

Assistant Press Secretary Dickens. Thank you all.

Ugandan Spokesperson. Those—you had the statements from our two Presidents. And actually we are asking you that you report what you've seen here. So we are pleased, really——

State of the Union Address

Q. With all due respect, Mr. President, can you take a question, sir?

President Bush. Sure.

Q. Why—can you explain how an erroneous piece of intelligence on the Iraq-Niger connection got into your State of the Union speech? Are you upset about it, and should somebody be held accountable, sir?

President Bush. I gave a speech to the Nation that was cleared by the intelligence services. And it was a speech that detailed to the American people the dangers posed by the Saddam Hussein regime. And my Government took the appropriate response to those dangers. And as a result, the world is going to be more secure and more peaceful.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 3 p.m. at the Imperial Botanical Beach Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at The AIDS Support Organisation Centre in Entebbe July 11, 2003

Thank you all. Please be seated, unless you don't have a chair. [*Laughter*] Thank you so much for the gracious welcome. And I want to thank the people of Uganda for such a warm welcome for Laura and me. We love being here. I'm really glad we came.

I want to thank the President for his hospitality, and the First Lady, I want to thank you for your hospitality as well.

This is such a land of hope in the heart of Africa, is the best way to describe it. And I bring with me the good wishes of the American people to the citizens of Uganda.

I'm especially thankful to the staff and volunteers of TASO. I appreciate you, Dr. Alex. Thank you for your tour and your hospitality. You know, it's one thing to hear about the ravages of AIDS or to read about them; it's another thing to see them firsthand.

I oftentimes talk about the armies of compassion in my own country. There's no doubt in my mind, today I met generals

in the armies—in the worldwide army of compassion. And I want to thank all of you who are involved in the fight to deal with this terrible pandemic.

A small place, a small house, you're doing great works of compassion. And the influence of TASO is bigger than you think. You have worldwide influence here because you've provided a model of care for Uganda. You've shown what can work here in this country. And Uganda, by confronting AIDS aggressively and directly, is giving hope to peoples all across the continent of Africa. We know what it takes to fight AIDS because TASO clinics and others like them are showing the way.

People who come through these doors need medical treatment, and you provide it. People who come here needing to learn about AIDS prevention; you give them important information. Men and women sometimes come to this place with terrible fears and a broken spirit. You receive them with kindness. You help them gain skills.

You care for their families. You encourage them to go forward with life.

The AIDS virus does its worst harm in an atmosphere of secrecy and unreasoning fear. TASO is speaking the truth. The President of Uganda speaks the truth. And therefore you're overcoming the stigma of the disease, and you're lifting despair. You're welcoming lonely, isolated people as brothers and sisters. You treat every soul with respect and dignity, because that's the only way to treat a child of God.

The disease of AIDS is fought with knowledge and medical skill. It also is fought with decent and loving hearts. TASO began here 16 years ago because of the vision of one woman. It's been my honor and Laura's honor to meet Noerine. Noerine, thank you. Noerine is a catalyst for change, a remarkable soul who acted when she lost her husband, Charles, to AIDS. Here's what Noerine said. She said, "I used to ask him, when he was ill, 'As you are lying there, what is the most precious thing?'" And he would say, "Just touching me, holding my hand, just being there." "And," says Noerine, "you don't have to be a doctor to do that."

The caring people of TASO have transformed so many lives, as Agnes told us. Agnes, we appreciate your testimony, and we appreciate your love. Her husband died in 1992 of AIDS, and TASO counselors encouraged her to get tested. She discovered she also had HIV and feared she did not have long to live. The clinic gave her treatment. Counselors brought food to her family and paid the school fees for one of her daughters.

In 1994, Agnes started volunteering to help at TASO by teaching children and counseling other women who have lost their husbands. She says that when people hear her story, they begin to think different: They get courage; they have the will to live.

Others here at TASO have shown the courage that turns loss and fear into something positive and good. Godfrey Monda

has worked here for a decade. In addition to supporting his own children, he cares for six children left by his two sisters who died of AIDS. Godfrey is a counselor to about 300 people in his region. Every 3 months, he and several coworkers take a boat to Goosie Island on Lake Victoria, where they train volunteers to combat AIDS and provide AIDS education with a drama group. Because of this good man's work, others will be spared from the grief his family has known.

And that is the kind of devotion and unselfish effort that turning the tide against AIDS requires all across the continent of Africa and all across the world. You're leading the way here in Uganda.

To win this fight, governments must also act with compassion and purpose. Governments have got to lead. And Mr. President, you're leading, and so is your administration. And I've been honored to meet the ministers of health, the AIDS coordinator, people of your Cabinet who understand when President Museveni says we must deal with the issue honestly and openly and compassionately.

President Museveni and Uganda have pursued a direct and comprehensive anti-AIDS strategy. They emphasize abstinence and marital fidelity as well as condoms to prevent HIV transmissions. They developed a strategy. They're implementing the strategy for the whole world to see, and the results have been magnificent.

Their approach has reduced the HIV infection rate to 5 percent in this country, the most dramatic decline in the world. For many in Uganda, the value of this achievement is beyond measure. Men and women are gaining years of life. More Ugandan children are growing up with mothers and fathers, and this country is reclaiming its future. Life by life, village by village, Uganda is showing that AIDS can be defeated across Africa.

However, the current efforts to oppose the disease are simply not equal to the

need. And America understands that. Nearly 30 million people on this continent are living with HIV/AIDS, including 3 million children under the age of 15. More than 4 million people require immediate drug treatment, but just 1 percent of them are receiving the medicine they require.

Africa has the will to fight AIDS, but it needs the resources as well. And this is my country's pledge to the people of Africa and the people of Uganda: You are not alone in this fight. America has decided to act. Over the next 5 years, my country will spend \$15 billion on the fight—to fight AIDS around the world, with special focus here on the continent of Africa. We'll work with governments and private groups and faith-based organizations to put in place a comprehensive system to prevent, to diagnose, and to treat AIDS. We will support abstinence-based education for young people in schools and churches and community centers. We will provide comprehensive services to treat millions of new infections.

Throughout all regions of targeted countries, we'll provide HIV testing. We'll purchase antiretroviral medications and other drugs that are needed to extend lives. We will help establish broad and efficient networks to deliver drugs, including by motorcycle, just as you did here in Uganda. We will help build and renovate and equip clinics and laboratories. We will prepare doctors and nurses and other health care professionals to treat AIDS more effectively.

The resources our country provides will help to hire and train childcare workers, to look after orphans, and to provide care at home to many AIDS patients. In other words, we want to join you in the war against the pandemic of AIDS. We want to be on your side in a big way.

This is the proper place for me to summarize the initiative that I've laid out be-

fore Congress. Because there's no doubt about it, in order to be effective, there has to be a willingness on the part of the people of the country, and you've got a willingness here in Uganda. You've got good leadership. You've got good leadership in your religious institutions. You've got good leadership throughout your Government. You've got fantastic doctors. You've got the people themselves that are willing to rise up and to confront the disease.

You know, I believe God has called us into action. I believe we have a responsibility—my country has got a responsibility. We are a great nation; we're a wealthy nation. We have a responsibility to help a neighbor in need, a brother and sister in crisis. And that's what I'm here to talk about. And I want to thank you for giving me the chance. I want to thank you for giving me the chance to come and share the compassion of my country for the people who suffer. We look forward to working with you. We look forward to being on the forefront of saying that when history called, we responded.

So, Mr. President, I'm honored that you would receive us. Laura and I are thrilled to be spending time in your beautiful country. I want to thank those who have provided witness and provided music. I want to thank you all for your hospitality. May God bless the people of Uganda. May God continue to bless the United States of America.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:10 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni of Uganda and his wife, Janet; and Alex G. Coutinho, director, and Noerine Kaleeba, founder, The AIDS Support Organisation.