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Relations; Patrick Leahy, chairman, Senate Committee on the Judiciary; Bob Graham, chairman, Senate Select Committee on Intelligence; Max Baucus, chairman, Senate Committee on Finance; Carl Levin, chairman, Senate Committee on Armed Services; Henry J. Hyde, chairman, House Committee on International Relations; F. James Sensenbrenner, Jr., chairman, House Committee on the Judiciary; Porter J. Goss, chairman, House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence; William M. Thomas, chairman, House Committee on Ways and Means; and Bob Stump, chairman, House Committee on Armed Services. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

Telephone Remarks to Race for the Cure Participants
June 1, 2002

Ambassador Nancy Brinker. Mr. President, we are honored that you would take time out and talk to us today. Thank you, and welcome.

The President. Well, Nancy, thank you very much for your kind words, and I appreciate so very much your service to our country as Ambassador to Hungary and your service to our country as the founding chairman of the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation.

And I've got to tell you, I'm here at West Point, getting ready to give the commencement address, and I'm honored to be here. But I kind of wish I was running today with the thousands who are there.

I want to thank all the runners for bringing hope to Americans as we fight cancer. I want to thank the survivors for your courage. I want to thank Congresswoman Sue Myrick, who is Race for the Cure honorary survivor chair.

I appreciate so very much the fact that you all recognize that you're running for a great work and a great cause, that every life saved is a mother, a daughter, or a sister restored to health. What I love most about the Komen runs is that people participate in the spirit of generosity and kindness and love that really distinguishes America and makes us unique. You know, a lot of people go out and run to win prizes. You're running and walking to save lives. And for that, our Nation is incredibly grateful.

I recognize that we've made some advances, and I'm grateful for those, as I know you are as well. But I also know that we've got a long way to go to win this war on cancer and breast cancer. Nancy mentioned that the Federal Government is strongly committed to funding—putting dollars up for research at the NIH, which we will do and continue to do. See, I'm an optimistic person. I believe—strongly believe—in our lifetimes we will achieve a victory over cancer.

Again, I want to thank you for running. Every step you take today is critical to finding a cure for breast cancer.

S. Sgt. Tony Damon. I'm sorry, Mr. President. This is Signal.

The President. Yes—what?

Staff Sergeant Damon. I'm sorry, they dropped the call. We're going to reestablish——

The President. What are you talking about? They dropped the call?

Staff Sergeant Damon. They tried to connect you to the feed, and the feed didn't go through.

The President. You mean I haven't—they haven't heard a word yet?

Staff Sergeant Damon. I'm sorry, Mr. President, they haven't heard a word.

The President. Goddang it.

[*At this point, the phone line was reestablished.*]

Ambassador Nancy Brinker. Welcome, Mr. President.

The President. Hey, Nancy, I am sorry that we dropped off. Let me tell all the runners and walkers how appreciative I am that you're walking and running to save lives, how appreciative I am that you show the great generosity of spirit of the American people.

I want you to know, Nancy, that the Federal Government stands on your side, that we're going to spend money to research, to find the cures necessary to defeat cancer. And I believe in our lifetime we will defeat cancer, and a large part of that success goes to the thousands all across America who support the Komen Foundation runs and walks.

And so, on behalf of a grateful nation, thank you for—you all for what you do. I'm here at West Point. I kind of wish I was running with you all today. But since I'm not, I am honored to be able to start the race.

And so the walkers, you all will start in a few minutes. But right now, if the runners will get ready, it's about time for you to start. And so in five seconds, it is my honor to start this Race for the Cure. Four, three, two, one—runners ready, and go.

NOTE: The teleconference began at 8:22 a.m. The President spoke from the Superintendent's House at the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, NY, to race participants on The Mall in Washington, DC. Staff Sergeant Tony Damon, USA, Console Controller, Army Signal Corps, assisted the President in the telephone conversation.

Commencement Address at the United States Military Academy in West Point, New York
June 1, 2002

Thank you very much, General Lennox. Mr. Secretary, Governor Pataki, Members of the United States Congress, Academy staff and faculty, distinguished guests, proud family members, and graduates: I want to thank you for your welcome. Laura and I are especially honored to visit this great institution in your bicentennial year.

In every corner of America, the words "West Point" command immediate respect. This place where the Hudson River bends is more than a fine institution of learning. The United States Military Academy is the guardian of values that have shaped the soldiers who have shaped the history of the world.

A few of you have followed in the path of the perfect West Point graduate Robert E. Lee, who never received a single demerit in 4 years. Some of you followed in the path of the imperfect graduate Ulysses S. Grant, who had his fair share of demerits and said the happiest day of his life was "the day I left West Point." [*Laughter*] During my college years, I guess you could say I was—[*laughter*]—during my college years, I guess you could say I was a Grant man. [*Laughter*]

You walk in the tradition of Eisenhower and MacArthur, Patton and Bradley—the commanders who saved a civilization. And