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HEAD OF THE U.S. DELEGATION TO THE U.N. DIPLOMATIC CONFERENCE
ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT
July 15, 1998

I wish to report to you today on the status of negotiations.

Since early 1995, we have spared no effort to draft and negotiate a statute for a permanent international criminal court that would serve the interests of international justice, be realistic in its objectives, and operate as efficiently and effectively as possible.

The United States has been a strong proponent of an appropriate court that it can back with its diplomatic, financial, and other resources. There can be no question in anyone's mind how significant such support could be, because the United States has demonstrated repeatedly its resolve to pursue international justice. No other country has shown as much support for the International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda as the United States of America. We will continue to support these important institutions. We also will continue to make every effort to bring all perpetrators of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes to justice. We have been hoping, as a potential state party of an international criminal court, that the full weight of the United States could be used to support its critical investigations and prosecutions in the future.

At this conference, the U.S. delegation has engaged in the most intensive discussions with other delegates in order to achieve our common objectives. We have sought to find means to achieve fundamental U.S. requirements for the court and also the objectives of other governments. In some instances our efforts have proven very useful in arriving at constructive language with broad appeal.

But we stand on the eve of the conference's conclusion without having found a solution. We fear that governments whose citizens make up at least two thirds of the world's population will find the emerging text of the treaty unacceptable. The world desperately needs this mechanism for international justice, but it must be a community, not a club. It will need the cooperation of governments to operate effectively, and it will not achieve its objectives by ignoring the legitimate concerns of many governments. The United States and other countries have critical responsibilities around the world that are crucial to the protection of civilian populations. A scheme that ignores these responsibilities is not going to serve the vital interest of the court.

I want to say that we hold in high regard the efforts that the chairman and key governments have made with us to arrive at consensus language here in Rome. These delegations have sincerely sought means to build bridges that would allow the permanent members of the Security Council and populous democracies in all regions of the world to be active participants in an international criminal court. I also want to praise the tireless efforts of the U.S. delegation in Rome. My colleagues have worked 18-hour days since June 15, and every American should be proud of their efforts to achieve our objectives.

We hope that in these remaining days of the conference, we can still reach broader agreement among delegations. The United States stands prepared to engage in any discussions and any meaningful undertakings to achieve consensus on the
document. There is still time to achieve our common vision for international justice.

Thank you.