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White House on this beautiful day.

And Arlen, if you all would come up, let me just get one quick picture with our health professionals here.

Thank you all very, very much.

Q. Mr. President, who will submit your health package to Congress? Who will submit it, sir?

The President. —piece by piece. You're hearing a very important part of it right now.

Note: The President spoke at 9:26 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of Health and Human Services Louis W. Sullivan; Representatives Jamie L. Whitten, chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, and Norman F. Lent; Senators Dale Bumpers, Orrin G. Hatch, John H. Chafee, and Arlen Specter; James O. Mason, Assistant Secretary for Health; Antonia C. Novello, Surgeon General of the Public Health Service; and William L. Roper, Director of the Centers for Disease Control.

Remarks at the Groundbreaking Ceremony for the Hospital for Sick Children

June 13, 1991

Thank you all very, very much. We got a tent, we have clowns. What else is there? [*Laughter*] This is wonderful.

Listen, thanks for that warm welcome. And Barbara and I have been looking forward to this. And I want to acknowledge a special friend of yours, a friend of medicine's who came out with me here today, our Secretary of HHS, Dr. Lou Sullivan. We just came from the Rose Garden where we talked about the importance of childhood immunization. And I want to tell you, the more I see and listen to our Secretary, whom we've known before he became Secretary—Morehouse School of Medicine, where he was a head—the more I respect his work for this country, particularly for the children of this country.

We're also honored to have with us today, resplendent in uniform, Dr. Antonia Novello, who with such a poignant firsthand knowledge she has of the critical need for this kind of hospital of compassion. And a special greeting to Dr. Constance Battle who I met, the hospital CEO, medical director, and guiding spirit.

And to Stephen Montgomery, the introducer, the chairman of this hospital's board, a person who epitomizes what we refer to as the Points of Light. Let me say to you and all the other volunteers and all the others that give their lives to helping others

here, we are very, very grateful to you.

And to the representatives of the District that are with us today, may I salute you. And welcome also to the doctors, the nurses, the therapists, the aides, the volunteers who fill these halls with life and love. A special welcome—a special welcome to the parents who are here, but even more than that, most of all to the kids themselves right over here.

Barbara and I are thrilled to be here. She heard that 62 years ago, the First Lady, Mrs. Herbert Hoover, laid the cornerstone of the main building here. And so, she and I are both thrilled that we'll get to do this job today. She talked with me about her very moving visits here, and she speaks for the mothers' special love for those most in need.

Some of you kids have been to our house, the White House, the people's house, when you've come for Christmas tours. But I wanted to see this place for myself. And you know something, I'm sure that Barbara's stories even didn't prepare me for the majesty of this place. I expected to feel sadness when I got out of the car, and I felt a sense of joy and real hope projected by those who have committed a lot of their lives to helping others here. As parents, we desperately want to protect our kids; we want to spare them pain or fear. And that's

why our hearts go out to families whose kids lie in incubators or cribs, wheelchairs behind the walls here. And it's hard to face a world in which your children suffer. You ride an emotional rollercoaster, and you must draw upon all reserves of courage and love and certainly faith just to make it through each day.

These marvelous kids—and I wish all of you could see them from this vantage point, at least the ones we have with us—have won their first great battle, the battle for life. And now they're fighting the battle for recovery. And my money's on them; I believe they're going to make it. And they're being very good listening to all of this. [Laughter] And this is the place where they start. It may be hard for some of us to walk into a hospital, I confess that myself, but you get drawn into the drama of life within its walls. And you see notes at the end of the cribs, I'm told, "She smiles when tummy is rubbed," or "He reaches for panda when it's moved away." Some tiny bodies bear the marks of what brought them here, regrettably, society's ailments: abuse, accidents, drugs. But the staff's love and care casts a special light upon everything.

I was reminded of a Bible verse that describes apostles who did their work because it was right: "We were gentle among you like a nurse taking care of her children." The Bible says that. Gentle among us like the nurse in a rocking chair cradling an infant swathed in tubes, or the one who dressed the comatose girl in a new dress. The little girl in her twilight world will never see her outfit, but it shows that somebody cares. Gentle like the senior citizen volunteer sitting next to a window, feeding the blind toddler on his lap. The caregivers have created within a maze of machines and respirators a human world; a community of hugs and kisses, a world where people talk not of how sick the kids are—that's with them every day—but of how well they can be; a world where a nurse, explaining why she does what she does, says without pausing to think it over, "They feel our love."

You know, when you're dealing in medicine, whether you're a doctor or not, we toss around the word "miracle" a lot. But this hospital reminds of its true meaning.

A real miracle is saving one child. It's watching a toddler take that first unassisted breath in his life. It's seeing a young girl, paralyzed from the neck down, learning to draw with her mouth. Well, Bobetta, I'm talking about you. Or it's saying goodbye to a boy who came 14 months ago as a premature newborn and who will be leaving next month, going home with his mom and dad.

Really, I think, that's the legacy of the Hospital for Sick Children. It's a legacy that must spread. I was amazed to hear that this is one of only a handful of similar hospitals in this country. We need more places like this, transitional care facilities for kids who no longer require a hospital's acute care, but who aren't well enough to go home yet. We need communities like this, where parents can apply the salve of love and can learn how to care for their kids in the years ahead. And the staff here, I'm told, is developing a magnificent program that shows how to set up this kind of hospital.

I hope health care professionals across this country will learn from it and go on to develop more facilities like this one. They're cost-effective. They work. They stabilize children and give them the best possible chance to live and to recover. We'll need more such centers since the technologies that save lives also create more long-term health challenges.

Barbara's told me that you always have a waiting list here. She's also told me that you never turn away any children whose families cannot pay. And I look at your plans for expansion and think of how many more lives you'll be able to reach out and touch.

The Hospital for Sick Children is a hidden treasure. And it brings out the hidden treasure in kids who otherwise might have been forever forgotten. No one who walks through your doors can leave without feeling a kind of awe. You bring alive the prayer of St. Francis: "Where there is despair, let me sow hope. Where there is darkness, light. And where there is sadness, joy."

And thank you for the life-transforming love that you show. Barbara and I will never forget this place or any of you. And may God bless you for your inspiring work

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and the very special kids that you love.
Thank you all very much.

Note: The President spoke at 10:02 a.m. on the grounds of the hospital. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of Health and Human Services Louis W. Sullivan; Antonia

C. Novello, Surgeon General of the Public Health Service; Constance U. Battle, chief executive officer and medical director of the hospital; Stephen Montgomery, chairman of the hospital's board of directors; and patient Bobetta Ricks.

Remarks on Signing the Baltic Freedom Day Proclamation

June 13, 1991

Welcome everybody, and please be seated. First of all, may I welcome Senator Riegle from Michigan and Congressmen Ritter and Hertel with us here today. Just delighted to have you here. And let me begin by thanking all of you. I'm sure it's inconvenient coming from as far away as some of you have, but you're welcome here, and we're delighted to have you.

I had the pleasure of meeting some of you all a few months ago here at the White House. And I, frankly, valued and got a lot out of the exchange of views on the situations in the Baltic. And I pledged then and pledge again our desire to continue close consultation with Baltic-Americans from whatever State and, of course, the Congress as well on these important questions.

And it's an honor to mark this occasion, this important occasion with so many of the men and women who champion the cause—and have for years—of freedom for the Baltics.

More than 50 years have passed since the dark days of June in 1940, when three sovereign nations were subjugated by superior force. In those 50 years, the courage of the Baltic peoples has shown that force can subjugate a nation, but it cannot rob a people of their desire to be free.

Never has anyone in this room believed that the fate of the Baltic States was sealed by that secret pact between Hitler and Stalin. Never has the United States recognized the forcible incorporation of the Baltic States into the Soviet Union. Never in five long decades have the people there and all of you too, I might add, lost hope: the

indomitable spirit that sustains the history and heritage of the Baltics. Generations of sons and daughters who have never known freedom have faith that the Baltics will one day once more be free. Today, that dream of self-determination, the Baltics' democratic destiny, burns fiercely and bright.

In Estonia, in Lithuania, and Latvia, freely elected legislatures now govern in the name of the people. The popular will has expressed its clear and unmistakable desire for freedom. And in the face of violence and intimidation, the Baltic peoples and their freely elected leaders have steadfastly refused to answer violence with violence, preferring the path of peace and principle.

The resumption of negotiations between the Soviet Government and the Baltic States is a positive step. And yet there's much reason to be concerned about recent Soviet actions against customs posts in Lithuania and Latvia and the ongoing Soviet occupation of broadcast facilities in Vilnius—acts that are incompatible with the process of peaceful change. Good-faith negotiations cannot go forward in an atmosphere of threat and intimidation.

And this nation has taken steps to demonstrate our support of the Baltic nations, the people there. In February, through the generous support of many of the groups represented here today, the U.S. shipped emergency medical supplies to Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia. And I'm proud to say that since the response from the Baltic-American community has been so tremendous, we'll soon send a second shipment to the Baltics. These shipments are but one side of the affinity we feel as Americans with the