

MR. CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE:

I AM PLEASED TO APPEAR BEFORE THE COMMITTEE TODAY TO ADDRESS THE IMPORTANT TOPIC OF INTERNATIONAL PARENTAL KIDNAPPING. MR. CHAIRMAN, I WANT YOU TO KNOW HOW MUCH I APPRECIATE YOUR FOCUS ON THIS ISSUE FOR IT IS SO IMPORTANT THAT WE DO EVERYTHING WE REASONABLY CAN TO PROTECT OUR CHILDREN.

I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO THANK YOU, MR. CHAIRMAN, AND THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE FOR GOING FORWARD ON THE RECENT HEARING REGARDING THE MANY IMPORTANT LAW ENFORCEMENT TREATIES PENDING BEFORE YOU. WE BELIEVE THAT THESE TREATIES WILL SERVE CRITICAL UNITED STATES LAW ENFORCEMENT INTERESTS THROUGH THE EXTRADITION AND MUTUAL LEGAL ASSISTANCE MECHANISMS THEY ESTABLISH. MANY OF THOSE TREATIES CAN ALSO SERVE US IN THE TOPIC BEFORE YOU TODAY, THE INTERNATIONAL ABDUCTION OF A CHILD BY HIS OR HER PARENT.

I UNDERSTAND THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAS TRANSMITTED THE ANSWERS TO YOUR FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS, AND WE HOPE THAT THE SENATE WILL RATIFY THESE TREATIES AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

SOME OF THE MOST DIFFICULT AND CRITICAL CASES OUR LEGAL SYSTEM FACES ARE THOSE INVOLVING THE CUSTODY AND WELFARE OF A CHILD. WHEN A PARENT TAKES THE DRASTIC MEASURE OF REMOVING A CHILD AWAY FROM THE OTHER PARENT, THE CASES BECOME MORE COMPLEX AND HEARTBREAKING.

ADDRESSING THESE MATTERS IN THE INTERNATIONAL ARENA IS USUALLY AN EVEN MORE DIFFICULT TASK BECAUSE WE HAVE FACTORS TO CONSIDER WHICH WE MAY NOT BE ABLE TO CONTROL, DUE TO THE SOVEREIGNTY OF FOREIGN STATES. IN A DOMESTIC ABDUCTION OF A CHILD BY HIS OR HER PARENT, CIVIL ORDERS REGARDING CUSTODY ARE NOW BY LAW GRANTED FULL FAITH AND CREDIT FROM STATE TO STATE. MOREOVER, STATE AND FEDERAL CRIMINAL WARRANTS REACH ACROSS OUR INTERSTATE BOUNDARIES.

IN THE INTERNATIONAL ARENA, CUSTODY ORDERS ENTERED BY STATE COURTS IN THE UNITED STATES ARE NOT ENFORCEABLE OUTSIDE OF THE UNITED STATES. FURTHERMORE, STATE OR FEDERAL CRIMINAL WARRANTS REACH ONLY AS FAR AS OUR EXTRADITION TREATIES TAKE US AND AS FAR AS THE DOMESTIC LAW OF OUR EXTRADITION TREATY PARTNER PERMITS. IN BOTH CIVIL AND CRIMINAL PROCESS IN THESE INTERNATIONAL ABDUCTIONS, AS IN MANY MATTERS THAT EXCEED OUR BORDERS, THE REACH OF THE UNITED STATES IS ULTIMATELY LIMITED BY DECISIONS OF SEPARATE SOVEREIGN STATES AND THEIR INDEPENDENT JUDICIARIES.

ALTHOUGH THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE DOES NOT PLAY A DIRECT ROLE IN THE CIVIL MECHANISMS FOR THE RECOVERY OF CHILDREN INTERNATIONALLY, WE ARE DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT THIS PROBLEM AND HOW WE CAN BEST SUPPORT THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WHICH HAS THE LEAD IN RECOVERING ABDUCTED CHILDREN. THUS I WANT TO SAY A FEW WORDS ABOUT THE CIVIL MECHANISMS FOR CHILD RECOVERY, BEFORE MOVING TO THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT'S ENFORCEMENT AND PROGRAMMATIC ROLE IN INTERNATIONAL ABDUCTION CASES.

II. CIVIL RECOVERY

THE UNITED STATES HAS LONG BEEN A LEADER IN CREATING MECHANISMS FOR THE RETRIEVAL OF CHILDREN ABDUCTED INTERNATIONALLY. THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA WERE INSTRUMENTAL IN THE NEGOTIATION OF THE CONVENTION ON THE CIVIL ASPECTS OF INTERNATIONAL CHILD ABDUCTION, DONE AT THE HAGUE, OCTOBER 25, 1980 (“HAGUE CONVENTION”). THIS “HAGUE CONVENTION” PROVIDES FOR THE RETURN OF A CHILD ABDUCTED INTERNATIONALLY BY HIS OR HER PARENT, PURSUANT TO AN APPLICATION BY THE LEFT-BEHIND PARENT AND A SUBSEQUENT CIVIL LAWSUIT FILED IN THE COUNTRY WHERE THE CHILD IS LOCATED.

ACCORDING TO THE CONVENTION, A “HAGUE PROCEEDING” DOES NOT DECIDE CUSTODY; INSTEAD, IT SHOULD, IN MOST CASES, RESULT IN AN ORDER FOR THE “RETURN” OF THE CHILD SO THAT THE PARENTS MAY PURSUE THE RESOLUTION OF CUSTODY AND THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE CHILD IN A CIVIL COURT LOCATED WHERE THE CHILD RESIDED PRIOR TO THE ABDUCTION. IN THE FIRST TEN YEARS OF ITS OPERATION, PROCEEDINGS UNDER THE HAGUE CONVENTION HAVE RESULTED IN THE RETURN OF OVER 2000 CHILDREN TO THE UNITED STATES. TODAY, 50 COUNTRIES ARE PARTY TO THE CONVENTION.

THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE’S OFFICE OF CHILDREN’S ISSUES IS THE UNITED STATES’ CENTRAL AUTHORITY FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE HAGUE CONVENTION. THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE SUPPORTS THIS OFFICE IN ITS ROLE AS THE CENTRAL AUTHORITY, AND COORDINATES WITH IT WHEN A CASE HAS BOTH CIVIL AND CRIMINAL ASPECTS. FURTHER, THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE SUBSTANTIALLY FUNDS THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR MISSING AND EXPLOITED CHILDREN (“NCMEC” OR “THE NATIONAL CENTER”). THE NATIONAL CENTER, UNDER A COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, PERFORMS CERTAIN FUNCTIONS REGARDING CASES OF CHILDREN “ABDUCTED TO” THE UNITED STATES.

WHILE THE HAGUE CONVENTION HAS FACILITATED THE RETURN OF MANY CHILDREN TO THE UNITED STATES, AND WHILE IT IS A VAST IMPROVEMENT OVER THE LACK OF ANY INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENT WHATSOEVER, IT DOES NOT GUARANTEE A SATISFACTORY RESULT IN EVERY CASE FOR EVERY PARENT. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION VARIES AMONG FOREIGN JURISDICTIONS. EVEN IN CASES IN WHICH A LEFT-BEHIND PARENT HAS TIMELY FILED AN APPLICATION, HIRED LEGAL COUNSEL, AND LITERALLY DONE EVERYTHING “RIGHT,” THAT PARENT, AND THE UNITED STATES, MAY BE BITTERLY DISAPPOINTED WITH THE RESULT IN A PARTICULAR CASE.

AS A PROSECUTOR, I HAVE HAD THE EXPERIENCE OF A JUDGE OR JURY RETURNING A DECISION WITH WHICH I DID NOT AGREE, WHICH I BELIEVED WAS THE WRONG DECISION. IN THESE HAGUE CASES, AS WELL, THERE MAY BE SOME DECISIONS WHICH WE THINK ARE WRONG. ULTIMATELY THESE DECISIONS, BOTH IN THE UNITED STATES AND ABROAD, ARE MADE BY INDEPENDENT JUDICIARIES IN INDEPENDENT SOVEREIGN STATES.

THAT REALITY, HOWEVER, OFFERS LITTLE COMFORT TO THE LEFT-BEHIND PARENTS WHO HAVE SUFFERED THE FRUSTRATION AND ANGUISH OF LOSING CONTACT WITH A BELOVED CHILD—EITHER IN SITUATIONS IN WHICH THE WHEREABOUTS OF THE CHILD ARE UNKNOWN, OR IN SITUATIONS IN WHICH THE WHEREABOUTS ARE KNOWN, BUT ACCESS IS

LIMITED OR DENIED ENTIRELY. MY HEART GOES OUT TO THOSE PARENTS.

THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE WILL CONTINUE TO WORK WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE IN ANY WAY IT CAN TO SUPPORT EFFORTS UNDER THE HAGUE CONVENTION. FURTHER, IN COUNTRIES THAT ARE NOT PARTY TO THE HAGUE CONVENTION, OUR RESOURCES ARE, THERE TOO, COMMITTED TO ASSIST THESE CHILDREN AND THE LEFT-BEHIND UNITED STATES PARENTS.

III.

JUSTICE EFFORTS; CRIMINAL PROCESSES AND EXTRADITION; JUSTICE PROGRAMS

I WOULD NOW LIKE TO BRIEFLY OUTLINE THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT'S ROLE IN THESE DIFFICULT CASES.

THE TERMS "PARENTAL KIDNAPING" AND "PARENTAL ABDUCTION" HAVE COME TO ENCOMPASS A VARIETY OF SCENARIOS INVOLVING SEPARATION BETWEEN A CHILD AND A LEFT-BEHIND PARENT OR OTHER PERSON WITH CUSTODIAL INTERESTS. THE FACT PATTERNS RANGE FROM A "WRONGFUL RETENTION" OR "OVERSTAY" OF LAWFUL VISITATION OR CUSTODY, TO AN IMPULSIVE TAKING, TO A KIDNAPING INVOLVING PREMEDITATED FRAUD OR VIOLENCE. OFTEN, PARTICULARLY IN WRONGFUL RETENTIONS OR OVERSTAYS, THE WHEREABOUTS OF THE PARENT AND CHILD ARE KNOWN; OTHER CASES INVOLVE LAYERS OF FALSE IDENTIFICATION, FALSE PASSPORTS AND A HELPFUL "UNDERGROUND."

IN ADDRESSING THESE CASES OF PARENTAL ABDUCTION, TWO MECHANISMS CAN BE CALLED UPON FOR TWO SEPARATE BUT RELATED ENDS: FIRST, THE HAGUE CONVENTION OR OTHER CIVIL MEANS FOR RECOVERY OF THE CHILD; AND, SECOND, CRIMINAL STATUTES FOR PROSECUTION OF THE OFFENDER.

THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE CAN HAVE A MORE DIRECT ROLE ON THE CRIMINAL SIDE. WE ARE THE AGENCY CHARGED WITH THE INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION OF CRIMES UNDER THE INTERNATIONAL PARENTAL KIDNAPING CRIME ACT OF 1993 (IPKCA); WE ARE INVOLVED IN THE LOCATION AND APPREHENSION OF ABDUCTING PARENTS CHARGED WITH STATE OR LOCAL OFFENSES WHO ARE ALSO SUBJECT OF A FEDERAL WARRANT FOR UNLAWFUL FLIGHT TO AVOID PROSECUTION; AND, WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WE ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR SECURING THE EXTRADITION OF OFFENDERS CHARGED UNDER EITHER STATE OR FEDERAL LAW.

MOST PARENTAL KIDNAPING OR INTERFERENCE WITH CUSTODY CASES ARE CHARGED UNDER STATE LAW. BY COMPARISON, THE NUMBER OF FEDERAL PROSECUTIONS INVOLVING THESE OFFENSES IS MUCH SMALLER. AT THIS TIME, OUR UNITED STATES ATTORNEYS' OFFICES HAVE 26 OPEN CASES INVOLVING PARENTAL KIDNAPING AND 66 MATTERS PENDING INVESTIGATION. THE FBI REPORTS HAVING OPENED 260 CASES UNDER THE FEDERAL INTERNATIONAL PARENTAL KIDNAPING CRIME ACT (IPKCA) SINCE ITS ENACTMENT IN 1993. IN ADDITION, FROM 1994 TO 1998, THE FBI OPENED OVER 800 CASES TO ASSIST IN LOCATING ABDUCTORS CHARGED UNDER STATE AND LOCAL STATUTES.

I WANT TO MAKE CLEAR THAT THE CRIMINAL PROSECUTION AND APPREHENSION OF ANY

ABDUCTOR DOES NOT NECESSARILY RESULT IN THE RECOVERY OF THE CHILD. INDEED, THE CONGRESS, WHEN IT ENACTED THE FEDERAL PARENTAL KIDNAPING STATUTE, NOTED THAT THE HAGUE CONVENTION OUGHT TO REMAIN THE PREFERRED MEANS FOR CHILD RECOVERY.

TWO RECENT FEDERAL CASES ILLUSTRATE THIS POINT. IN BOTH THE AL-AHMAD PROSECUTION IN THE DISTRICT OF COLORADO AND THE AMER PROSECUTION IN THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK, FEDERAL PROSECUTORS APPREHENDED AND OBTAINED CONVICTIONS AGAINST THE ABDUCTING PARENT. HOWEVER, IN BOTH CASES, THE CHILDREN REMAIN IN THE MIDDLE EAST WITH EXTENDED FAMILY WHILE THE ABDUCTOR SERVES THE SENTENCE IMPOSED. AGAIN, IN BOTH THESE CASES, THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE ENDEAVORS TO ASCERTAIN THE WELFARE AND WHEREABOUTS OF THE CHILDREN AND TO ASSIST THOSE LEFT BEHIND.

PROBLEMS WITH EXTRADITION MAY BE ANOTHER REASON THAT CRIMINAL CASES ARE NOT PURSUED. EXTRADITION IS NOT AN OPTION IN ALL PARENTAL KIDNAPING CASES. MANY OLDER “LIST” STYLE EXTRADITION TREATIES—TREATIES FROM AN ERA WHEN ABDUCTION OF A CHILD BY HIS OR HER PARENT WAS NOT RECOGNIZED AS A CRIME—ARE NOT INTERPRETED TO ENCOMPASS THIS OFFENSE. FURTHER, SOME COUNTRIES WILL NOT EXTRADITE THEIR NATIONALS. FINALLY, SOME COUNTRIES DO NOT RECOGNIZE SUCH AN ABDUCTION AS A CRIME AT ALL.

WITH THE HELP OF THIS COMMITTEE, WE CAN MAKE PROGRESS IN ADDRESSING THESE PROBLEMS. THE EXTRADITION TREATIES PENDING BEFORE THE COMMITTEE WILL ALLOW FOR EXTRADITION FOR PARENTAL KIDNAPING WHENEVER BOTH COUNTRIES RECOGNIZE THE OFFENSE AS A CRIME. THIS COMMITTEE ALSO TOOK THE LEAD IN CRAFTING LEGISLATION—S.1266—TO ADDRESS THE PROBLEM OF THE LIMITED INTERPRETATION OF TERMS UNDER OUR OLDER “LIST” TREATIES. WE APPRECIATE YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT IN ENSURING THAT OUR EXTRADITION TREATIES WILL ENCOMPASS THE OFFENSE OF PARENTAL KIDNAPING TO THE FULLEST EXTENT POSSIBLE.

IN ADDITION TO ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS, THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE SUPPORTS THE RECOVERY OF CHILDREN INTERNATIONALLY ON A PROGRAMMATIC BASIS. OUR OFFICE OF JUVENILE JUSTICE AND DELINQUENCY PREVENTION, KNOWN AS OJJDP, SERVES A LARGER AGENDA INVOLVING THE WELFARE OF MISSING AND EXPLOITED CHILDREN, INCLUDING FUNDING MANY ACTIVITIES OF THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR MISSING AND EXPLOITED CHILDREN. OJJDP FUNDS TRAINING OF LAW ENFORCEMENT, PROSECUTORS, AND JUDGES ON DOMESTIC MISSING CHILDREN CASES, RESEARCH PROJECTS, AND THE DISTRIBUTION OF INFORMATION REGARDING THE PREVENTION OF AND RESPONSE TO PARENTAL ABDUCTIONS.

IN ADDITION, OJJDP AND THE OFFICE FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME HAVE ESTABLISHED A FUND TO ASSIST PARENTS WITH TRAVEL COSTS WHEN THEY RECOVER THEIR CHILDREN. THESE FUNDS, ARE ADMINISTERED BY OJJDP IN COORDINATION WITH THE NATIONAL CENTER AND THE OFFICE OF CHILDREN’S ISSUES. BEGINNING THIS YEAR, A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE OFFICE OF VICTIMS OF CRIME WILL BE PHYSICALLY LOCATED AT THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, TO ASSIST THAT DEPARTMENT WITH UNITED STATES CITIZENS WHO ARE VICTIMS OF CRIME OVERSEAS, INCLUDING THESE CHILDREN.

IV. INTERAGENCY EFFORTS

MR. CHAIRMAN, WE HAVE BEEN WORKING HARD TO ADDRESS CONCERNS IN THIS AREA. IN JUNE 1997, OJJDP IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE NATIONAL CENTER HELD A PARENTS FOCUS GROUP TO IDENTIFY ISSUES AND NEEDS IN THIS AREA. WE OBTAINED INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM STATE AND LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES TO IMPROVE THE HANDLING AND RESPONSE TO INTERNATIONAL ABDUCTION CASES THROUGH A NUMBER OF RESEARCH, TRAINING, AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE EFFORTS.

IN JANUARY 1998, WE ALSO CREATED AN INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE TO SPECIFICALLY FOCUS ON INTERNATIONAL PARENTAL KIDNAPING AND HOW WE CAN BETTER RESPOND TO THE VICTIMS IN THESE CASES, BOTH THE LEFT-BEHIND PARENT AND THE ABDUCTED CHILD. THE COMMITTEE HAS RECEIVED INPUT FROM FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES IN ORDER TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE THE SERVICES AND SYSTEM RESPONSE TO PARENTS. AS PART OF THIS EFFORT COMMITTEE MEMBERS HAVE PARTICIPATED IN PARENT FOCUS GROUPS, ATTENDED WORKING GROUP MEETINGS, AND LISTENED DIRECTLY TO THE QUESTIONS AND NEEDS OF LEFT-BEHIND PARENTS. THE WORK OF THIS INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE IS ONGOING AND IS ADDRESSING THE FULL RANGE OF ISSUES, FROM EFFORTS TO EDUCATE LAWYERS, PROSECUTORS, LAW ENFORCEMENT AND JUDGES ON THE HAGUE CONVENTION AND INTERNATIONAL CHILD ABDUCTION CASES, THROUGH DETECTION AND RECOVERY, TO PROSECUTION AND PUNISHMENT. THE INTERCHANGE TO DATE HAS HELPED IN COORDINATION OF THE MANY AGENCIES—LOCAL, STATE, AND FEDERAL—WHICH MAY NEED TO BE INVOLVED IN ANY GIVEN CASE. A REPORT ON THE COMMITTEE'S ACTIVITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE SERVICES AND RESPONSE TO PARENTS AFFECTED BY INTERNATIONAL ABDUCTIONS IS EXPECTED AFTER THE FIRST OF NEXT YEAR.

I STRONGLY BELIEVE THAT ASSISTANCE AND GUIDANCE WOULD BE OF GREAT BENEFIT BOTH TO LAW ENFORCEMENT PERSONNEL WHO MUST QUICKLY RESPOND THESE CASES AS WELL AS TO LEFT-BEHIND PARENTS IN INTERNATIONAL ABDUCTION CASES.

THEREFORE, I WILL BE ASKING THROUGH THE INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE THAT OJJDP, THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, AND OTHER ENTITIES, REVIEW THE VALUABLE INTERNATIONAL PARENTAL CHILD ABDUCTION GUIDE RECENTLY RE-ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE. THE GOAL OF THIS REVIEW IS TO ENSURE THAT IN ITS NEXT PUBLICATION IT IS MORE USER FRIENDLY AND INCLUDES INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE PARENTS THEMSELVES. I WILL ALSO ASK THE COMMITTEE TO EXPLORE WAYS TO INCREASE THE CIRCULATION OF THIS GUIDE. I HAVE LEARNED HOW VALUABLE THIS TYPE OF INFORMATION CAN BE TO DESPERATE PARENTS. OJJDP'S FAMILY SURVIVAL GUIDE FOR PARENTS OF MISSING CHILDREN, BECAUSE OF ITS CONTENT, HAS BEEN ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR DOCUMENTS EVER PRODUCED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE. THE INTERNATIONAL PARENTAL CHILD ABDUCTION GUIDE, JOINTLY PRODUCED BY THE JUSTICE AND STATE DEPARTMENTS, IN CONJUNCTION WITH PARENTS, FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES, AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS CONCERNED WITH MISSING CHILDREN, CAN BE A VITAL RESOURCE FOR A PARENT WHOSE CHILD HAS BEEN REMOVED FROM THE UNITED STATES.

AREAS FOR RENEWED EFFORTS

WHILE I HAVE ALREADY DESCRIBED EFFORTS THAT ARE ONGOING IN THIS AREA, THE JUSTICE AND STATE DEPARTMENTS ARE, COLLECTIVELY, TAKING A HARD LOOK AT WHAT MORE WE CAN DO. I HAVE DISCUSSED THIS WITH SECRETARY ALBRIGHT.

AMONG THE MANY ISSUES WE ARE ADDRESSING IS THE FUNCTIONING OF THE HAGUE CONVENTION. WHILE ALL AGREE THAT THIS TREATY IS A VALUABLE TOOL FOR THE RECOVERY OF CHILDREN, WE ARE COMMITTED TO MAKING SURE IT WORKS EVEN MORE EFFECTIVELY. THIS TASK RESTS PRIMARILY WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE. HOWEVER, THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT CAN ASSIST IN THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENTS, PROSECUTORS, PRACTITIONERS AND JUDGES, ALL OF WHOM MUST BECOME MORE FAMILIAR WITH THE HAGUE CONVENTION. THE OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS AND OJJDP ARE EXAMINING HOW WE COULD EXPAND OUTREACH AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS TO TRAIN LAW ENFORCEMENT, PROSECUTORS, JUDGES, AND SOCIAL SERVICES ON INTERNATIONAL PARENTAL KIDNAPING.

TOGETHER WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WE ARE REVIEWING HOW BEST TO FOCUS OUR EFFORTS ABROAD. OVER HALF OF ALL FAMILY ABDUCTIONS ARE TO COUNTRIES NOT PARTY TO THE HAGUE CONVENTION. WE NEED TO CONSIDER WHETHER THERE ARE OTHER COUNTRIES WE SHOULD ENCOURAGE TO JOIN THE CONVENTION. UNITED STATES LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS LOCATED OVERSEAS, PARTICULARLY OUR FBI LEGAL ATTACHES, CAN HELP TO EMPHASIZE TO THEIR FOREIGN COLLEAGUES THE SERIOUSNESS WITH WHICH THE UNITED STATES TAKES THESE CASES, AND THE NEED FOR EFFECTIVE RESPONSES IN LOCATING THE CHILDREN AND THE ABDUCTING PARENTS.

ANOTHER AREA FOR ATTENTION IS PREVENTION. EFFORTS MADE IN THE STATE AND LOCAL JURISDICTIONS AS TO THE TYPE OF ORDERS ENTERED REGARDING CUSTODY, THE DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION REGARDING LEGAL AND PRACTICAL STEPS TO HELP PREVENT ABDUCTIONS, AS WELL AS ADDITIONAL MEASURES, SUCH AS SURRENDER TO THE FAMILY COURT OF BOTH U.S. AND FOREIGN TRAVEL DOCUMENTS FOR THE CHILDREN, WILL WELL SERVE AS A DETERRENT TO THESE ABDUCTIONS.

ALSO, WE NEED TO MANAGE THESE CASES MORE EFFECTIVELY ON AN INTERAGENCY BASIS AND EXPLORE WAYS TO IMPROVE OUR SYSTEMS FOR KEEPING COMPLETE AND ACCURATE STATISTICS. STATE DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL, FEDERAL AND STATE PROSECUTORS AND INVESTIGATORS, AND CHILD WELFARE AGENCIES NEED TO WORK TOGETHER AND BE BETTER INFORMED, SO WE MAKE TIMELY AND EFFECTIVE DECISIONS ABOUT THE CIVIL AND CRIMINAL REMEDIES IN THESE CASES, AND IN ORDER TO BETTER RESPOND TO THE LEFT-BEHIND PARENT.

MOREOVER, COORDINATION AT A WORKING LEVEL MUST BE SUPPORTED BY COORDINATION AT A POLICY LEVEL. SECRETARY ALBRIGHT AND I HAVE ASKED OUR SENIOR POLICY STAFF TO REVIEW SEVERAL POLICY ISSUES REGARDING INTERNATIONAL CHILD ABDUCTION. ONE ISSUE WE WANT TO REVIEW —TOGETHER WITH O.M.B. IF APPROPRIATE —IS THE LEVEL OF RESOURCES WE CAN AND SHOULD BE DEVOTING TO THESE CASES. WE ALSO NEED TO EXPLORE MAKING BETTER USE OF DIPLOMATIC INITIATIVES AND HOW WE AT JUS-

TICE CAN SUPPORT STATE IN THESE EFFORTS. WE ALSO NEED TO REVIEW, AT A SENIOR LEVEL, THE ROLE OF THE NATIONAL CENTER AND, IN PARTICULAR, CURRENT SUGGESTIONS TO EXPAND ITS ROLE IN PREVENTION, CASE MANAGEMENT, CASE PROCESSING, AND SUPPORT TO LEFT-BEHIND PARENTS.

VI. CONCLUSION

THESE CASES PRESENT DIFFICULT CHALLENGES. THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT IS COMMITTED TO CONTINUE AND TO IMPROVE ITS PARTNERSHIP WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, AND WITH STATE AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES, TO INSURE THAT EVERY CASE IS ADDRESSED EFFECTIVELY. WHILE THERE CAN BE NO GUARANTEES WE WILL HAVE THE DESIRED RESULT IN EVERY CASE, WE MUST ASSURE THAT WE HAVE DONE OUR BEST TO RECOVER CHILDREN WRONGFULLY SEPARATED FROM THEIR PARENTS, AND TO ENFORCE THE LAWS AND LAWFUL ORDERS OF OUR COURTS.

AGAIN, I APPRECIATE THE OPPORTUNITY TO APPEAR BEFORE THE COMMITTEE CONCERNING THIS MOST IMPORTANT TOPIC.