end to the conflict, let us remember the central lesson of the First World War: the need for a good peace. If you mess up the peace, you get another world war.

A year ago, I said if the nations of the region reached an agreement that the international community could support, I would support a peacekeeping operation in the Congo. The region has now done so. The Lusaka cease-fire agreement takes into account the sovereignty

and territorial integrity of Congo; the withdrawal of foreign forces; the security of Congo's neighbors; the need for dialogue within the nation; and most important, the need for the countries within Central Africa to cooperate in managing the region's security. It is more than a cease-fire; it is a blueprint for building peace. Best of all, it is a genuinely African solution to an African problem.

There is still fighting in Congo. Peace will not happen overnight. It will require steady commitment from the parties and the unwavering support of the international community. I have told our Congress that America intends to do its part by supporting the next phase of the U.N.'s peacekeeping operation in the Congo, which will send observers to oversee the implementation of the agreement.

We need to think hard about what is at stake here. African countries have taken the lead -- not just the countries directly affected, either. They are not asking us to solve their problems or to deploy our military. All they have asked is that we support their own efforts to build peace, and to make it last. We in the United States should be willing to do this. It is principled and practical.

I know -- I see the members of Congress here. I say again -- I see Congressman Payne, Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee, Congresswoman Barbara Lee, Congressman Royce -- we need to stand by the people of Africa who have decided how to solve this most complex and troubling problem. (Applause.) We have learned the hard way in the United States, over decades and decades, that the costliest peace is far cheaper than the cheapest war. And we need to remember that as we approach our common responsibilities in central Africa.

Finally, let me say that I intend to continue to work hard on these things for every day that I am President. For me, the remarkable decade of the 1990s began with the liberation symbolized by Nelson Mandela's first steps from Robben Island. (Applause.) In a few days, I will have the opportunity to join by satellite the conference in Tanzania that President Mandela is organizing to build peace in Burundi.

A lot of people look at Africa and think, oh, these problems are just too complicated. I look at Africa and I see the promise of Africa, and think, if the problems are complicated now, think how much worse they'll be if we continue to ignore them. (Applause.)

Other people grow frustrated by bad news, and wish only to hear good news. But empty optimism does Africa no more service than groundless cynicism. What we need is not empty optimism or groundless cynicism, but realistic hope. We need to see the promise, the beauty, the dreams of Africa. We need to see the problems clear and plain, and stop ignoring the evident responses. We in the United States need to understand that our obligations to be good partners with Africa are not because we are certain that everything will turn out all right, but because it is important. Because we're human beings, we can never expect everything to turn out all right.

Africa is so incredibly diverse. Its people speak nearly 3,000 languages. It is not a single, monolithic place with single, monolithic truths. A place of many places, each defined by its own history and aspirations, its own successes and failures. I was struck on my trip to Africa by the differences between Ghana and Uganda, Botswana and Senegal -- between Capetown and Soweto. I was also struck by what bound people together in these places.

In George Washington's first draft of his Farewell Address, he wrote, "we may all be considered as the children of one common country." The more I think about globalization and the interdependence it promises and demands, the more I share that sentiment. Now, we must think of ourselves as children of one common world. If we wish to deepen peace and prosperity and democracy for ourselves, we must wish it also for the people of Africa. Africa is the cradle of humanity, but also a big part of humanity's future.

I leave you with this thought: when I think of the troubles of Africa, rooted in tribal differences; when I think of the continuing troubles in America, across racial lines, rooted in the shameful way we brought slaves here from West Africa so long ago, and our continuing challenges as we integrate wave after wave after wave of new immigrants from new places around the world; I am struck by the fact that life's greatest joy is our common humanity, and life's greatest curse is our inability to see our common humanity.

In Africa, life is full of joy and difficulty. But for too long, the African people have lacked for friends and allies to help the joys overcome the difficulties. The United States will be a friend for life.

Thank you. (Applause.)

END

11:28 A.M. EST

RECORD TYPE: PRESIDENTIAL (NOTES MAIL)

CREATOR: Dan J. Taylor (CN=Dan J. Taylor/O=OVP [OVP])

CREATION DATE/TIME:25-APR-2000 14:55:12.00

SUBJECT: fyi -- AIDS/S.Africa story from Wired News

TO: David W. Beier (CN=David W. Beier/O=OVP@OVP [OVP])

READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Jodi R. Sakol (CN=Jodi R. Sakol/O=OVP@OVP [OVP])

READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Sarah A. Bianchi (CN=Sarah A. Bianchi/OU=OPD/O=EOP@EOP [OPD])

READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Todd H. Dennett (CN=Todd H. Dennett/O=OVP@OVP [OVP])

READ:UNKNOWN

TEXT:

A South African AIDS Catch-22

by Lakshmi Chaudhry

3:00 a.m. Apr. 25, 2000 PDT

Intellectual property laws may be killing AIDS victims in South Africa.

Multinational drug companies, with the help of the United States, have successfully blocked the South African government's efforts to seek cheaper alternatives to expensive AIDS drugs. They say these efforts violate their patent rights.

Faced with the high costs of an effective treatment program, the government simply seems to be giving up on its people. And it's chosen a strange way to do it.

South African President Thabo Mbeki has been claiming since last November that there is no clear connection between HIV and AIDS. He reiterated that claim in a letter to President

Clinton that was leaked last week to the Washington Post. Mbeki also is questioning the effectiveness of the popular retroviral drug AZT, which he says is too "toxic."

AIDS and consumer activists say the South African government is questioning the causes of the disease as a way to avoid the enormous cost of treatment programs.

Mbeki's position, which flies in the face of established medical research, has been widely slammed by scientists and activists as irresponsible.

"Ninety-nine point nine percent of research says there is just no question that the HIV virus causes AIDS," said Jim Yong Kim, director of the infectious diseases program at Harvard University. "He is in a position of absolute denial. And it's just not helpful."

Considering the proportions of the AIDS crisis in South Africa, Mbeki's views may also be downright dangerous.

South Africa's HIV epidemic is among the world's largest. The number of AIDS victims has increased 30-fold since 1990. Ten percent of South Africa's 43 million people are infected with the AIDS virus. A United Nations study estimates that more than 6 million will be infected by 2005.

The ability of a country to finance an effective AIDS program is measured by the amount of Gross Domestic

Product available per infected person. And while South Africa is relatively wealthy compared to other developing countries, the sheer size of its infected population puts it near the bottom of the pile.

It has a mere \$44,000 per infected person, which is far less than India (\$93,000) or Thailand (\$200,000). (The United States has \$9.5 million per person with HIV.)

The problem is complicated by the government's thwarted efforts to seek cheaper alternatives, which have been stymied by pharmaceutical companies.

"(Mbeki is) a desperate guy," said James Love, director of the Consumer Technology Project. "He can't provide even the basic treatment without bankrupting the government. So he's clutching at straws to justify not spending the money."

In 1997, the government passed an amendment to the Medicines and Related Substances Act that allowed it to produce or import cheaper versions of existing drugs through parallel importing and compulsory licensing.

Parallel importing would let South Africa import patented drugs into the country from nations other than the United States at cheaper prices, since multinationals often charge different prices for the same drug.

Compulsory licensing would force manufacturers to license their patented

drugs to South African companies that then could produce and distribute the product at a much lower cost.

"Drug companies would do almost anything to avoid compulsory licensing because it shifts the power from them to the government," Love said.

The Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association, which represents 42 pharmaceutical companies including American-owned multinationals, immediately sued the South African government to block implementation of the 1997 amendment.

The PMA says the amendment violates the rights of companies that own the patents to these drugs, and sets a dangerous international precedent.

As a result of the lawsuit, which still is being litigated, the amendment has never been implemented.

Without the possibility of reducing costs, the South African government has done little to address the question of treatment over the past three years. In various statements, Mbeki has said the government wants to investigate the causes of the disease before embarking on a treatment program.

"The government is dragging its feet because it cannot see its way around the cost issues," said Zackie Achmat, a leading AIDS activist in South Africa.

The debate over the cause of AIDS is "just a red herring to distract attention from the existence of effective treatments," Achmat said.

The government already has banned workers in public clinics from prescribing AZT, a drug proven effective in preventing fetal transmission by pregnant women.

While the official reason for banning AZT is that it's too toxic, Achmat and Love say the government's motivations are economic rather than scientific.

"With 1,500 new cases every day, the cost of providing (an) anti-retroviral drugs regimen on that scale is enormous," Achmat said.

Most standard treatment programs cost around \$10,000 per person annually.

Love says the government's callousness does make sense when placed within a broader context. Without the AZT regimen, "Seventy to 80 percent of infants are born uninfected.... And treatment programs in Thailand show AZT reduces the infection rate from 20 to 10 percent," he said. "In other words, it's very expensive, doesn't cure in all cases, and isn't cost-effective."

But South African activists are less charitable.

Achmat says the government has little interest in helping poor blacks, who are suffering the most in this epidemic.

"This is a very Thatcherite government" that is primarily interested in cutting welfare costs, he said.

"The question of AIDS treatment (for poor people) is anathema to the finance ministry," he said.

While the government denies it, Achmat and other South African activists suspect it has reached an unofficial settlement with the PMA. "They lack the fiscal and political courage to challenge the drug companies," he said.

Drug companies argue that Mbeki's new position instead makes the lawsuit irrelevant.

"If you're not going to take the drugs, then the patents don't matter," said John Grayson, spokesman for PhRMA, the trade association representing American drug companies.

Apart from the fear of alienating foreign investors, some allege the government simply is not interested in saving people who are poor, illiterate, and unskilled.

"People are thinking in a Malthusian framework," said a prominent activist who preferred to remain unidentified.

"They're disposing of people who are deemed as not useful. I don't want to think so, but I may be the one in denial."

Whatever the motivations for the government's bizarre position, the future for South Africans looks grim without

treatment.

Right now, 100,000 people die of AIDS each year in South Africa, according to U.N. statistics. Without a significant AIDS program in place, the U.N. estimates that one in five adults there will die over the next decade.

RECORD TYPE: PRESIDENTIAL (NOTES MAIL)

CREATOR: Todd H. Dennett (CN=Todd H. Dennett/O=OVP [OVP])

CREATION DATE/TIME:25-APR-2000 15:01:03.00

SUBJECT: fyi -- AIDS/S.Africa story from Wired News

TO: Matt Gobush (CN=Matt Gobush/OU=NSC/O=EOP@EOP [NSC])

READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Thomas M. Rosshirt (CN=Thomas M. Rosshirt/OU=NSC/O=EOP@EOP [NSC])

READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Tyler S. Beardsley (CN=Tyler S. Beardsley/O=OVP@OVP [OVP])

READ:UNKNOWN

TEXT:

----- Forwarded by Todd H. Dennett/OVP on 04/25/2000

03:00 PM -----

From: Dan J. Taylor on 04/25/2000 02:55:12 PM

Record Type: Record

To: David W. Beier/OVP@OVP, Sarah A. Bianchi/OPD/EOP@EOP, Todd H.

Dennett/OVP@OVP, Jodi R. Sakol/OVP@OVP

cc:

Subject:fyi -- AIDS/S.Africa story from Wired News

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RECORD TYPE: PRESIDENTIAL (NOTES MAIL)

CREATOR: Lisa Ferdinando (CN=Lisa Ferdinando/OU=WHO/O=EOP [WHO])

CREATION DATE/TIME: 3-MAY-2000 09:43:34.00

SUBJECT: Sandy Berger on PBS NewsHour, May 2, 2000

TO: Anna Richter (CN=Anna Richter/OU=OPD/O=EOP@EOP [OPD])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Anne M. Edwards (CN=Anne M. Edwards/OU=WHO/O=EOP@EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Anne W. Bovaird (CN=Anne W. Bovaird/OU=WHO/O=EOP@EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Anthony R. Bernal (CN=Anthony R. Bernal/O=OVP@OVP [OVP])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Aprill N. Springfield (CN=Aprill N. Springfield/OU=WHO/O=EOP@EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Beth Nolan (CN=Beth Nolan/OU=WHO/O=EOP@EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Brian A. Reich (CN=Brian A. Reich/O=OVP@OVP [OVP])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Christine L. Anderson (CN=Christine L. Anderson/OU=WHO/O=EOP@EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Daniel R. Wilson (CN=Daniel R. Wilson/OU=OMB/O=EOP@EOP [OMB])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: David B. Stockwell (CN=David B. Stockwell/OU=NSC/O=EOP@EOP [NSC])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: David Vandivier (CN=David Vandivier/OU=OMB/O=EOP@EOP [OMB])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Dawn M. Chirwa (CN=Dawn M. Chirwa/OU=WHO/O=EOP@EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Dorinda A. Salcido (CN=Dorinda A. Salcido/OU=WHO/O=EOP@EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Eli G. Attie (CN=Eli G. Attie/O=OVP@OVP [OVP])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Elizabeth E. Baylor (CN=Elizabeth E. Baylor/OU=WHO/O=EOP@EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Elizabeth R. Newman (CN=Elizabeth R. Newman/OU=WHO/O=EOP@EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Ellen Mellody (CN=Ellen Mellody/OU=WHO/O=EOP@EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Elliott H. Baer (CN=Elliott H. Baer/OU=OPD/O=EOP@EOP [OPD])

READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Emily Karcher (CN=Emily Karcher/OU=WHO/O=EOP@EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Gene B. Sperling (CN=Gene B. Sperling/OU=OPD/O=EOP@EOP [OPD])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Gilbert S. Gonzalez (CN=Gilbert S. Gonzalez/OU=WHO/O=EOP@EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Gordon Li (CN=Gordon Li/OU=WHO/O=EOP@EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Heather M. Riley (CN=Heather M. Riley/OU=WHO/O=EOP@EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Helen L. Langan (CN=Helen L. Langan/OU=WHO/O=EOP@EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Irma L. Martinez (CN=Irma L. Martinez/OU=WHO/O=EOP@EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Jacqueline F. Lain (CN=Jacqueline F. Lain/OU=WHO/O=EOP@EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: James E. Kennedy (CN=James E. Kennedy/OU=WHO/O=EOP@EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Jason H. Schechter (CN=Jason H. Schechter/OU=WHO/O=EOP@EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Jeffrey A. Shesol (CN=Jeffrey A. Shesol/OU=WHO/O=EOP@EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Jeffrey M. Smith (CN=Jeffrey M. Smith/OU=OSTP/O=EOP@EOP [OSTP])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Jenni R. Engebretsen (CN=Jenni R. Engebretsen/OU=WHO/O=EOP@EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Jennifer Ferguson (CN=Jennifer Ferguson/OU=OMB/O=EOP@EOP [OMB])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Jennifer H. Smith (CN=Jennifer H. Smith/OU=WHO/O=EOP@EOP [WHO])
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TO: Jennifer M. Palmieri (CN=Jennifer M. Palmieri/OU=WHO/O=EOP@EOP [WHO])
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TO: Joel Johnson (CN=Joel Johnson/OU=WHO/O=EOP@EOP [WHO])
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TO: Joseph P. Lockhart (CN=Joseph P. Lockhart/OU=WHO/O=EOP@EOP [WHO])
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TO: Joshua Gotbaum (CN=Joshua Gotbaum/OU=OMB/O=EOP@EOP [OMB])
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TO: Joshua S. Gottheimer (CN=Joshua S. Gottheimer/OU=WHO/O=EOP@EOP [WHO])

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TO: Julia M. Payne (CN=Julia M. Payne/OU=WHO/O=EOP@EOP [WHO])
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TO: June Shih (CN=June Shih/OU=WHO/O=EOP@EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Justin L. Coleman (CN=Justin L. Coleman/OU=WHO/O=EOP@EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: kimberly s. anderson (CN=Kimberly S. Anderson/OU=OA/O=EOP@EOP [OA])
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TO: Kristina Wolfe (CN=Kristina Wolfe/O=OVP@OVP [OVP])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Laura D. Schwartz (CN=Laura D. Schwartz/OU=WHO/O=EOP@EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Laura J. Lewis (CN=Laura J. Lewis/OU=WHO/O=EOP@EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Leslie Bernstein (CN=Leslie Bernstein/OU=WHO/O=EOP@EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Lisa Ferdinando (CN=Lisa Ferdinando/OU=WHO/O=EOP@EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Lowell A. Weiss (CN=Lowell A. Weiss/OU=WHO/O=EOP@EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Marc I. Hurwitz (CN=Marc I. Hurwitz/OU=NSC/O=EOP@EOP [NSC])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Mark A. Kitchens (CN=Mark A. Kitchens/OU=WHO/O=EOP@EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Matthew T. Schneider (CN=Matthew T. Schneider/OU=WHO/O=EOP@EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Megan C. Moloney (CN=Megan C. Moloney/OU=WHO/O=EOP@EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Melissa G. Green (CN=Melissa G. Green/OU=OPD/O=EOP@EOP [OPD])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Melissa M. Murray (CN=Melissa M. Murray/OU=WHO/O=EOP@EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

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PBS NewsHour

May 2, 2000

NATIONAL SECURITY THREAT

The White House has declared the immune deficiency virus AIDS a national security threat. National Security Advisor Samuel Berger discusses why a disease has been added to the list for the first time.

The Health Unit is a partnership with the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation.

JIM LEHRER: AIDS as a national security threat, and to Ray Suarez.

RAY SUAREZ: Over the past two decades, as the spread of the AIDS virus was recognized as a public health emergency in Europe and North America, its impact on the developing world has been far more catastrophic. Of the 33 million people with HIV Around the world, 95 percent are in developing countries, mostly Sub-Saharan Africa. Every day, 5,000 Africans are infected, primarily from heterosexual contact. In the West, the disease is spread mostly via drug use and homosexual

contact. Statistically, the tragedy is most acute in Zimbabwe and Botswana, where one in four adults is HIV-positive.

MARTHA AINSWORTH, The World Bank: AIDS is taking a terrible toll on developing countries. In Zimbabwe, life expectancy is 22 years shorter than it would have been in the absence of the AIDS epidemic.

In Tanzania, AIDS is increasing poverty. Children are being pulled out of school to cope with the deaths of

adults

in their families.

RAY SUAREZ: But health and demography may not be the only dimensions of the problem. The Clinton administration has designated AIDS as a threat to national security. It's the first time an infectious disease has been added to a list that includes terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. The AIDS news broke on Sunday, the same day hundreds of thousands of gay rights supporters rallied in Washington. One senior Republican said the timing was not a coincidence.

SPOKESMAN: Do you think AIDS is a national security threat?

SEN. TRENT LOTT: I

saw that in the

Washington Post this

morning. I mention that

paper again, and I didn't

see it in other papers, and

the answer is no, I don't. I

guess this is just the president trying to make an appeal

to,

you know, certain groups. But no, I don't view that as a

national security threat. Not to our national security

interests, no.

RAY SUAREZ: That provoked this response from the White House.

JOE LOCKHART: To have this

question put to him by a

television interview, and to have

him laugh at the AIDS problem

as a national security issue... you

know, I think this is a problem at

home which we've addressed,

this is a problem around the world that we have an interest

in and we need to keep working on, and you can't just

laugh it off.

How does AIDS threaten the U.S.?

RAY SUAREZ: And joining us now is the president's national security adviser, Samuel Berger. Welcome to the program.

SAMUEL BERGER: Good evening.

RAY SUAREZ: How is the suffering of people who have AIDS and other diseases in foreign countries a threat to the national security of the United States?

SAMUEL BERGER, National Security Adviser: The AIDS epidemic has reached such proportions (Some of the statistics that you cited earlier, 50 million people in the world now infected with HIV, in some countries, in Africa 20 percent infected with HIV. In 1998, 200,000 people in Africa died from war; 2.2 million died from AIDS. In some countries now we have 30 percent of the military, 40 percent of teachers who are suffering from HIV. So what you have is an epidemic now which is eating at the very civil society of nations, their potential for economic prosperity. If we had a famine that killed 2.2 million people

last year in Africa, we would be very alarmed. President Bush sent troops to Somalia, a famine not nearly of that

magnitude. If we don't address this as an urgent problem,
we're going to have increasing instability, increasing
conflict

and an implosion of many of the countries in the
developing world.

RAY SUAREZ: But I think you get near universal
agreement that this is a public health crisis, a human
tragedy of the first rank. But how does it reach across the
Atlantic to the United States and threaten this country?

SAMUEL BERGER: Well, we
understand, I think, as global
worlds, global age, and a global
economy that instability in other
parts of the world which can
lead to war and conflict can
have a direct effect on the
United States. And I think we have an obligation to act
with others to try to both deal with the consequences and
increase the degree of education and prevention to try to
slow this down.

RAY SUAREZ: Does this bring on to the United States
and our security apparatus some sort of obligation beyond
one that the United States government may have already
taken on to itself?

SAMUEL BERGER: No,
but I do think it's

incumbent on us to lead
here and to make other
countries in the world
more aware of this, to
join with us. And let me
give you a few examples. We now have raised this in the
United Nations Security Council, the nations of the U.N.
Security addressed this in January. When the president
goes to Portugal in late May for the summit with the E.U.,
this will be one of the items on the agenda. When we go to
the G-8 summit in Okinawa with the industrial countries,
this will be one of the items on the agenda -- not to the
exclusion of other items but to get countries to join
together, as we have done, to devote resources to first
treating the consequences, and second to try to stop the
spread of the -- this epidemic.

Terrorism, weapons and AIDS

RAY SUAREZ: Is this the first time something like this has
ever been done to talk about disease, not only AIDS but
tuberculosis, malaria and others in the same way that you
at the National Security Council talk about weapons,
about terrorism, about terrorist acts?

SAMUEL BERGER: For
example, you know, we
have been dealing with
the international drug
crisis as a foreign policy
and national security issue

for many years. It's a question not only of dealing with the demand side of that problem here in the United States, but also trying to stop

it

from the source and interdict it between here and there. Now, obviously different kinds of issues require different kinds of crisis. We're not suggesting here that this is something that calls for a military response. But it does

call

for a national response. It calls for us to lead with other nations. When you have large parts of the developing world whose capacity to grow, whose capacity to have militaries that can maintain stability, whose capacity to teach their children is really being called into question (

In

fact indeed their capacity to govern ultimately being

called

into question, a few ounces of prevention at this point

will

be I think well spent compared with what we could face in the future if we don't deal with it.

RAY SUAREZ: As with government reports on other crisis abroad this one contains "best case" and "worst case" scenarios, epidemiological reports, health

statistics.

In a country, individual country let's say like Zimbabwe, which is so heavily affected by this disease, how would it become unstable from within when it has a lot of its people sick?

SAMUEL BERGER: Well, the countries, for example, that have had enjoyed solid growth in Africa now are beginning to see that growth erode because its work force is not able anymore to function in the economy and the cost of the disease to the government is becoming overwhelming. What happens? Those countries begin to unravel. They are unstable. They're more likely to engage in conflict with their neighbors. And before long, we have something, a situation which is really tumultuous. And so the most important thing we can do is first of all, work with other countries to try to apply collective resources; two, work with the leaders of these countries to try to change the dynamic. For example, in Uganda where President Musaveni has been a real leader here and has been out front in terms of talking about this problem, dealing with education, dealing with prevention, the rates have begun to go down. So there are things we can do about this. And we've also finally tried to stimulate our pharmaceutical companies to develop the kinds of vaccines for problems in the developing world where the money is not there to buy the drugs and, therefore, justify the research for vaccines on certain strains of AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria.

RAY SUAREZ: Do you expect to face skepticism on this? You heard Senator Lott before we began to talk.

SAMUEL BERGER: I think the
facts speak for themselves. I
think that the fact that 50 million
people in the world now are
effected by this epidemic; the
facts that 2.2 million people last
year died in Africa alone; the

fact that this is now a growing problem in Asia, in India
and elsewhere (India a country in South Asia with great
potential and great promise but also in a very unstable

area

of the world, I think that as people look at the facts and

as

senators look at the facts you'll realize that a national
response together with other countries is appropriate.

RAY SUAREZ: Samuel Berger, thanks for being with us.

SAMUEL BERGER: You're welcome.

DISNEY DUELS WITH TIME WARNER

Time Warner pulled ABC from seven metropolitan
markets this week,
after its transmission deal with Disney expired. The
two media giants
are in dispute over fees Time Warner must pay to
show Disney-owned
ABC on its cable system.

The NewsHour Media Unit is funded by a grant from
the Pew Charitable
Trusts.

JIM LEHRER: Margaret Warner has the cable story.

DIANE SAWYER: I'm Diane Sawyer.

CHARLES GIBSON: And I'm Charles Gibson.

MARGARET WARNER:

Millions of television viewers
awoke yesterday not to
Charlie Gibson and Diane
Sawyer, but to this
announcement from their
cable company, Time
Warner, charging that
Disney, the parent company of ABC, had pulled all ABC
programs from Time Warner's cable systems. ABC
disputed that, saying Time Warner had pulled the plug on
ABC. The clash between two media conglomerates
centers on how Time Warner will compensate Disney to
be able to offer Disney-owned programs to Time Warner
cable subscribers. The two companies have been haggling
over the terms ever since their previous agreement ran out
December 31.

SINGING: A little bit of heaven next to mine (

MARGARET WARNER:

According to published news reports, Disney is insisting that if Time Warner wants to continue to carry ABC, it also has to carry Disney's cartoon and soap opera networks, and shift the Disney channel from a premium offering -- for which the subscriber pays extra -- to the basic cable lineup. Time Warner says that would cost it an additional \$300 million a year.

CARTOON CHARACTER: Hello.

Millions affected by the blackout

MARGARET WARNER: 3.5 million Time Warner cable customers in cities across the country were affected by the blackout, nearly two million of them in the two largest media markets: New York and Los Angeles. The dispute comes at a crucial time for ABC. It is the beginning of

May

sweeps, the period during which a network's ratings are measured to set advertising rates for the coming months.

That means ABC's powerhouse programs like the wildly successful "Who Wants to be a Millionaire," sporting events like this

Saturday's Kentucky Derby
and widely watched news
programs were in blackout jeopardy. The arrangement
between the cable provider and the network works like
this: Time Warner owns the cable system that runs into
subscribers' homes. Disney owns the content that is
delivered over those cables. Their business arrangement --
like all arrangements between broadcast stations and their
local cable systems -- is governed by the 1992 Cable
Television Act. The broadcaster has a choice. It can opt
for the act's so-called "Must Carry" provision, under which
the cable operator must transmit the broadcaster's signal,
but pays no fee, or it can opt for the act's so-called
"Retransmission Consent" provision, which sets up a
negotiation between the two. The cable system doesn't
have to carry the local station's programs, but if it

does, it

must pay a mutually agreeable price. Most large
broadcasters, including ABC, opt for the latter
arrangement. Disney/ABC and Time Warner each accused
the other of abusing the law. Yesterday, it was Disney
President Robert Iger.

ROBERT IGER, President,
Walt Disney Co.: On Time
Warner's side, it's about, in my
opinion, using their power as a
monopolist, as an unbelievably
strong gatekeeper, it has a
choke-hold of sorts on the

consumer, in terms of controlling television access to
their
home -- using that power in an abusive way, to essentially
drive the economics of a business arrangement in their
favor.

MARGARET WARNER: Joseph Collins, Chairman and
CEO of Time Warner Cable, responded today.

JOSEPH COLLINS, Chairman,
CEO, Time Warner Cable: We
don't feel that we're using
anybody to achieve corporate
goals. As I think I've just said in
my statement, we want our
customers to have ABC, we've
never said anything differently than that, and we think
they
should have ABC -- but we don't think ABC should be
using the retransmission consent rules to extract things
from
our customers. We don't think that's it right there.

MARGARET WARNER: Late this afternoon, ABC and
Time Warner reached a truce to of sorts to put ABC
programming back on Time Warner Cable until July 15th
while the two companies continue to negotiate.

Negotiating power

MARGARET WARNER: For

more on this controversy, we're
joined by Bruce Leichtman.
Director of Media and
Entertainment Strategies for the
Yankee Group, a technology
research and consulting firm; and
Jeffrey Chester, executive
director of the Center for Media Education, a consumer
advocacy group.

MARGARET WARNER: Bruce Leichtman, this was a
pretty bold move on Time Warner's part. It's not often
that a cable system yanks some of its most popular
programming. Why did Time Warner do it?

BRUCE LEICHTMAN, The Yankee Group: Well, they
were caught in a very complicated negotiation and they
had to show that they had some power, that they could
when pushed get rid of ABC and they were (they felt
that they were pushed to the point where they had to take
action. And they took action at a point where it would
most damage ABC.

MARGARET WARNER: All right, why is Disney/ABC
pushing so hard? Is it just about getting more money for
these programs or is it bigger than that?

BRUCE LEICHTMAN: Well, at
a large part it is about getting --
what? -- more money. More

money is what they're looking at
and saying, okay, I've got the
Disney Channel. I've got Disney
Toon. I've got my other cable networks. I want to get as
much as I can from each of these entities and basically, I
don't have the hand that the cable operator has. All I've
got in my hand are the major networks like ESPN, and
eventually they use that arrow to come back at Time
Warner and said, you know what we're going to raise our
price on ESPN, and you can't take off ESPN.

Competition and retransmission

MARGARET WARNER: But otherwise what you are
saying is they're trying to use, say, ABC as leverage to
get
good positions for some of their lesser none products like
the cartoon network or the soap opera network?

BRUCE LEICHTMAN:

Well, it's interesting
because the carton
network goes
head-to-head. That is a
Time Warner property
that goes head to head

with Disney Toon. It is a complicated equation when you
have these two giants going against each other. But most of

the broadcasters now also have major cable properties and they use those major cable properties in those retransmission consent debates that you described before. They use them to get leverage because they don't get money from the transmission of ABC. So they say, what can we make money from? And they can make money from introducing new channels like Disney Toon, like bringing Disney to basic and getting consumers all to pay for that rather than just premium consumers who elect to pay for that.

MARGARET WARNER: Finally before I go to our other guest, why would Time Warner not want that?

BRUCE LEICHTMAN: Well, Time Warner wouldn't want it for many reasons: One, they are looking at their own properties. They look and again they say I've got Cartoon Network, I've got Boomerang, two different cartoon networks -- Do I want to put on Disney Toon? Well that is one looking at their own entities. I've got CNN SI. Do I want to put on ESPN Sports? And then on the other side of the equation they look at something like taking Disney to basic. What that means is passing the cost to all their consumers and then --

MARGARET WARNER: As opposed to subscribers who pay extra?

BRUCE LEICHTMAN: Exactly. That would then increase their rates not just to those who choose to get

it,

but increase their rates to everyone.

MARGARET WARNER: Okay. Jeff Chester, what do you think drove this, what would you add to this?

JEFFREY CHESTER, Center for Media Education: This is about who will control the Internet and our television system in the 21 century. What ABC -- was to ensure that it would be able to compete in this new broadband high-speed Internet future. What Disney understands is that in the new media world, the company which owns the cable wire will be able to control its destiny. And if Disney is alarmed about the power that Time Warner will have over its corporate future, every other content Web site and competitor should also be alarmed.

MARGARET WARNER: Explain this. That's because in the new Internet world or where we're heading, only the cable line into your house has the transmission to really

do

the high-speed Internet whereas your phone line doesn't?

Broadband Internet content

JEFFREY CHESTER: We are we are creating a new Internet, a broadband high speed Internet. It's going to come to new a number of different ways but for the most part, I and other consumer groups believe it will come to residential consumers, the average people, through the cable line. This high speed Internet has to come through a wire that can send all kinds of multimedia, all kinds of

data,

all kinds of phone traffic. In essence, broadband will replace the current system of television and the cable industry because of the way it's regulated can decide,

well,

I don't want you, your program or your Web site on my network or it can decide, you know, you compete with me. I control the flow of traffic on this network. I'm

going

to slow you down so people will see CNN a few seconds faster than they will see ABC News, and that will make all the difference.

MARGARET WARNER:

And pointing out Time
Warner owns CNN.

JEFFREY CHESTER: That's
exactly right.

MARGARET WARNER: In
other words, both these

companies in this case played
both roles. They both provide pipelines in certain cities
and
then they also provide content.

JEFFREY CHESTER: That's true, but I think what this
battle illustrates is that the power rests with those
people

which own the cable wire and there are only a handful of
companies -- they all own programming and unfortunately
the way we are regulating cable, unlike the way we've
regulated the Internet, the cable companies can make all
kind of content decisions about who has access to the wire
and what terms. That's why we need to have some new
public policies.

MARGARET WARNER: Bruce Leichtman, do you agree
this larger issue also was at stake and was behind the
scenes in this situation?

BRUCE LEICHTMAN: I think
the larger issue is absolutely at
stake. Whether that fell in
Disney's hands or not is another
question. The retransmission
"Must Carry" debate is one that
has been going on for four or five years in the cable
industry. And I think when push came to shove when
Disney was pushed up the wall, they used that argument of
look at the market power that Time Warner has today.

Imagine what they are going to have when AOL is
partnered with them. But one thing we do have to keep in
mind is there is a lot of legislation today that do

prohibit

cable. Cable can only own up to 30% of territory in
America. So that is a legislation that prohibits them.
Broadband is a very important factor in the future, but
even if we look five years down the road, we project that
while 70 million people will be on-line only 20 million of
those will have broadband. So broadband is an element of
the future but not the "be all-end all" and also it will

not

affect the market power that content, rich content has in
making operators like Time Warner decide that they can't
prohibit ESPN from being on their system.

The Time Warner and AOL merger

JEFFREY CHESTER: But
because of all the mergers that
we've witnessed two cable
companies in essence -- AT&T
and when it combines with AOL,
AOL/Time Warner -- will control
half of all cable households. In
January, American Online agreed to merge with Time
Warner. Up until January, America Online was arguing for
the kind of policies that all the consumers group have been

arguing for -- an open access policy, to make sure that the new Internet is as open and as competitive as the current Internet has been. But once AOL bought access to the cable lines it no longer supported a policy. There are only a handful, a tiny handful, of cable companies which will have tremendous control over the future of our media system. We need to have -- and there aren't public policies to ensure that they will treat everyone fairly. That's why we need some new rules.

MARGARET WARNER: And, Bruce Leichtman, why do you think then both Time Warner and ABC/Disney decided to call a truce here?

BRUCE LEICHTMAN: Well, ultimately, it makes so sense for anyone. And to the consumer they don't care who is right or who is wrong. They just want to see "Who wants to be a Millionaire."

JEFFREY CHESTER: I think we need to thank both Disney and Time Warner for this, because they've taken an issue that's been fairly invisible and now placed it in front of the American public. If Disney is scared I think everyone else should be scared.

MARGARET WARNER: All right. Gentlemen, thank you very much.

END

RECORD TYPE: PRESIDENTIAL (NOTES MAIL)

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TEXT:
FOX NEWS SUNDAY

May 7, 2000

SNOW: AIDS, gene therapy, cheap medicine. Health and Human
Services Secretary Donna Shalala talks about the future of your health.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

VICE PRESIDENT AL GORE: What is in the secret plan to privatize Social Security?

(END VIDEO CLIP)

SNOW: Al Gore accuses George Bush of harboring a secret plan to get Social Security. Is he on target, or off the wall? New York Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan tells us.

And would you bare your soul to this woman? Dr. Laura Schlessinger talks about life, love, wisdom and the joys of giving advice.

Plus our panel--Fred Barnes, Mara Liasson and Juan Williams on the May 7th edition of FOX NEWS SUNDAY.

Good morning, welcome to FOX NEWS SUNDAY. Our guests will join us in a moment. But first, let's get the headlines from Kathy Wolf with FOX NEWS channel in New York--morning Kathy.

(NEWS BREAK)

SNOW: President Clinton wants to make prescription medicine cheaper, medical experimentation safer, and redefine AIDS as a national security threat. Here to talk about your health and maybe share a word or two about the upcoming presidential race, is Donna Shalala, secretary of health and human services. Also with us, Mara Liasson of National Public Radio and FOX NEWS.

Prescription drug benefit, people are talking about. First question, if there's no prescription drug benefit in the upcoming budget, will the president veto it?

SHALALA: I can't say that he will. We intend to get a prescription drug benefit. We'd like to get it in the context of medical reform of Medicare, obviously, but we need it because it will improve the health of seniors. No one would design that program today without a prescription drug benefit. There's no reason not to do it. The president has budgeted it, and we have the resources to do it.

LIASSON: But it sounds like you're saying that he might be willing to leave office without expanding Medicare to include prescription drugs.

SHALALA: He doesn't want to leave office without expanding Medicare with prescription drugs, but we need a good benefit. We also need the patient bill of rights. We have lots of things before the Congress, and we intend to fight right down to the last day to get those things, because they'll improve health. This is about health; it's not about politics.

LIASSON: Let me ask you about one of the key components of your prescription drug coverage plan, which is to let these pharmacy benefit managers negotiate on behalf of Medicare with the drug companies to get lower prices for Medicare recipients. Now, there was an article today in the newspaper that said, private companies who use these same pharmacy benefit managers have not been seeing success. Prices are not coming down; these benefit managers are not doing the job that you expect them to do. How are you going to avoid having that same problem with Medicare?

SHALALA: Well, first of all, what we want to do is use the existing private system to negotiate on the behalf of Medicare; that's number one. Prescription drugs are increasing. Private sector benefit managers have not been able to get as deep discounts, apparently, as the private sector, the people that are paying for their employees, would like them to get.

SHALALA: There is nothing other than this kind of negotiation with the drug companies, unless you want to go to price controls. We do not want to go to price controls. So we need to depend on the existing structure. Perhaps it needs to be beefed up, but the existing structure is for these private benefit managers to negotiate with the pharmaceuticals to get discounts.

LIASSON: Right, but if they're not getting those deep discounts

for the private sector, how are they going to get them for you?

SHALALA: Well, first of all, we know they are getting discounts. We don't know how deep the discounts are because of the way the system works. In fact, it's not just visible how deep the discounts are and who's keeping what, because the pharmaceutical companies are not revealing that to the public.

We do know that people that get their drugs through their health care plans pay less than people who don't. You pay a sticker price if you don't go through a plan, if your employer does not purchase drugs on your behalf. So we do know there's some discount involved. We would like Medicare beneficiaries to take advantage of that.

SNOW: Secretary Shalala, the president wants us now to describe AIDS as a national security threat. A lot of people are saying, how on Earth can that possibly be the case? Why should we think of AIDS as a national security threat?

SHALALA: Because it is. Look at what's happening in Africa today. Basically, AIDS is uncoupling the economic gains that we've had in Africa as African companies are forced to shift more resources to their health system from their economic investments. Very high percentages of military now have AIDS in southern Africa, and it includes transport workers, miners, bureaucrats.

SNOW: So we will do what? I mean, we're spending hundreds of millions anyway.

SHALALA: What we need to do and what the president has proposed is that we, along with other international organizations, fund prevention campaigns, help the African companies to develop strategies. After all, AIDS can be prevented, but it requires very intense strategies, very good organization. And then in addition to that, drugs have to be available to prevent mother and child transmission.

SNOW: But what you're talking is getting people not to have

sex. It requires coercion, doesn't it?

SHALALA: It doesn't require coercion.

(CROSSTALK)

SNOW: We're talking about safe sex for adults, we're talking about abstinence for younger people, and we clearly are talking about everyone understanding how AIDS is transmitted.

Now, why does this create a national security problem? If it, in fact, takes the military apart, if it creates millions of orphans in Africa, who are subject to recruitment by these rogue gangs who run around these countries, then we, in fact, have security risks. In addition to that, the economy of these countries is coming apart because of the very high percentages of people who have AIDS.

LIASSON: It sounds like you just described why AIDS in Africa is a national security threat to those African countries. How is it a national security threat to the United States?

SHALALA: Because what happens in Eastern Europe, what happens in South Asia, what happens in Africa, eventually affects us. It affects our access to markets, it affects whether those countries are stabilized politically, which can unravel if, in fact, large portions of their military that keep their security or their leaders, next generation of leaders, simply aren't there because of AIDS.

So it's a complex problem for those countries, but it's also a problem for us.

SHALALA: We can no longer prevent a disease from coming to this country, whether it's AIDS or any other disease.

LIASSON: You're saying that the United States would be more threatened by AIDS as an illness if it is out of control in Africa.

SHALALA: I'm saying that there's a relationship between our own economic success and markets being open abroad and political stability in many countries of the world. Why are we investing and continuing to invest

in Russia? Eastern Europe also has the AIDS problem, Russia has it, India has it, every country in the world that we do business with but, more importantly, that we need to be politically stable, is suffering from these huge--onslaught of AIDS, and that makes the relationship economically, and from a security point of view, relevant to Americans.

SNOW: Two final questions on that. Number one, Senate majority leader Trent Lott on this show last week said: We're not going to pay for that in the Senate. What's the administration's response?

SHALALA: I think that's tragic and dangerous. Once before in this country homophobia, in fact...

SNOW: OK, are you accusing him of being homophobic just because he disagrees with you on this?

SHALALA: No, I'm not accusing him of being homophobic. But once before we hesitated when we saw the disease unravel in our own country. We were too slow in getting on top of it, and many people died. We know that infectious diseases know no borders, that they can affect this country. And in this case, it's both in our economic interests and our national security interest to work on these infectious diseases abroad, whether they be AIDS or tuberculosis or malaria. In the end, it's in this country's interest to reduce the incidence of disease wherever it occurs.

SNOW: So we're going to need information on who has it and who's transmitting it.

SHALALA: We need information. We need to work with these countries around the world to help them deal with these infectious diseases. It's part of our self-interest, economically and politically, to reduce diseases where they occur.

SNOW: How can you attack it without intruding on the privacy of the people who are spreading it?

Well, we've done that in this country. We've done an enormous amount in this country to reduce the incidence of AIDS by changing

people's behavior--their sexual behavior, mother-to-child transmission has been reduced through the introduction of testing for pregnant women. It is possible to change behavior, sexual behavior. Or, in the case of Eastern Europe, we're talking about the transmission because of drug use. So, we--working on the drug issue in Eastern Europe is also important.

LIASSON: Speaking of privacy, a lot of people are now going to these medical web sites and are concerned that their medical information that they exchange over the Internet is not being protected. Now, I know the administration has tried to protect medical privacy in other areas. What do you think the government do about the web sites?

(CROSSTALK)

SHALALA: There is some state protection. We still don't have regs in place. We hope to get regs for electronic transmission in place by the end of the summer. There is some voluntary work going on by these web sites, but the fact is that you can get any information, not necessarily accurate, about your health. You've got to be careful of the web site that you get on. And everybody is using web sites for second and third opinions. And, so, there is no government regulation. It is an issue of quality, and, again, of quality health care.

Obviously, the FCC is looking into it. Our concern at the moment is privacy on electronic records. We hope to get those regulations in place because Congress failed to act. This is increasingly an issue. But, again, it's health care and quality health care. People ought to be very careful about the information they get.

SNOW: Speaking of quality health care, gene therapy. It seems promising. Do we need to regulate it further or let it go?

SHALALA: Well, first of all, in terms of gene therapy, there are huge ethical questions, obviously. There are also patient protection issues. And the institutions, whether they're private or public, have a responsibility to the people that are in these clinical trials to make

sure they reveal what's going on. And that's more than self-regulation.

We intend to increase our oversight. We've moved the office in charge of patient protections actually to the secretary's office. I intend to make a major senior appointment.

But in the end, it's the great research universities, the academic health centers, and the private companies. This--America's confidence in researchers is going to unravel if these researchers aren't extremely careful in their conduct of this research.

SNOW: OK, secretary of health and human services, Donna Shalala, thanks for joining us.

SHALALA: You're welcome.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

SNOW: Social Security has emerged again as a hot topic. The key issue: Should you be able to invest part of your Social Security payment in the stock market? George W. Bush says yes; Al Gore says no, and our next guest says he has the best way of all. He's Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan.

Also here our Fox News panel: Fred Barnes of The Weekly Standard and from National Public Radio, Mara Liasson and Juan Williams. Brit Hume has the morning off.

Senator Moynihan, in the past week, Vice President Gore has said over and over and over that it's risky and extreme to invest in the stock market in the context of Social Security. Do you agree?

MOYNIHAN: I think we're going to have to talk this through in the next campaign--in this campaign. I would hope that the two candidates, Mr. Bush and the vice president, spend an hour on television with you fellows talking about it.

We have a new idea of large consequence. It would finish out a century of innovation in social insurance, which begins in--up here in Maryland in 1901 when they passed the first workman's compensation

bill--New York did, Illinois did. The Supreme Court declared them unconstitutional, took a lot of that to work. But gradually, most states have workman's comp. Wasn't hard to lose an arm in a factory in those days.

Then we began to get mothers' pensions, city--states did it, New York, Wisconsin. In 1935, the federal government comes in, and we get retirement benefits, unemployment insurance, retirement benefits, and we make national the mothers' pensions as Aid to Families and Dependent Children.

And 30 years later we get Medicare. What remains? One thing. The one thing the lower half of American workers don't have is any accumulation of wealth. Every one of us here has a 401(k). I'm in the federal thrift savings plan. You take up to 10 percent of your salary, the federal government will match five. Over 40 years--well, I mean, a child of the Depression, I signed up for government bonds.

WILLIAMS: Senator, you know one thing that strikes me in this is it's not a disagreement between Republicans and Democrats that stands out. It's a disagreement inside the Democratic Party between you and Mr. Gore. And on your side, we have Bob Kerrey, the senator from Nebraska, we also have John McCain, a Republican from Arizona, and you're standing there and, in essence, endorsing the Bush plan and by, you know, communicating therefore that maybe you disapprove of your own presidential candidate's attitude on this issue.

MOYNIHAN: Juan, fair point. But I haven't seen a Bush plan, nor have you. And I haven't told you the first half of our proposal Senator Kerrey, and I have put in the bill S. 21 two years ago.

We have to make some changes in the Social Security itself. The first is to correct the consumer price index by 0.8 percent--not much, but it's crucial.

We have to start bringing in all new hires in state and local

government. In 1935, we didn't--it wasn't clear the federal government could tax a state government. So about a quarter are not in the system, they get it on the side. Two other small things, and you are in actuarial balance for 75 years.

Then the last two points in FICA, the 12.4 percent tax, you don't need. So you give the worker the option to just take his 1 percent and the employer keeps it himself and has a little more money, or put the 2 percent into a series of savings plans the federal government would put in place, like we have for federal employees. And the average person on the--you know, lower-income people would come to the retirement and they'd have a little wealth.

(CROSSTALK)

WILLIAMS: That's if the stock market performs as it has performed in the past.

MOYNIHAN: As it has performed for 200 years, yes.

(CROSSTALK)

WILLIAMS: You don't think it's riskier, though?

MOYNIHAN: Well, first of all, you're not risking anything like your retirement benefits. They're fixed. They're guaranteed. This is just an extra thing. And if you put it in government bonds, you get a lower rate. The markets over--we're not talking about 15-month cycle but 40 years.

BARNES: Senator, the way you describe it, it would have been a perfect reform--social security plan for President Clinton to sign, and it would be the biggest part of his legacy, and yet he has rejected your plan that would include these individual investment accounts. Why did the president reject it?

MOYNIHAN: Well, get him on and ask him.

BARNES: I've tried to. But I know you've talked to him.

MOYNIHAN: The--it's maybe too new. Maybe it's going to take a

while. It took unemployment insurance--you know, the American Association for Labor Legislation was formed in 1904. It took 30 years to get unemployment insurance.

SNOW: But Senator ...

LIASSON: But Senator, everybody is focusing on private accounts. It sounds like George W. Bush's idea that through the miracle of the stock market we can make Social Security solvent for baby boomers. It sounds like Al Gore is saying if only we use some general revenues, the equivalent of the interest savings on the debt, we can keep it. But no one is talking about those two little things that you say are so easy, which is adjusting the COLAs and bringing more people in. Those are bigger hurdles than you make them sound.

MOYNIHAN: They're not complicated. They're hard.

LIASSON: Yes.

MOYNIHAN: Take Medicare. If you were to say, now, what will be the state of genetic medicine in 50 years' time? Five years, you'd be baffled. But if you want to know how many 50-year-olds there will be in this country in 50 years' time, plus or minus, the actuaries give you an answer. It's a tough bullet to chew, but it's defensible. We're getting an accurate price adjustment. And you'll have the extra monies, which allow ordinary workers to acquire some capital in their life and leave--have something in their will.

LIASSON: But do you think that either George W. Bush or Al Gore are talking about the steps that are necessary to keep Social Security solvent?

MOYNIHAN: No. And if you don't do that first, you can't do this other. But why not do it first? Why not wrap up a century of social insurance with every American retiring some wealth.

SNOW: Well, this is an idea Republicans no doubt could endorse at least as a starting point.

MOYNIHAN: Well, they should endorse because it means they'll all be Republicans. Am I right?

(LAUGHTER)

SNOW: The question is--have you got any signals from Trent Lott or anybody else that the Republicans may play ball with you guys on this?

MOYNIHAN: No. It hasn't yet been sat down and said, OK, we're going to do something. That's why Senator McCain and Kerrey and I have proposed--next year we set up a congressional commission with the commissioner of Social Security and work this out in six months. If you're going to do it, you can do it in six days. If you're not going to do it, six years won't do it.

SNOW: Is it safe to say you think these changes are inevitable?

MOYNIHAN: I think it's a good idea that people should have something they can leave to their kids.

SNOW: The vice president says he opposes it, but do you have any doubt if he became president he would support it?

MOYNIHAN: I think the vice president would--would--wants to look at the details more, and I'm sure we can do that. He's asked to talk it over. It just has never come up.

BARNES: In the campaign, George W. Bush says he's only going to talk about principles of reforming Social Security, but not exactly present a bill such as one like yours. Is that going to be enough for him? Can he get by with that? Would you like him to give more details?

MOYNIHAN: I'd like him to acknowledge that you have to do certain--make certain corrections in the basic program after which you could have this other revenue stream, which you could, on an optional basis; you choose. If you don't want to do it, don't do it.

LIASSON: But you're saying you can't have private accounts if you don't do the other steps first.

MOYNIHAN: That's right.

LIASSON: If you don't make adjustments in taxes and benefits.

MOYNIHAN: And much more. If you don't do those things, the system will be bankrupt in about 15 years.

LIASSON: What do you think about Al Gore's proposal to use interest savings, and affect general revenues to beef up Social Security?

MOYNIHAN: It's a perfectly respectable idea, but it's very much at odds with what Franklin Roosevelt wanted. He wanted a retirement system in which you have your number, your account, it's your money, you paid it in, you get it back, and no one's doing you any favor.

WILLIAMS: All right. Senator Moynihan, let me come to politics for a second. A few months ago when you endorsed Bill Bradley in the Democratic primaries, you said there's no way Al Gore can win the presidential contest against a Republican in November. I guess you've changed your view. Am I right?

MOYNIHAN: Well, I think there was--he wasn't getting very far at that time, but he changed his clothes, changed his campaign headquarters, changed his manners, he's doing very well.

(LAUGHTER)

WILLIAMS: But I think he's still far behind. I think he's like 26 points behind among white males, I read the other day.

MOYNIHAN: Well, he's probably 26 points ahead among white females, too.

WILLIAMS: But he's not doing well in the swing states. He's not doing well in the key swing states that are going to decide this election.

MOYNIHAN: I'm not here to talk politics. I'm talking social policy, and I want your children to have some wealth when their time comes.

SNOW: Well, speaking of wealth then, let's get back to the nub of this. Your party has been the primary--the primary obstacle when it comes to privatizing any part of Social Security. Do you have any hope

that unions will ever say, OK, we're going to give up our opposition to this?

MOYNIHAN: Well, all the union members in the American federation of government employees already have a thrift savings plan. And I guess I have to say watch that word ``privatize,' ' not privatizing; it's just having a savings account.

SNOW: OK, savings accountizing.

(CROSSTALK)

MOYNIHAN: We've had it in place for decades and the federal government works very well.

SNOW: So you think Democrats will in fact eventually support this?

MOYNIHAN: No, we have a great capacity for missing opportunities. We've been showing that for the last 20, 30 years.

SNOW: OK, Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, thanks again for joining us.

MOYNIHAN: Thanks all.

SNOW: We're going to take a break. When we return, Dr. Laura is back with a new book and some ongoing controversies.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

SNOW: Dr. Laura Schlessinger is the author of a new book, ``Parenthood By Proxy.' ' She's also the focal point of a lot of old controversies. Here to discuss both, Dr. Laura Schlessinger.

Welcome.

SCHLESSINGER: Good morning.

SNOW: Let me--one thing that I'm fascinated by your writing this book, that a couple years ago you had a religious conversion.

SCHLESSINGER: Yes.

SNOW: Tell us about that.

SCHLESSINGER: Well, my father was a nice Jewish boy from

Brooklyn, and while liberating northern Italy at the end of the war, met my mother, this gorgeous Italian Catholic woman. They got married and came here and the religious holy war started. The sum result was that there was virtually no religion in my life at all.

Right and wrong was taught seriously, let me tell you that, but it was, you know, based on your dad will kill you if you do that. You know, that sort of thing. Well, once you move out of the house, your dad doesn't have access to you. It's a whole different world. And I was brought up without God. I didn't have much of a respect for the concept of God or religion. It just didn't have any place and didn't seem meaningful. But as you mature, and especially when I had Derrick, something about that miracle...

SNOW: Your 14-year-old son.

SCHLESSINGER: Yes, he's now 14, 6 feet tall--that somehow started to touch me, and I started to read more about Judaism and just got more involved. And slowly but surely the whole family did a conversion, because I was Jewish through my dad, so that required a conversion because it needs to legally be through your mom.

But it really focused me on something that I'd been struggling with my whole life and that is, what is the point? You know, you can be successful, you can do all these things and feed yourself and feed yourself, and this is a lot of what I talk about in the book. We have constant search for satisfaction, for happiness, for glory, for power, for whatever, but there's a little hole in your heart where things like God and children and a spouse and family ought to be. And fortunately, I was blessed enough to sort of be nudged along to discover that.

SNOW: But this is interesting. This was long after you'd become a household name, long after you'd done best-selling books, long after your radio show had taken off.

SCHLESSINGER: No, not really, not really. It's been a span of,

I would say, eight years, so it's not that soon. I've only been syndicated five.

SNOW: OK. But the process really finally sort of solidified...

SCHLESSINGER: Yes, when I was starting out, I was doing more shrinklet stuff, which has more to do with, gosh, you. And, you know, having gone to college in the '60's, I was there for the changing mentality, which was at that time only college people. You know, ``I'm going to do my own thing and if you don't like it it's too bad for you.'' Unfortunately we've gotten to a state in our country where almost all adults are saying that. Even in today's New York Times magazine the section--I only had a moment to look at it and my heart sank: ``no God, no values, no ideals, everybody doing,'' and I thought, they listen to me.

And it's really sad because our children are paying the price. When I started on radio a span of 25 years ago, kids would call and say: Johnny doesn't like me. I don't like my ankles. my mother won't let me go to Mary's house. It was kid stuff.

Now I have kids as young as five, sadly, calling me, ``I never get to see my dad because he's living with his girlfriend,'' and/or, ``Mom moved 7,000 miles away and we can never see Dad and they're screaming at each other all the time,'' or, gee, just the other day, ``I'm 14''--what we do to our kids does choke me up--``I'm 14 and I want to know what I should do because my mother has her boyfriend come and sleep over, and it makes me uncomfortable. And I told her and she says, 'This is my life.'''

So we used to as parents have the notion that our lives were constructed around giving, the ``we'' notion. Now we expect everybody and everything in our environment, especially our kiddos, to move their lives around my needs, my wants, my entitlements, my whims.

And desires are always a thing of the future. I mean, instead of being satisfied and enjoying what we have now, desire takes you out of that place says, ``But I want that.''

SNOW: Again, the point--there are two points in the book to come through: Number one, that parenthood is, yes, about love, but commitment.

SCHLESSINGER: Yes.

SNOW: That's what you were just talking about there.

Second, again, this role of religion.

It sounds as if one of the things is--as you talk about perfecting man, what you're saying is we need more religion. Is that going to be playing a more prominent role in what you write and say and do?

SCHLESSINGER: Well, it has already. It sort of inched in, as I was struggling with it myself. Because for somebody for her whole life who has pretty much tried to, you know, be my own authority, you would imagine that it would be very difficult for me to say there's an ultimate authority.

SCHLESSINGER: But instead of it being kind of a tug of war, I found that it gave me peace and direction and support. And it makes a cohesion, which is why I nag people who call me, ``We're getting married in three months, we just love each other. I'm Catholic and he's Buddhist, but it's not going to be a problem, we've decided,'' and the religious holy wars--like they did in my family, so I have some personal knowledge of that--start down the line. And then instead of the religion being embracing of God and prayer and values together, it becomes a fight for turf. And that's not what's supposed to happen to kids in their home.

SNOW: Do you ever, when you get calls from adults on your show, just say to yourself, where do they find people this stupid?

SCHLESSINGER: Well, no, because it isn't stupid so much as people--reasonably decent, caring people, who have the moral intuition that what they're doing is wrong, with their careers, their homes, their spouses, their kids--are completely undermined by family, by neighborhoods, by media, by psych types, by soc types, who tell them it's

about you. I had one woman who called me, she had a master's degree, and when she got pregnant decided to stay home with my kid. She calls her mother and tells her, ``Mom, I'm pregnant, and I'm going to stay home with the kid. This is all so wonderful.'' And she hears her mother say, ``What about you?'' And she said, you know, at that moment I understood why I spent 20 years in therapy, because my childhood was about my mother, not about us as a family, not about me as a developing child with needs, to be nurtured, to be taught, to be disciplined, to be held accountable.

And we have to change that because we're destroying our culture. We're not adding to our hearts. When we take any kind of poll on how happy are you, it's in the toilet. So this is an experiment that has failed, yet we're persisting.

SNOW: Well, one of the things you're best known for a sense of moral clarity. And I think that fits into what we've been talking about with religion. But it's also gotten you in trouble in a sense that gay groups are now putting together a web site--stopdrlaura.com--arguing that your views on homosexuality expose you as somebody who is not a person who's at all tolerant of differences.

SCHLESSINGER: Well, the word ``tolerant'' has been used to now overlap and embrace total acceptance. You know, this country has become balkanized, fractionated, into special interest groups everywhere who have one point. Now, life is not that simple. My one point could damage the reality of you. And I have to be sensitive to that.

But what happens with special interest groups is that part of their function is to search and destroy anybody who disagrees with even any small part of the agenda.

SNOW: The key--the phrase that constantly gets repeated, you've been throw this question a zillion times, ``biological error,'' when you refer to homosexuals.

My Ph.D. is in physiology, so when I talk about biology, I'm

talking about it from a bio-clinical point of view. And that is clearly--the biology of the system is heterosexual, to produce babies. That's all I meant.

I have never named-called anybody. That's all a construct that came around me, and it's part of how the attack happens. You're misrepresented, fibbed about, totally misconstrued, so that you look like the demon. My 20 million listeners know differently. The people who read my books know differently. And they've got their mission; I've got mine. And mine is to save and protect and nurture children, and I'm real focused. And I'm from Brooklyn, and we don't let much get in our way.

SNOW: The first lady says she has the same agenda. What do you think of her views on child...

SCHLESSINGER: I don't think we have the same agenda. I think it starts out sounding the same: Kids need somebody to help them with their homework; kids need somebody to care about them. I mean, I'm right there going yes, yes, that's what I've been saying. And then all of a sudden it is, ``So we'll build a building and hire people to do that.'' No. They're called Mommy and Daddy. And my job, as I see it, is to put the will to be Mommy and Daddy back in. I mean, you're a busy guy. You're in the media. You're very important. You deal with news. So you could be consumed all the time by your career, but our chats--while we were getting powdered--was that you are so committed to making sure your children each have special time with you, alone, much less together, much less with the family.

No matter how modest one's life is or how magnificent one's life is, with respect to, you know, acclaim, the basic bottom line is, what is your priority, and what are you going to sacrifice to make that happen? And that's where we've lost it. We've lost it right there.

And our kids are becoming crass. The violence, the sex, the depression in kids, the suicide--it's there for a reason, and it isn't

because jocks make fun of them.

SNOW: Should--you've talked before about people who deal with faithless marriages or embarrassing ones, that they need to sometimes break up.

SNOW: Diagnosing from afar, what do you Rudy Giuliani and his wife ought to do?

SCHLESSINGER: I honestly don't know. I just read the tabloid nonsense about them in regular papers because I don't read the legitimate tabloids. And considering what's been written about me, I don't believe 90 percent of what I read, so I don't think I should comment.

SNOW: Final question. Are you going on the air in September with ``Schlessinger''?

SCHLESSINGER: Yes, everybody but me hates the name. They figure people won't be able to say it. Everybody can say it. It's September 11th.

SNOW: All right. Dr. Laura Schlessinger, thanks for joining us and have a safe trip home.

SCHLESSINGER: Thank you.

SNOW: Up next, our panel on the first strikes on the New York Senate race ad war.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

SNOW: This Democrat calls this Republican a racketeer. Hillary goes commercial. And the love bug strikes the web.

And welcome back. It's panel time for Fred, Mara and Juan. Brit still has the morning off.

Let's begin by talking a little bit about the Senate race in New York, or at least we think the match-up's still is going to be Hillary Rodham Clinton versus Rudy Giuliani. One sure sign, they're both on the air with ads. We're going to give you snippets of both, beginning with Hillary Rodham Clinton. Take a look.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

ANNOUNCER: For 30 years, she's fought for children and families. As a New York senator, she'll fight for better schools and health care for children. Hillary, put her to work for all of us.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

RUDY GIULIANI: I want to be a senator because I was born in this state. I want to be a senator because I served this state. I have ideas that I believe work, that I've put into practice.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

SNOW: OK, there you have it. Quick review. Fred?

BARNES: Well, you didn't show the part of the ad that really had some edge. I mean, he said he was born in New York. Obviously, Hillary Clinton was not born in New York. She's from Arkansas was born in Illinois.

But I don't think either--I don't think these are the ads we're going to be seeing on the air in October. Then they're going to have much sharper edge. There were some scenes in the Giuliani ads from upstate New York. That's where he needs to make some gains. If he runs as well as Republicans normally do up there, and he'll already be better than Republicans do in New York City, he'll win. But he's got to make--he's got to do better Upstate.

LIASSON: The other thing that you didn't show, our favorite parts you left out, was Rudy talks a lot about himself...

SNOW: Talk to the producers.

LIASSON: About himself and his personality. He uses the word ``real'' and ``authentic,'' reminding people that whatever you might think about Rudy Giuliani, you probably do think he's real and authentic; you might not think that about Mrs. Clinton. And he says, you know, if you're going to agree with me, you really will, if you disagree, you really won't.

I mean, this--I think that he's got his finger on the pulse of what this race is about. It's about two gargantuan personalities. Hillary's was a much more traditional ad. It's about her qualifications other than as first lady. And I think if the race comes down to personalities, Rudy's onto something here.

WILLIAMS: Well, from an insider's point of view, these are establishing ads, these establish the personalities in the race. And what was interesting to me was the absence of Bill Clinton in establishing Hillary Clinton. I think in large part that's because she's having trouble with women voters, and so she's trying to establish herself as a strong woman independent of Bill. But in a sense, it's difficult because much of the reason that people are so sympathetic to Hillary is they think she got a terrible deal from Bill.

SNOW: Well, one of the interesting things, though, you look at the ads too. Giuliani does his own voice over, he does his own speaking on the commercial, whereas somebody else is doing it, and you've got these sepia-toned pictures of Hillary Rodham Clinton, which at least to me, seemed to place her at sort of an arm's distance from the viewers. Am I wrong on this, just the techniques?

BARNES: Yes, I think you made a little too much out of that. I mean, she's trying to warm up her image as an independent woman. I predict, Juan, that President Clinton will be in there campaigning for her. He is very popular in New York, still. He'll be there.

SNOW: Speaking of one of the other interesting things this week is allegations now that Rudy Giuliani has a girlfriend. Her name is being mentioned everywhere. The New York Times, which has been prissy about some stories, is jumping into this one. What do you make of this?

LIASSON: Well, you know it's interesting, at least yesterday in The New York Post, New York City reacted with a big shrug. It seems like New Yorkers just don't care. Maybe New York City is turning into Paris,

where politicians can be married and have their wife living under the same roof, but still have a girlfriend.

WILLIAMS: You are being really crazy on this one.

LIASSON: It's OK...

WILLIAMS: What are you talking about? It's Gracie Mansion. She lives in one wing, he lives in the other wing.

LIASSON: You know...

WILLIAMS: They've been separated forever.

LIASSON: Maybe they should get a legal separation.

BARNES: Sounds like the Clinton White House.

LIASSON: Maybe they should get legally separated then. I mean, I don't know how this is going to affect--I can tell you certainly the cancer seems to have helped his image, humanized him. Apparently the initial reports of the girlfriend did the same thing.

But I don't know over the long run, if he continues to basically live in the same house with his wife and have a girlfriend, what voters all over New York state will think.

SNOW: Wait, you just say so he's sick and he's lonely and therefore people...

WILLIAMS: He's not making it seem like they're still married, they're right together and you've got this mistress on the side.

LIASSON: Marriage vows mean something, they are still married. It means something, otherwise why not just get divorced. There's nothing...

(CROSSTALK)

WILLIAMS: What about the

(CROSSTALK)

LIASSON: ... modern life sacraments...

WILLIAMS: What about the children?

SNOW: Thank you very much for that, Mara Liasson. I agree,

we're cutting it off there, let's move onto another topic.

Very briefly, we mentioned there in the flash points, Fred, there's this wonderful war going on in Washington. Patrick Kennedy, head of the congressional campaign committee for Democrats in the House of Representatives, going after Tom DeLay, accusing him of being a racketeer because he's got a series of these political action committees that he's throwing money to.

BARNES: Well, look, this was a frivolous suit. It was a shot across the bow, at the same time. Remember, Patrick Kennedy doesn't do squat without the approval of Richard Gephardt, the House Democratic leader who put him that job of running House--of helping House candidates in the first place. So, you know, the divisions there are so much wider than we even thought they were, between Democrats and Republicans. It is amazing in a very, very bitter situation.

I don't know--I mean, this suit isn't going to affect anything. They're not going to get discovery where they learn a lot of stuff.

WILLIAMS: Well, you know what it could affect...

LIASSON: Maybe they'll get a response from the Republicans, and then they'll be out of it...

(CROSSTALK)

WILLIAMS: Exactly right, that if the Republicans now file suit against the Democrats, then you're into a real fray. And you know what? It brings back attention to campaign finance reform.

BARNES: There is a real fray already, Juan.

WILLIAM: Right, terrible.

SNOW: But campaign finance reform--of course, Patrick Kennedy took money from the Hsi Lai Buddhist temple. I mean, this is one of these things where--when politicians, Mara, start lecturing each other about campaign finance reform, most people just say, oy.

LIASSON: Yes. The only thing that I think the Democrats were

trying to accomplish with this politically is that DeLay is a galvanizing figure for some Democrats, he's taken the place of Newt Gingrich, and they want him to look like a mobster. They sued him under RICO, which is the anti-racketeering statute. And that's what they're hoping to do. I don't think they'll get very far.

BARNES: Look, Gingrich was one thing, a huge, larger-than-life figure that everybody knew about and a lot of people reacted unfavorably to. The public has never heard of Tom DeLay...

(CROSSTALK)

WILLIAMS: Yes, but you know, the idea that Tom DeLay might be extorting money from contributors, putting pressure on them in exchange for favors.

BARNES: The Democrats don't do that, lean on contributors?

WILLIAMS: Well, I don't know.

BARNES: Come on, Juan.

WILLIAMS: The idea is that Tom DeLay has ratcheted up the game here in Washington more than anybody ever.

BARNES: Oh, please, please.

WILLIAMS: And that's what they're going after.

BARNES: He hasn't. No, come on. They all do it. They lean on people, they twist arms. They give donors the impression that if you don't give us money you're not going to have access, you're going to have a hard time in Washington, and so on.

WILLIAMS: That's not new.

BARNES: Like it or not that's the--that is the way the game worked before Tom DeLay came to town, it's the way it will be--it'll play after he leaves.

WILLIAMS: But that's not what they're speaking to. What they're speaking to...

BARNES: That's exactly what they're speaking to.

WILLIAMS: ... all these shell entities, all these small groups that he's started around the country, that act to raise money without any kind of federal oversight. That's what the Democrats are after, and that's why they're using the racketeering act.

BARNES: It will go nowhere.

SNOW: OK.

WILLIAMS: We'll see.

SNOW: One issue that may go somewhere, Mara, the Democrats are going hard after George W. Bush on gun control.

LIASSON: That's right.

SNOW: There's this gun control ad right now where you've got a state official in Iowa saying, basically, you know, ``We own George Bush. If he's president, we'll have him in the White House.''

Let's take a look at the ad and then you can react to it.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

KAYNE ROBINSON, VICE PRESIDENT, NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION:
Then we'll have a president where we work out of their office.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

LIASSON: That's an NRA official and, of course, the Clinton administration, Al Gore and the president jumped on that and said, ``Aha, what did we tell you?''. You know, ``George Bush is in the pocket of the gun lobby.''

Now it did give Bush a pretty good opportunity to say, ``No, I'm not. Whatever these people in this ad are saying, I'm my own man and I'm going to have my own office.''

Look, gun control is an issue, but it can cut both ways. I mean, interestingly enough, some of the polls have showed that Gore and Bush are tied, if not Bush doing a little better when it says--who's better handling guns. However, among the Democratic base, obviously, it's a good issue.

I thought George W. Bush did something that was a little unusual and potentially suspect this week. He said Al Gore was a member of the NRA. He had no evidence to prove it. So far the Gore campaign says they have no evidence to prove it. And Bush kind threw this accusation out there, just the kind of accusation he hates when it's against himself. He says, ``I don't want to be in the position of disproving a negative.'' He wants to say Al Gore isn't so good on guns either.

WILLIAMS: Well, I think it's--Fred is going to say, you know, this issue isn't going to play out in November. And I think, you know, gun control hasn't been a defining issue. It could be a wash.

But with those million mothers coming to Washington next weekend, you're going to see I think a heightened level of concern. And--I think the dynamics on gun control may be shifting in this country.

BARNES: No, they aren't shifting. And you will see a heightened level of concern among the media. That's who gets heightened by the whole gun control issue, or as President Clinton calls it ``common-sense gun safety,'' because gun control is a bad phrase. The public doesn't like it. It's like ``privatization.''

Look, everyone expected after Columbine that somehow the chemistry of the gun control issue would shift in favor of the gun controllers. It hasn't. Quite the contrary. NRA membership is soaring, and the notion that we should use force...

WILLIAMS: Who told you that? The NRA?

BARNES: Well, I don't know. Prove the negative.

LIASSON: Well, wait a minute...

BARNES: No, look, the notion that we should enforce existing gun laws now and get to new gun laws later, that idea--which is the NRA's--has won the public.

LIASSON: Well, except that the NRA opposed all those existing gun laws when they were proposed. They didn't want them on the books at

all, and now they want them enforced.

However, you know, the other thing that has happened since Columbine: George W. Bush has changed on gun control. He wasn't for mandatory trigger locks; now he is. He has made some steps in the direction of the gun controllers, whatever you want to call them.

BARNES: Which is why that ad won't work.

SNOW: OK. Let's switch to another topic we have teased, which is the love bug. Did you open up any viruses on your computer?

WILLIAMS: Well, no, I didn't, but my wife did and the computer is gone.

(LAUGHTER)

So now--and then she got mad at me because I didn't want to hear her tale of tears.

But the thing is, and I think this is right, that if the system, if the web is so vulnerable, you really have to reconsider the amount of investment we have made in it, not just in terms of money. I'm talking about, if you look at a big company and you look at even our families' files, all that we've put on there, if it's so vulnerable, we shouldn't trust it.

BARNES: That's a good point. I got 18 ``I love yous.''

LIASSON: Oh, Fred, that's so sweet.

WILLIAMS: Did you get the one from me, Fred?

BARNES: I don't know.

BARNES: I deleted them all, so I'll never know. But it is--if one hacker in the Philippines can paralyze the financial industry and so much else--NPR ...

LIASSON: Yes, we were down.

BARNES: The Weekly Standard. It shows how vulnerable the world web is.

WILLIAMS: I agree.

SNOW: I know I've talked to a number of--media organizations seem to have been uniquely affected. Fox was down for an afternoon. Some radio stations...

LIASSON: Yes, we were down.

SNOW: ... were down two, three, four days, as a result of that. I mean, just completely wiped out.

And the other interesting thing is, Fred, we noted in the news broadcast earlier, is that evidently this is a bug that may have originated in the Philippines but it may have been a German guy in Australia who was, I mean...

WILLIAMS: You never know.

SNOW: You never know. Well, OK. We'll have our kids explain it to us. Thank you, panel. Now we're going to give you the pick of the litter from this week's

Our scorcher of the week comes from RHamm (ph):

LETTER: ``While watching Tony Snow interview Trent Lott this morning--meaning last week--''I thought I might be witness to the first anchor man love fest with a congressman on national TV. What a puffball interview. I thought for awhile I was watching 'The Dating Game.' I think Tony would be an excellent replacement for Kathy Lee.''

SNOW: Dear R.H., sounds like a good idea. I mean, I suppose the money's great. But I don't know. You see, the problem is I'd have to lose weight and have my dresses taken in.

(LAUGHTER)

That's hideous.

When we return, my parting thoughts on unwanted Valentines.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

SNOW: Well, it's not unusual for people in love to forget things, so it's fitting that an ``I love you'' virus this week wiped out computer memories worldwide.

Not surprisingly, members of Congress tried to get into the story by promising to hold hearings. But everybody knows you can't kill computer viruses with a law, especially bugs with exotic international origins.

Besides, politicians should have known something was fishy. Does anybody believe for a minute that lawmakers, upon seeing hundreds of ``I love you'' e-mails didn't smell a hoax?

But then again, something more sinister may have been afoot. In a seemingly unrelated cyber-story, the Clinton administration dispatched its former top legal minds to Capitol Hill this week. They're trying to explain why the White House failed to give Congress nearly a quarter-million e-mails, covering everything from Whitewater to the affair Lewinsky.

Here's a succinct, comprehensive summary of the testimony given by former White House lawyers Cheryl Mills and Charles F.C. Ruff:

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

RUFF: I can't recall.

MILLS: I don't know the answer to your question.

RUFF: I do not have a recollection.

MILLS: I don't recall.

RUFF: I do not know.

MILLS: I don't recall.

RUFF: As I've said, Mr. Chairman, in response to your previous questions, I do not recall.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

SNOW: You don't think the love bug virus got to them, too, do you?

That's it for today. Have a great week. Remember to start your Sundays right here on Fox News Sunday.

END

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CREATION DATE/TIME:10-MAY-2000 14:56:27.00

SUBJECT: Joe Lockhart briefing

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TEXT:

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

May 10, 2000

PRESS BRIEFING BY

JOE LOCKHART

The James S. Brady Press Briefing Room

1:45 P.M. EDT

MR. LOCKHART: Let me start with a brief announcement today. On Friday, May 12th, the President will take his case to the American people for extending PNTR to China. He will travel to Ohio and to Minnesota. In Akron, Ohio, the President will meet with business and workers and community leaders interested in the impact of extending PNTR to China, and in Minnesota the President will make remarks on the benefits to American farmers of extending PNTR to China.

Q Where is that?

MR. LOCKHART: Shakopee, Minnesota, which is not far from Minneapolis-St. Paul.

Q Is he meeting again with the Governor?

MR. LOCKHART: I don't think he will be there that day. I know the representative from that area, David Minge will be there and hosting the President.

Questions?

Q Joe, what is the cost of the Democratic prescription drug plan?

MR. LOCKHART: I don't think it's been scored yet by CBO, so I don't know the exact cost. I think it's in the same general range as the proposal the President put forward. It might be slightly higher. We're going to look at what CBO does and we're taking a look at it now on what the costs are. But I think the important thing is that we think this legislation will meet our budgetary framework of fiscal discipline, paying down the debt and investing in Medicare and Social Security, as well as provide an accessible universal and optional prescription drug benefit for Medicare.

Q Joe, is there some reason why the administration has waited this long to present language on this?

MR. LOCKHART: No, I think the President put forward in the budget in February the proposal for prescription drugs for Medicare. We have worked very hard with the leadership of Representative Gephardt and Senator Daschle to get consensus among Democrats. I think that was reflected in the event we had today that we have of all the good ideas on how to do this synthesized into a piece of legislation that's as well ahead of where the Republicans are. And we hope now that the momentum of today's event will crystallize into some action. Speaker Hastert has said he's willing to work with Democrats, provide prescription drug benefit. This legislation offers a blueprint for how to do it.

Q Chairman Archer says that he wants bipartisan cooperation on this. How does your plan compare with the Republican Plan?

MR. LOCKHART: Well, the Republicans don't really have a plan yet, they have a fact sheet. I know you've all seen it because they've handed it out to you. They haven't gone beyond that. The Democrats have been talking about this now for several years, are all ahead of where the Republicans have been. But I think today's legislation offers a blueprint for how we can move forward. The Democrats will reach out their hand in bipartisanship, and we hope the Republicans will take it.

Q Joe, when the President spoke, he called for the kind of bipartisan effort that you suggested. However, it seemed when Congressman Gephardt spoke, he started railing on all the bad things the Republicans have done on this issue. What are the prospects for actually reaching agreement, and for refraining from partisan point-scoring?

MR. LOCKHART: I think the Republicans have put forward a plan that is not workable, and that's one of the reasons why you don't see legislation, because right now it is more of a set -- an ideology. But we have seen over the last 18 months to two years a real shift in the Republican leadership and the Republican Party's view on this issue. They started out by saying, basically, not over our dead bodies. And they've moved and slowly shifted to the point now where they say they want to work with Democrats to provide a real prescription drug benefit.

So we've made a lot of progress, and it's been because of the leadership of the President and the Democratic leaders. We believe the Republican leadership when they say they want to work with us on a bipartisan basis. We have a bill now; we should get to work.

Q Just to follow up on that, what are the prospects for

actually bridging the gap between the two proposals? The Republicans favor a method where essentially individuals get some kind of voucher and then try to buy insurance from different insurance companies, and you folks favor setting up one company and having --

MR. LOCKHART: Again, I think it's difficult to compare the two because you've got what is not even a proposal, just a set of ideas on a short piece of paper, as opposed to a full legislative proposal that the Democrats have put forward today. I think the Republican position has evolved on this. It's certainly our hope that what we have put down today will serve as the basis for a bipartisan agreement.

Q Joe, in the last couple weeks the Republicans have kind of made some moves to push a lot of decisions into the next administration. There's the Kosovo deadline; Colombia funding was restricted to one year. Jesse Helms said don't bother to negotiate a new arms control treaty with the Russians, that will be for the next President. What is the White House's reaction to the fact that Congress seems to be limiting the scope of what the President can do to his term of office?

MR. LOCKHART: Let me just say that I think the Republicans believe they can put off things like a prescription drug benefit, a patients' bill of rights, a rise in the minimum wage and sensible gun safety laws, then they do it at their own political risk. These are issues that average Americans are quite concerned about. They want Congress to work on it this year. They want Congress to act on it this year.

And if they've made the political calculation that somehow this

can all be put off to a future Congress when they think the situation might be better for them, then that's a decision they'll have to take. But I think it is a decision that comes with some political risk.

Q Joe, how damaging is it to fund Colombia -- to only have the money for one year, instead of the two the President asked for?

MR. LOCKHART: Well, certainly, I think it's important that we make the commitment over the two years that we asked for, because I think this shouldn't be looked at in a vacuum of just the United States. There are a number of international -- countries around the world that are working with Colombia, as you know, and Colombia is providing the bulk of the resources. So I think it's important that we send the message that we're committed to this.

I think, overall, what has the potential to cause damage, though, is the kind of process that we've got through here. It can best be described as a mess. You have the House moving this -- they moved it quite quickly in a supplemental. Now you have the Senate moving it in maybe one bill, maybe three bills; it may be 2000 money, it may be 2001 money. They haven't figured any of that out. These are urgent needs for the country. We don't need to play politics. We don't need to subject it to the kind of slow walking appropriations that we've seen over the last few years.

I think we firmly believe that the Senate leadership should bring this forward in a way that we can rapidly conclude this debate and pass the supplemental.

Q Do you actually think there's a chance that they'll

regroup this into a stand-alone supplemental bill?

MR. LOCKHART: It's hard to know. I think even those who are devising the strategy are not quite sure what they've got now. I mean, when you can't explain whether it's 2000 or 2001 money, you can't explain whether it's going to go on one bill, three bills or four bills, then you have to recognize that the situation has gotten out of control and it's a mess. And often the best way, when you've dug a hole, is to stop digging and to figure out a way to get it done in a way that meets the country's needs.

Q How about the Republican move to loosen the embargo on Cuba?

MR. LOCKHART: I hadn't seen anything specifically on that. I can only reiterate that we have worked actively over the last few years to try to make sure that as far as things like humanitarian or medical needs of the Cuban American people we tried to address, but did not in a way that didn't provide any benefit to the Cuban government.

The President has some flexibility as far as how we can do that. We've taken various steps over the last few years and that's something I think we should ensure that that flexibility remains.

Q Joe, the House is voting to extend the Internet tax moratorium by five years. The President said he doesn't like that, it's too long, it pushes some issues back. Would he veto a five year extension? And also, as part of that, he said that the states should solve the taxation issue by restructuring some of their tax policies. What's the federal role in sorting this all out?

MR. LOCKHART: Well, let me answer it in the negative first. The federal role in sorting this all out is not kicking the can down the road for another five years. There's a bit of phoniness in this debate, so let me be clear on where we stand.

We oppose -- and are for a permanent moratorium on any excess taxes, where we oppose any discriminatory taxes. But our concern is if you move, kick the can down the road for another five years, Congress states all the affected parties will find a way to put off the tough decisions that need to be made as far as how state and localities handle sales tax and their own tax issues.

So I think the federal government has a role and partnership with governors. I think the President talked about it the last time the governors were here, it was a big part of the conversation. We support a two-year extension because, obviously, our position is that we are opposed to discriminatory or access taxes. But we think if you go and extend out through five years you really run the risk of putting off some decisions that need to be made.

Q But you can't really veto that bill, can you? I mean, the high-tech community is very much for that. Can you really envision the President --

MR. LOCKHART: Well, I'm just not going to answer a hypothetical about something that's not down here yet.

Q I have a question back on prescription drugs. Does the President have some objection to the model the Republicans want to use,

where an individual Medicare recipient could go out and buy prescription drug coverage? Is he insistent that all Medicare recipients have to be in the same government-run program?

MR. LOCKHART: Let me deal with that a couple of ways. One is, I think the major problem with the ideas the Republicans put forward is, the insurance industry has indicated they have no interest in participating in it. So that's -- there are two players on this, and if one player says they're not playing, there's no game.

Secondly, I think the kind of reform you can see in Medicare, the kind of discount and volume buying has to be done as a group. I don't think that 68-year-old John Smith is going to be particularly effective going into his pharmacist and saying, let's deal, let's make a deal here. Just like private -- whether they be HMOs or other health care groups can provide cheaper prescription drugs for their beneficiaries; within Medicare, we can do the same thing. I think the problem with the Republican plan for the President, for most of the Democrats is that we just don't think it will work.

Q It's not like all insurance companies or all HMOs negotiate together with the drug companies, they all set up their own individual agreements. Why couldn't there be room for multiple plans as opposed to one government plan?

MR. LOCKHART: Because I don't know any HMOs or insurance companies who have one or two beneficiaries. They represent large groups. There is an economy of scale; otherwise they wouldn't be in the business. There isn't like the front row here has their health plan and the second row has their health plan; that's just not the way it works.

Q Well, federal employees choose from dozens of different plans.

MR. LOCKHART: Right, and each -- well, I guess there is. If we can get Terry to move, but he wasn't even listening so he doesn't even know what I said. (Laughter.)

Q Joe, on China. The Chinese government has said that they cannot guarantee that they will not sell in the future missile and nuclear technology to other countries like Pakistan and Iran. Do you think it will affect in the Congress PNTR or --

MR. LOCKHART: Well, we have made our position on proliferation quite clear to the Chinese, and I think as a general point we believe we are better able to make our points and to articulate our national security concerns when we are engaged and we bring China into rules-based organizations, rather than by isolating China. So can I predict an impact? No. But should it have an impact? Not according to our judgment.

Q Is the President aware of the Washington Post story the other day that honored killings are continuing still in Pakistan?

MR. LOCKHART: Yes, I'm sorry, I didn't see that. I'd have to check on that for you.

Q I think Vladimir Putin just named a Prime Minister -- any reaction to this person? I guess he was on the previous government also. Do we know anything about him?

MR. LOCKHART: I don't know in particular what we know about him. I think, as a general principle -- we have congratulated Mr. Putin for the democratic transition -- the President did, in writing -- on the occasion of his inauguration. But as a general principle, we are less interested in the people that they put forward, rather more interested in the policies, the general move toward economic reform, the cleaning up of corruption, our bilateral issues of arms control and nonproliferation. So, again, I think -- I don't have a great deal of detail about the newly-appointed Prime Minister, but what's important is they follow the general policy outline and agenda that Putin talked about.

Q Joe, do you know what the practical impact will be of the executive order the President signed today on AIDS drugs in sub-Saharan Africa, and is it a change in administration policy, or does it formalize the existing policy?

MR. LOCKHART: I think the practical impact is that it will promote the accessibility of HIV-AIDS drugs into sub-Saharan Africa. I think over the last months there's been some focus on the crisis that exists there. I mean, some 80 percent of the deaths of AIDS right now are in sub-Saharan Africa, and over 11 million people have already died, 44 million I think are infected.

The executive order finds the balance between protecting intellectual property rights and also promoting accessibility of the drugs in this area, and allowing the companies to deal with the public health crisis that they face.

Q Does this mean that what countries like South Africa are

trying to do in sort of setting up I guess licensing agreements on their own to start producing AIDS drugs, maybe without the full permission of the companies involved --

MR. LOCKHART: What it does is it provides them flexibility within their own intellectual property construct, as long as they stay within the TRIPS agreement within the WTO. I mean, I think the basic -- I think our intellectual property laws here are much more stringent than even within the WTO. And this allows sub-Saharan countries, a group of identified countries, flexibility for them to take steps in order to make these drugs more accessible.

Q Developing countries have been saying for years that intellectual property laws prevented them from getting badly-needed drugs at costs that they could afford. Doesn't this executive order prove that point?

MR. LOCKHART: I don't think that it proves that our intellectual property laws are too stringent. I think that this executive order recognizes the truly great public health crisis that exists now in sub-Saharan Africa, and I think it creates the flexibility that the countries there need to address the problem.

Q Joe, you mentioned the patients' bill of rights. Is there going to be a meeting tomorrow with the conferees?

MR. LOCKHART: It's still on, right? Let me check for you. It was tentatively set for tomorrow, and I just haven't checked since Monday. But I'll check for you.

Q One more question on prescription drugs. If you could respond to the two main criticisms of it -- the Republicans charge that it's going to be too costly, and consumer groups are saying that the administration is buckling to the pharmaceutical industry.

MR. LOCKHART: That puts us right in the middle, so I think it's normally a pretty good place. I think you'll find that the prescription drug program that the President laid out is affordable and fits within our budget framework, it pays down the debt by 2013, invests in Medicare, Social Security and our other urgent national needs.

As far as those who say we're buckling to the pharmaceutical companies, if we have, the pharmaceutical companies have shown a peculiar way of expressing their appreciation by opposing it.

Q What's the President's view of the lawsuit the DCCC filed against Tom Delay?

MR. LOCKHART: You know, I saw a couple of things on that in the paper this morning. I don't know, I haven't talked to him about it. I'll try to get his opinion.

Q Do you know, has anyone at the White House -- as you may have seen, a former White House official is quoted as saying, or wrote a piece saying he thought it was a bad idea. Did any input come from the White House --

MR. LOCKHART: No.

Q -- did DCCC check here before they did this, or was it

just a --

MR. LOCKHART: Not that I'm aware. The first I saw of it was when I saw it in the newspaper.

Q Joe, how much political advice, if any, is the White House giving the Million Moms March organizers?

MR. LOCKHART: Political advice?

Q -- coordination and getting this thing together? I know they were here to meet with the President --

MR. LOCKHART: No, I think this, as has been reported, this came out of some mothers and groups that wanted to find a way to make a statement on Mother's Day. We have worked with them some this week, finding an appropriate way for the President to participate in the effort, but as far as political advice, I don't think they've come looking for that here.

Q Is he going to it or is there any plan for him to participate directly in it, speaking or by remote control?

MR. LOCKHART: We're still trying to work that out. We're battling the normal things that we have here, which is -- we represent a considerable logistical and security challenge to any organization. We want to find a way to participate that doesn't sort of fundamentally change the way this group wants to put on their event.

Q Joe, with crude oil prices rising again, is anyone here

beginning to worry that the problem is not taken care of and more needs to be done?

MR. LOCKHART: Well, I think you've got -- if you look back on the price of gas at the pump, it went down six or seven weeks in a row, and went up slightly this week. So I don't know that I'm going to draw any grand conclusions from one week's report.

Thank you.

END

2:07 P.M. EDT

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TEXT:
About-Face on Africa AIDS Drugs
by Lakshmi Chaudhry

2:50 p.m. May. 10, 2000 PDT

President Clinton issued an executive order Wednesday allowing countries in sub-Saharan Africa to produce or import generic versions of AIDS drugs.

The order represents a significant shift in White House policy, which previously advocated strict enforcement of medical patent rights of U.S. drug companies, even in countries facing a massive AIDS epidemic.

"The United States shall not seek, through negotiation or otherwise, the revocation or revision of any intellectual property law or policy ... that regulates HIV/AIDS pharmaceuticals or medical technologies," the White House directive says.

"(It) recognizes the truly great public health crisis that exists now in sub-Saharan Africa," White House spokesman Joe Lockhart said at a press conference.

About 11.5 million people have died of AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa, which accounts for 83 percent of the world's total HIV/AIDS-related deaths.

For the past three years, the Clinton administration has been threatening sanctions against countries such as South Africa for plans to import cheaper versions of AIDS drugs. The U.S. Trade Representative's Office claimed that any such effort violated the intellectual property laws of the World Trade Organization.

But the policy turned into a public relations disaster when activists in the United States jumped into the fray last summer. The administration has been under fire from various quarters, including Ralph Nader, the AIDS organization Act-Up, and fellow Democrats such as Senators Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) and Russ Feingold (D-Wisc.).

In fact, the Clinton directive was issued only after Feinstein and Feingold threatened last month to filibuster an African trade bill.

The two senators had attached an amendment to the bill that would allow access to generic drugs. But the amendment was dropped from the final version of the bill. In a May 3 letter to the president, Feinstein asked the White House to confirm his support for her position by issuing an Executive Order.

While the senator may be pleased with the new policy, some White House critics say it doesn't go far enough.

"It's definitely a step in the right direction," said James Love, director of the Consumer Technology Project. "But it's a little less than meets the eye."

Love says the order does not cover the many Asian and Latin American countries facing an AIDS epidemic, such as Thailand and the Dominican Republic. "From a public relations point of view, it was becoming difficult to justify the policy in South Africa. But maybe people aren't focusing as much at other countries," he said.

And some of the wording is ambiguous, he said. The order uses phrases such as "adequate and effective protection," which Love says allows the government a lot of latitude.

"But it's definitely a big improvement," he said.