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Greek Orthodox Archdiocese Banquet Speech

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GREETINGS BY REP. GERALDINE A. FERRARO TO THE 27th BIENNIAL
CLERGY-LAITY CONGRESS OF THE GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE -
GRAND BANQUET HONORING ARCHBISHOP IAKOVOS - JULY 5, 1984

I am proud to represent one of the largest
Greek-American communities in the United States. And I am
honored to have a chance to pay tribute this evening to a
great spiritual leader and a great force for human rights
and religious cooperation, Archbishop Iakovos.

Since I entered Congress over five years ago, I have
known Archbishop Iakovos as a wise guide, a patient
instructor, someone I could turn to for important insights
into the Cyprus crisis or an enlightening discussion of his
faith -- your faith -- and mine.

Yet as well as I have been privileged to come to know
Archbishop Iakovos, I was overwhelmed when I read his
autobiographical material in preparation for this evening.

A deacon for 50 years and, for 25 years, the spiritual
leader of 2 million Greek Orthodox faithful on two
continents, Archbishop Iakovos holds 24 honorary degrees and
speaks four languages. Roman Catholics, Jews and
Protestants have honored him for his truly ecumenical

spirit. Friends of human rights and racial equality know him as their friend. In 1965, when he was 54 -- an age at which many people have ceased to grow and change and learn -- Archbishop Iakovos marched in the frontlines with Martin Luther King in Selma, Alabama.

Today, as he approaches the age of 74 he continues to astonish us with his energy, his openness and his strength of spirit.

I think I can best illustrate what I mean by quoting to you Archbishop Iakovos' own words, as reported by the New York Times on the occasion of the religious ceremony marking his 25th year as Primate of the Greek Orthodox Church in the Americas.

"I am," he said "most glad for the youth revolution of the 1960s, the uncertainties of the 70s and the demands of the generation of the 80s. Each decade accentuated the task before us because revolutionaries often find the truth."

Archbishop Iakovos is a revolutionary in the very best sense of the word. He is a man steeped in his own faith who nevertheless recognizes the truths offered by other religions. An ardent patriot in his adopted land, he knows that guns and money alone cannot solve the violence of El Salvador; the aggression of Turkey; the repression in

Poland. As a true revolutionary, he understands -- and embodies -- the power of ideas...and ideals.

Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to take part in the successful conclusion of your 27th Biennial Congress. And thank you for allowing me -- and all our distinguished guests here this evening -- to pay tribute to a religious leader who does honor to his community and provides inspiration to us all.