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Remarks at the Women in Federal Law Enforcement Awards Ceremony

**Ambassador Francis X. Taylor, Assistant Secretary for
Diplomatic Security and Director, Office of Foreign Missions**

Women in Federal Law Enforcement (WIFLE)

2003 Conference

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Thank you Michele. President Blodgett, Executive Director Moore, Administrator Tandy, and distinguished guests, the women of federal law enforcement. I am absolutely delighted to be asked to speak here tonight and represent Secretary Powell, the Department of State, and the Bureau of Diplomatic Security at this very important event for women in law enforcement.

In 2000, I proudly received the Outstanding Advocate for Women in Law Enforcement Award from WIFLE. I have a personal interest in the advancement of women in law enforcement. My wife Connie joined the Air Force's Office of Special Investigations in 1976. She did so as a single parent. She encountered tremendous resistance, skepticism, and discrimination from her colleagues. I watched her grow professionally and personally as she took on the challenge of proving that she was as capable of

doing the job as any of her male counterparts, if not better. And she raised three children while doing it. Now, she is the Reserve Advisor to the Commander of OSI, a full Colonel, and several ranks above those that did not support her.

But that achievement was not gained without sacrifice. She has come a long way, but the road you must pave is longer. The award I received two years ago was not hard won by me. It was hard won by my wife, and by so many of you in the audience who daily set an example of the prowess of women in law enforcement. You are so important to our profession. You make a difference.

The impact of women in the field of law enforcement, in fact in many professional fields, is undeniably positive. The diversity that women bring to the law enforcement community, not only in terms of gender, but also in perspective, outlook, approach, and background has greatly impacted upon our profession. The inclusion of women in all aspects of law enforcement, from investigations to SWAT to criminal forensics, has allowed each and every field to develop and grow. And organizations like WIFLE, one of the premier professional law enforcement agencies in our nation today, allows you to pool your resources and collaborate, to the benefit of law enforcement's pursuit of justice and national security.

But do not view all of your male colleagues as enemies. There are many, like myself, who truly believe that your inclusion in the law enforcement profession is critical to the success of the law enforcement mission. Mentoring can make a very significant impact on your career. Mentoring can come from many sources, from women and from men. While I address the many women in this audience, I would like to take this opportunity to also address my male colleagues here tonight, directors and senior managers in the multitude of agencies represented here. Mentoring is not a gender or race issue, not a matter of male or female. It is a leadership issue. Those committed to the success of their organization must ensure that the best and brightest are mentored. That mentoring must continue to the highest level of the organization. It is the responsibility of every leader, and it will never change.

Before Diplomatic Security, I was the State Department's Coordinator for Counter-terrorism. The theme of this year's conference, "Collaborative Leadership: The Future of Law Enforcement" is very timely and appropriate as we examine the most important issue in the nation and in the world: terrorism. It is through the collaborative efforts of all law enforcement agencies working together as a unified force that makes the United States, and the rest of the world, a better and safer place to live.

For the past two years, our coalition allies and we have fought to end the scourge of terrorism. As President Bush stated at the outset, this is not a war that we will win in one day, one month, or one year. It is a war that will take many years of sustained coalition effort to wage. But I assure you that we will win. The war on terrorism must be fought, and won, on many fronts.

There is much talk of the military's actions in the Middle East and around the world. They have captured the public's imagination and, after thirty-one years in the Air Force, I can proudly acclaim that our brave soldiers, men and women, have performed heroically and in an unprecedented manner in Afghanistan and Iraq . But the military cannot win this fight alone.

As proud as I am of our military, it is a collaborative effort. As President Bush mentioned, the military is one of those efforts, but we cannot forget the diplomatic, economic, intelligence, and law enforcement effort. History has shown that the sustained effort of law enforcement and rule of law are central to the defeat of terrorism. No terrorism organization was ever defeated by the military alone.

And you, members of the U.S. law enforcement community, play a pivotal role in this high-stakes game that we are engaged in. As law enforcement officers, we serve on the front lines and face perhaps the most significant challenge in the war on terrorism. With every arrest, every conviction and incarceration, our homeland becomes more secure. To date, there have been more than thirty-five hundred arrests of Al-Queda operatives around the world by you and your foreign counterparts. That is a magnificent feat, one to be proud of on a day-to-day basis and one that we must continue. The worldwide dragnet that began after 9-11 continues to this day. The rule of law, both national and international, will break the back of the terrorists.

We provide the first line of defense for the American people and our homeland. We must constantly adapt and enhance our capabilities to protect the American people from another day like September 11th. Over the past two years, we have stood shoulder to shoulder, logged countless hours and burned the midnight oil to prevent terrorist attacks on American soil. We must bring our collective expertise to solve the very complex and fluid problems that face us. And there is not a single law enforcement officer here that cannot and does not have the capabilities and the strengths to fight this fight. You have been instrumental in stopping acts of terrorism, both here and throughout the world. You have disrupted organizational meetings, money transfers, identity changes, and likely terrorist acts. You have pushed yourselves to the limit to get the job done and done well.

But as we all know, in law enforcement the job is never done. And while we have been enormously successful, as evidenced by the lack of an event of the magnitude of September 11th in our country, the recent attack on the Marriott Hotel in Jakarta , Indonesia reminds us that the fight is still on. So we must remain vigilant, for our friends and our families and the American people are counting on us to preserve the blessings of liberty for generations to come.

Of course, I cannot stand at a podium without bragging about my organization, the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, which serves on the forefront of the fight against terrorism. Each and every day, the 28,500 women and men of Diplomatic Security protect American diplomats and their families while fighting terrorism globally. With Special Agents assigned to embassies and consulates in 157 countries, we are the

most widely represented American security and law enforcement organization worldwide. If there were a Fortune 500 listing for security companies, Diplomatic Security would rank in the top five. Diplomatic Security provides comprehensive security services to the Department of State, our Secretary, and our embassies and consulates worldwide.

Diplomatic Security is a global security enterprise that serves as a platform for protecting U.S. interests around the world, whether by technical security, physical security, personnel security, counterintelligence, or investigations. Diplomatic Security agents serve on joint terrorism task forces throughout the nation and work with their American law enforcement colleagues on investigations with overseas nexuses. Our global investigations into passport and visa fraud – felonies usually committed in connection with other more serious crimes, such as international terrorism – help secure our borders and protect our people. We do this in conjunction with many of the agencies represented here. Recently, in one week, we located five U.S. fugitives overseas and returned them to American soil to face American justice.

We manage the security of, and interface with, foreign diplomatic missions in the United States. Our strong ties with foreign police services facilitate our operations overseas. Working with our international colleagues, another collaborative effort, we have been able to identify, arrest, and prosecute potential terrorists before they reach American shores. The women of Diplomatic Security train these same international counterparts to combat terrorism in their own countries. And if that wasn't enough, they ensure the safety and security of the Secretary of State, global statesmen, and American diplomats from those that may try to harm them.

Now, I really want to brag about the women of Diplomatic Security, of which 19 are here tonight. Last year, Secretary of State Colin Powell's keynote address at the WIFLE Conference focused eloquently on diversity and his commitment to ensuring that women are provided the full range of professional opportunities. He praised the many women on his protective detail who risk their lives every day to keep him safe. This commitment to diversity is one that I fully support. Women serve at every level of my organization. From street agent to senior executive officers, they are critical to the success of Diplomatic Security. They represent the best of the Diplomatic Security Service and epitomize the excellence of American law enforcement. I encourage you to meet them and learn more about Diplomatic Security. It is one of the best and most rewarding jobs in government. And I've been told to say that we are currently recruiting...

Special Agent Justine Sincavage recently returned from Kabul, Afghanistan, where she served as the senior Regional Security Officer for an embassy operating in the center of war and terrorism. Special Agents Beth Trites and Pat Hartnett-Kelly are the Special Agents in Charge of the Washington and New York Field Offices respectively, the two largest field offices in my organization. Special Agent Rosa Trainham is a member of the Senior Foreign Service. Rosa served in Ankara, Turkey, as the Senior Regional Security Officer before returning to Washington, where she is now responsible for

supporting and coordinating our embassy security operations in the tumultuous Middle East . And Special Agent Linda Minsker, who was detailed to our recruiting office one year ago to increase outreach to women and minorities, has played a very important part in putting together our recruiting booth. Her tireless efforts have resulted in a four-fold increase in the number of women applying to Diplomatic Security. By the way, we will be opening the vacancy announcement in mid-September.

The proof of my commitment to diversity can be seen in my office. Justine Sincavage is my Executive Assistant responsible for my team of special and staff assistants, all women save one. But Justine is looking for a skirt for him to wear.

Special Agent Lareen Stephans is here from Beirut tonight. Laureen will be recognized tonight as a Distinguished Honorable Mention recipient for the 2003 Julie Y. Cross Award. She is serving her country with distinction as a Supervisory Special Agent at the U.S. Embassy in Beirut . Lebanon has traditionally been one of the most dangerous places in the world for Americans. Suicide bombings, assassinations, and kidnappings in the 1980s plagued our efforts to bring stability to the region. For the past year, Laureen has deftly served as the Deputy Regional Security Officer of one of the largest embassy security programs in the world protecting the lives of Americans, diplomats and private citizens, from terrorist groups and anti-American elements that continue to operate in the region with impunity.

Although Laureen doesn't know this, her Ambassador has repeatedly conveyed to me his strong feelings of the importance of Laureen's role in Diplomatic Security. The challenges faced by any regional security officer overseas these days are especially difficult. But added to this are the very special elements of service in the unstable security environment of Lebanon . Ambassador Battle considers himself blessed to have an officer of your caliber as his mission's Deputy Regional Security Officer. Laureen brings great credit to the Department of State. I am pleased to say she is here tonight, from Beirut , to accept her Distinguished Honorable Mention for the Julie Y. Cross Award.

Women are an integral part of the American law enforcement community. The diversity, in outlook, approach, and methodology that you bring to law enforcement only serves to strengthen the fabric of our profession. I delight in the pleasure of seeing WIFLE's growth since my first WIFLE conference in 1996. WIFLE's growth is reflective of the number of women in law enforcement today.

But the success of growth belies the challenges that still lie ahead. The battle is not yet won. You will still have to prove your mettle and worth to a community dominated by members of the opposite sex. Each and every day, women in law enforcement balance the challenges of work and demands of family. And it is a challenge because only you can have children and be mothers to them. I salute every one of you that have managed to balance the demands of your personal and professional lives. You have had to devise strategies to meet these demands, but you should also be demanding new strategies of your organizations.

There are so many little girls out there looking up to you and one of them, or perhaps one of you, will become the first female Director of the FBI, the first female Director of the U.S. Marshals Service, the first female Assistant Secretary for Diplomatic Security. You cannot become the first female head of DEA, Karen Tandy has already achieved that honor and I am proud to share this room tonight, but there are many more firsts out there for you to aspire to. Your presence here, and the thousands of your female colleagues around the country, are clear examples of women who have dedicated their lives to protecting the United States . Women, who have, while juggling professional and personal demands, continued to defend liberty and preserve freedom by ensuring that justice is served.

So tonight, it is my pleasure to congratulate the Women in Federal Law Enforcement award recipients for their exceptional achievements. I salute WIFLE for its success. And it is my pleasure to congratulate and thank all of you for your extraordinary and patriotic service. You represent the best of America and inspire us all. Thank you.

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