

[AS PREPARED]

**FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
REMARKS AT THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF ESTONIA
TALLINN, ESTONIA
JULY 9, 1996**

President Meri, Prime Minister Vahi [vah-ee], Ambassador Taylor, members of the diplomatic corps, distinguished guests, and all the people of Estonia:

It is a pleasure to be with you today in Tallinn, and especially to join you in this beautiful library, a monument to the enduring culture of the Estonian people.

Ever since I was a teenager I have been interested in this part of the world. Not because I have family roots in Estonia, Latvia or Lithuania, or even any distant cousins here. But because I grew up outside of Chicago, a city that is home to many refugees who fled persecution in other lands.

I remember going to a meeting at our public library one night with men and women who had come to America from the Baltic states. I heard their stories about life under Soviet communism, as well as about the indigenous history, traditions and cultures of people in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

Now I am here, in their ancestral homeland, helping to celebrate the freedom and independence they could only dream of so many years ago.

Estonia is my final stop on a trip that has taken me through Central Europe and to the Baltic region. Words alone cannot convey the excitement, inspiration and hope I have felt as an American visiting countries whose democratic and economic reforms are reshaping the landscape of the European continent.

At every stop I have seen optimism overcoming despair, economic progress overcoming economic inertia, and a spirit of tolerance and civic responsibility overcoming a legacy of tyranny that for decades deprived good men and women of their basic freedoms.

In Romania, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and here in Estonia brave people are striving to build on the promise of democracy in the wake of Communism's fall. Against great odds,

and under trying circumstances, the people of Central Europe and the Baltic states opened the door to democracy's return, and now are walking through it to a brighter future.

To the men and women of Estonia -- and to the people of Latvia and Lithuania, whose ambassadors are in the audience today -- I bring a special message from America and the American people: We rejoice in the freedom you have restored here, we admire your courage and tenacity, and we will continue to stand with you as you regain your rightful place in the family of Western democratic nations.

For more than half a century, the blue, black and white flag of Estonia was absent from atop Tall Herman, replaced by a hammer and sickle, just as the flags of Latvia and Lithuania were exiled from their native soil. But throughout the dark years of occupation those three flags flew proudly in the foyer of our State Department in Washington. Americans never lost faith in the sovereignty of the Baltic republics during the Cold War; and Americans will not lose faith in your march to democracy.

Two weeks ago, when President Clinton met in Washington with Presidents Meri, Ulmanis [ool-MON-is], and Brazauskas [Bra-ZOWS-cuss], he reiterated American support for the sovereignty, independence and security of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. He believes you are on the right path: Free market and democratic reforms are working, and your efforts to join together as regional partners will only accelerate the reintegration of the Baltic states into the European community.

It is particularly fitting to celebrate the achievements of this region in Tallinn, a city that for centuries embodied Estonia's diversity, openness and links to the world. After arriving yesterday I had a chance to visit Old Town with President Meri. I saw the old guild houses that nurtured a middle class here and cemented your ties to the rest of Europe; the churches of different faiths, representing the pluralistic character of Estonian history; and here in Central Tallin, the library where we meet now, filled with books that span the breadth of human knowledge and experience.

A decade ago, who could have imagined that we would be here today, in a free city, in a free country, and in a free library? And what better symbol is there of freedom and democracy than the books that line these shelves and the ideas they contain -- all part of the lively, passionate, and noisy debate that is so essential to democratic life.

In my discussions yesterday and today, I have learned more about Estonia's courageous economic reforms and the progress you have made in establishing the foundations of a lasting democracy:

a free press, the separation of church and state, respect for the rule of law and for minority rights.

To ensure that democracy continues to thrive, every citizen must be able to participate fully in all aspects of civic life. Here as elsewhere in Central Europe and the Baltic region, men and women are joining together in voluntary activities, non-governmental organizations and community groups to make democracy work for all citizens by ensuring that women are not relegated to the margins of society; that relations between ethnic groups are strengthened; that the press remains strong and free; that the climate is right for small businesses to prosper, and that children are nurtured and cared for as they should be.

This morning, I visited a clinic that is the first in Estonia to offer a broad range of health services for women. And just a few hours ago I had the chance to meet with representatives of non-governmental organizations, many of whom are involved in promoting civic education -- not just teaching children the values and lessons of democracy, but teaching teachers, business people, elected officials, and ordinary men and women who are the lead actors in any democracy.

As one of the participants said, "Democracy is a mechanism that people must learn to use." Here in Estonia, civic education is critical to building a more engaged, informed and vigilant citizenry.

Today, the greatest threat to democracy is no longer a Communist monolith with imperial designs. It is not a line on a map, or a geographic boundary. It is the volatile economic and social conditions that emerged with the collapse of the old authoritarian regimes, and the discontent and demagoguery that those conditions can generate.

These challenges are not unique to Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, or Central Europe. They are challenges shared by democracies new and old. To meet them, the West needs to expand its democratic family by opening up the institutions that have served us for decades. As I said on America's Independence Day when I spoke at the new headquarters of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty in Prague, democracy is not just about government institutions; it is also about the internalization of democratic values in people's hearts, minds and everyday lives.

Along with broader political, economic and strategic alliances, we must consciously develop "an alliance of values" to guide our democracies as we confront the inevitable challenges of the 21st century: the challenge of keeping peace in a world where ancient hatreds are slow to die and new ones are too easily born; the challenge of giving all citizens the chance to fulfill their

God-given potential and participate fully in the life of their country.

These challenges are made more difficult because of the historical moment in which we live. It is a time of rapid economic change, increasing global competition and scarcer resources -- a time when families in every country are burdened by the pressures of the mass media and consumer culture; when the gap between rich and poor is growing wider; when personal identity and work are inextricably tied to globalization and high technology; when ethnic pride and national citizenship are too often viewed as mutually exclusive.

Democracy gives us the capacity to cope with these challenges. But democracy can only thrive in the post Cold War era if we are able to convey the values underlying it -- the values of opportunity, responsibility, community and respect for human dignity.

And just how do we convey those values to ourselves and, more important, to our children?

We do it by strengthening civil society -- by strengthening the daily associations and actions that weave together the fabric of democratic life.

Before coming to Estonia I was in Hungary, where I visited a center that is helping the minority Roma community overcome obstacles to education, employment, and full participation in Hungarian society.

In Slovakia, I met with caring and involved men and women who are working to overcome obstacles that now hinder the full flowering of citizen groups.

In the Czech Republic, I talked to representatives of NGOs who are involved in local projects to protect the rights of children, safeguard the environment, and install modern medical equipment in Czech hospitals.

I met citizens in Poland working to promote women's rights and improve health services. And in Romania, I heard from journalists who are working to build an independent press in a country where, for decades, the real news was considered subversive or even dangerous.

In many cases, America and Americans are supporting these local efforts. What we are creating through these partnerships is an ethos of responsibility, caring and initiative that allows people to participate in civic life and shape their own destinies.

In short, we are creating an alliance of democratic values.

And as partners in this alliance we are discovering that we have much to learn from each other. The courageous men and women of Estonia who are erecting a democratic nation from the rubble of a communist past are reminding a new generation of Americans just how precious freedom is, and what a stake we all have in its success around the world.

America, in turn, offers first a reminder to the young democracies of Central Europe and the Baltic region that democracy is inherently a messy business -- as messy and hard to manage as human nature itself.

Understandably, there are some today who question the pace of progress and the pain of change. To them I say: Look at America. We have been striving to perfect democracy for more than 200 years. And we continue to do so without any assurance that we will ever fully succeed. Why? Because nothing is more precious to us than the freedoms our ancestors struggled to win -- and struggled to preserve.

The second reminder is that democracy asks us to live peacefully as neighbors with people who are different from us, maybe even beside people who in the not-too-distant past have actually done harm to us or to our families.

One hundred and fifty years ago, the United States was torn apart by a great civil war. If you had come to our shores in the 1860s, many Americans would have told you that the wound we sustained would never heal. Yet today, those old divisions have faded into history.

It took America 100 years to abolish slavery. It took America another 100 years to guarantee civil rights for all minorities. Even today we contend with periodic acts of intolerance and hatred.

But for most Americans, old animosities long ago gave way to pride that, no matter what corner of the world our families came from, we are all part of the same family, brothers and sisters rooted in common values and aspirations.

Here in Estonia, diversity has been your strength for centuries. Your nation, with its rich history as a trading center and marketplace for Europe, has thrived on its contacts with other regions of the world. Now, too, your diversity should be a source of strength, not division. As Estonia lives up to the ideals of democracy, all people must be made to feel at home here, proud of their ethnic heritage and confident of their place in Estonia's national life. And all those who live in Estonia must fulfill their responsibilities to the nation of which they are a part.

Vice President Gore said it best when he visited Tallinn last year: ". . . in this demonstration of tolerance, Estonia is a model for the rest of the world."

Earlier today, I had a chance to hear some famous Estonian folk songs, and also to dance with some Estonian folk dancers. When the music stopped, one woman said that the best way to understand a people is through their art.

In the short time that I have been here, I can say that I have gained a new appreciation of the Estonian people through their songs.

Almost 200 years ago, Kristjan Jaak Peterson [Kris-tee-on Yahk Peterson] wrote:

Why should not my country's tongue
soaring through the gale of song
rising to the heights of heaven
find its own eternity?

Five years ago, a gale of song swept through Estonia, rising into a chorus for national sovereignty and freedom. Five years ago, Estonians sang their way to independence. Today, the power of song that has resonated throughout the centuries is empowering the people of Estonia to raise their own voices, speak their own words, form their own ideas, and dream their own dreams.

Now you know that you are not singing alone.

May the chorus of all free people continue to sing of the values that brought the people of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Central Europe this far. And may those values guide all of our families, communities, nations and our world into the future that lies ahead.

Thank you very much.

###

[TEXT AS PREPARED]

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
REMARKS AT THE ODEON THEATER
BUCHAREST, ROMANIA
JULY 1, 1996

Ambassador Moses, Minister Mincu, distinguished guests, friends, and all of the citizens of Bucharest: It is my deep honor to be here today -- to stand on soil where so many have sacrificed for the cause of freedom and democracy.

I have never been to Romania before. And I am proud that your country is my first stop in Central Europe. Earlier this afternoon, I was given a brief history lesson walking through Revolution Square. I saw the Senate building, the Royal Palace and the national library. And it did not take long for me to realize that this city -- Bucharest -- is a living monument to the Romanian people, both their challenges and their achievements.

I see here the old city -- the Paris of the East -- with streets, buildings and squares that convey the beauty and elegance of France in the 19th century. I see also the tragic legacy of Communist rule -- the destruction of so much of historic Bucharest that was accomplished to serve the vanity of a dictator. And finally, I see the hope and promise of Bucharest today -- a city propelled by democracy and the energy of a newly freed people.

This city itself tells the story of its country and its region. It is the story of people coming together from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea to reject the tyranny and intolerance of the past in order to build a common democratic future.

To all the people of Romania and Central Europe, let me say:

We share in your aspirations to join the Western democratic family. We share in your aspirations for economic reform and a free market system. We share in your aspirations to build a society that respects human rights, a free press, and the rule of law.

And just as we stood with the people of Romania through decades of the Cold War, we stand with you now -- and we will help you fulfill your aspirations as you knit the fabric of a

prospering, confident, free and open Europe.

We in the West have watched the extraordinary transformation that has taken place in this region in a very short time. I would not be standing here today if all the nations and all the people of Central Europe had not kept faith with democratic ideals, struggled for them -- even shed blood for them -- during long and dark years of authoritarian rule.

Now you have emerged from the darkness; the light of freedom shines upon you. This is your moment -- your opportunity to fulfill your historic destiny.

And let there be no doubt that as you seize this momentous opportunity, America will do her part to ensure your integration into the family of democratic nations.

Make no mistake: We have an interest in your success. Millions of Americans fought in two World Wars to keep the cause of freedom alive in all of Europe. And never once did we forget in the aftermath of 1945 that the liberation of Europe was incomplete -- that one-third of a continent was forced to endure dictatorship after dictatorship, oppression after oppression, indignity after indignity.

Now, with tyrants overthrown and the Cold War behind us, we are more determined than ever to help you replace the shackles of the past with the liberties of a democratic future.

Americans of both major political parties agree that the integration of all of Europe's new democracies is one of our greatest challenges in the post-Cold War world.

Yet we must also recognize that, in a world as complicated and fast-paced as ours, change inevitably brings challenge. In country after country around the world we have watched tyranny crumble and democracy come alive, but we also have felt the strains of growing global competition and scarcer resources. While profound economic and political transformation has created unprecedented opportunities for global peace and prosperity, it also has inflamed old tensions and weighed us down with new ones.

Given these realities, your accomplishments over the last seven years in Central Europe -- and here in Romania -- are all the more remarkable.

Building a democracy -- building democratic institutions and rooting democratic values in the hearts and minds of a people -- does not happen overnight, even under the best of circumstances. In my country, we have been striving to perfect democracy for 220 years, and we still have not fully succeeded.

But we never waver from the struggle. We never waver because nothing is more precious to us as Americans than the chance to be free.

On Thursday, we Americans will celebrate our national independence day. And I hope the symbol of our ongoing efforts to perfect our own democracy will encourage the people Central Europe to keep fighting and striving for democracy and freedom here.

For those of you in Romania, the road may be longer and steeper, but no less worth traveling. It is no secret that the oppressive hand of communism left a deeper imprint in Romania than almost anywhere else in Europe. You suffered through some of the most misguided economic policies, the most cynical disregard for human rights, the most abusive forms of social repression. From the smallest villages to the largest urban centers, the Romanian people bore a daily burden unimaginable in the West.

Yet now, you are poised to break through to a new era -- a new era politically, economically and socially.

On the political front, you should find encouragement in the free and fair local elections that took place here last month. The Romanian people have demonstrated that ideological extremes are not the path to democracy and reform, but the path to failure and privation. And we in the West are deeply grateful for your role in helping bring stability to the Balkans.

On the economic front, the best path to prosperity is full economic reform and an openness to investment and entrepreneurship. The enterprising spirit of the people of Romania is visible in the countless new small businesses that enliven your streets and communities. To make the most of that tremendous potential, economic reform must be constant and complete.

On the social front, you can take pride -- as we Americans do -- in your identity as a multi-ethnic society. Some choose to see diversity as a weakness. In America, we view it as our greatest strength. We are a nation of immigrants whose success is built on a tradition of pluralism. (A young Romanian American girl, Dominique Moceanu [Mo-chah-new], is not only a household name in America today, but one of our brightest prospects in the upcoming Olympics.)

Ask any American where his family is from, and he is just as likely to say Italy, Ireland, Romania, Hungary, Poland or Greece as he is to say Chicago, Detroit, Boston or Baltimore. It is with pride that millions of my country men and women trace their heritage to Central Europe. Yet at the same time, no matter where we are from, we know we are all Americans.

Here, too, your diversity should be a source of strength, not division. A modern, successful, European Romania can only exist if all Romanian citizens are made to feel at home -- proud of their ethnic heritage and of their nation.

As you continue this promising journey along the road to democracy, there is one other thing to consider. While political freedoms, human rights, and a free market economy are essential to the progress, prosperity and stability of any democratic nation, so too are investments in people, including women and children.

When I speak of social investment I mean ensuring that every citizen has access to education, health care, family planning, proper nutrition, credit, and jobs, as well as the benefits of clean water and air and safety from violence in and out of his or her home.

I have said many times: Democracy can only flourish if families flourish. And families can only flourish if women and children flourish. Yet too often they are left out of the equation.

I am especially proud that the United States, as part of its foreign assistance program, has made a commitment to social investment in countries around the world, including the new democracies of Central Europe.

For six years, the United States has worked with committed health care providers and others at the grass roots level here in Romania. Non-governmental organizations and the work they do are vital to building democracy from the ground up. Tomorrow, I will have the chance to meet with NGO representatives. And I am looking forward to learning more about the progress they are making in Bucharest and around the country.

Today, it is my honor to help you mark the dedication of the Advanced Center for Nursing Education. This institution is emblematic of the good that can come when the public and private sectors join together to address a pressing social need.

Nurses are critical to improving the quality of health care and the delivery of medical services to the Romanian people, particularly women. This center, supported by the United States government as well as private donors such as Humana Hospitals and Baylor University, will offer new hope to countless women and their families in Romania.

This is but one example of America's commitment to Romanian democracy and our partnership with you. We can and will help. But democracy will only be fully achieved if all the people of Romania believe they have a stake in its success.

Before coming here this afternoon, I visited the pediatric AIDS Center where Romanian nurses and doctors are bringing hope and comfort to many children's lives. I also visited Primary School #57, where a whole new pedagogy is being used to teach children the civic values of democracy.

At each stop, I have seen that you are making progress. I know that it does not always come easily. But person by person, brick by brick, institution by institution, you will fulfill your dream of a free and democratic Romania.

Thank you very much.

###

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
STATEMENT UPON ARRIVAL IN ROMANIA
BUCHAREST, ROMANIA
JULY 1, 1996

This is my first visit to Romania, and I am delighted to be here. I bring with me a message of hope and solidarity from the American people, who support the courageous efforts underway in Romania to build a new and lasting democracy.

During my stay in Bucharest, I will have the opportunity to meet with many men and women in government and non-governmental organizations who are working to improve health care, education, and civic life in Romania. Their efforts are crucial to the success of Romanian democracy and to the future of the Romanian people, particularly women and children who suffered most during the dark years of authoritarian rule.

It is with great excitement and eagerness that I make this visit. I thank the President Iliescu and his government -- and all the Romanian people -- for extending such a warm welcome to me.

###

**FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
STATEMENT UPON ARRIVAL IN SLOVAKIA
JULY 6, 1996**

I am very pleased to visit your beautiful country today. In the last several days I have visited Romania, Poland and the Czech Republic. I have seen how the people of Central Europe are striving, sometimes against great odds, to make freedom and democracy work for their societies.

In recent years, Slovakia has been through two momentous changes: its freedom from the tyranny of communism, and its emergence as an independent nation. Today Slovakia aspires to join the democratic family of nations, and we support that aspiration.

During the Velvet Revolution, the people of Slovakia made it clear that they embrace the principles of democracy. Now they must assure that those principles take root and allow for the growth of a civil society with respect for human rights, rule of law, an independent judiciary and a free press.

I bring with me a message of encouragement from the American people. During this visit, I will meet not only with your government leaders, but also with private citizens. In particular, I will meet with the representatives of non-governmental organizations who will play a crucial role in the building of your democracy.

First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton
Vital Voices Speech
July 11, 1997
Austria Center, Vienna

Mrs. Clinton: I want to start by thanking Ambassador Hunt for her service to the United States, but more than that for her leadership and commitment to human rights and the work that she has done here in Europe on behalf of raising the voices of women so that all can hear them. I would like to thank the other conference sponsors for supporting this very important meeting. And I would also like to thank the Austrian people and their government for their willingness to serve the cause of peace and democracy. Home to the United Nations and other critical international organizations, host to important summits of the Cold War, haven for refugees, Austria has given the people of Europe and the world a safe place to come to [line missing from her reading] challenge, hear out and understand one another so that together we may shape a common future.

This conference is held in that same spirit. We are here to advance the cause of women and to advance the cause of democracy and to make it absolutely clear that the two are inseparable. There cannot be true democracy unless women's voices are heard. There cannot be true democracy unless women are given the opportunity to take responsibility for their own lives. There cannot be true democracy unless all citizens are able to participate fully in the lives of their country. We have seen great progress in this region of the world. Our previous speakers this morning, from Bulgaria, Lithuania and the Czech Republic shared with us some of the progress they have seen in their own lives. How those walls did come tumbling down. How they were able to take advantage of new opportunities. To seek new responsibilities on behalf of themselves and to further the cause of democracy in their countries. We come at a point in time when the architecture of revolution is nearly complete in Europe. The old order is being replaced by democratic institutions and open markets, of free press, functioning parliaments, political parties. Basic rights of assembly and association are becoming facts of life. Last month Russia joined the community of creditor nations. This week the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland were invited to join NATO, and at the time the announcement was made it was clear that those were the first invitations, not the last invitations. Today my husband is in Poland and Romania to reiterate America's support for democracy's progress. And I think it is also significant that you are gathered here in Vienna to recognize both the crucial role that women have played and will play in continuing that democratic progress. But also in talking and working together to devise strategies and learn from one another about how we can continue to overcome the obstacles that still lie ahead. It is clear, I think, to all of us, to someone like me who comes from a democracy that has been working at perfecting its union for more than 220 years, and to those of you who come from much newer democracies, that democracy is very hard work. You cannot flip a switch and expect to have a democracy as we dream of. In my own country we struggle every year with the challenges that are posed to democracy. We have to work very hard to make sure all of our people are given the opportunity to participate fully in the life of our democracy. We meet new challenges every day. So the work of democracy is never finished and all of us

...are committed to continuing that work no matter what the obstacles we face. Because even though you may have a free press or a functioning parliament, even though you may have elections that are fair and are repeated successfully, democracy depends

on more than that. It depends on more than just a written constitution. It depends upon more than even economic progress. Democracy depends ultimately on whether democratic values are rooted in the hearts of men and women. Whether all citizens believe that all people are entitled to be accorded the respect to which each of us as human beings should be able to demand. As a Croatian writer once said, "for everyday life revolution consists much more of the small things, of sounds, of looks and images." So even though we may look and see the institutions of democracy functioning, even though we may see the image reflected of our open markets and the progress we are making economically, we still and we always will have work to do, to make sure what Alexis de Tocqueville called "the habits of the heart" that really are at the center of a democratic institution or a democratic country are cultivated and passed on from generation to generation.

If we look at where we are in the world today, we see that one of the sounds that is most important to ensuring that democracies take root is the sound of women's voices, those vital voices that we celebrate here. On my visits to Central and Eastern Europe, I have heard the sounds of those voices. I have heard women from many countries articulating their dreams for the world and their lives after communism. Despite the differences between them, everyone seemed to speak the same mother tongue. The language of freedom and hope. I heard women's voices in Estonia when I visited a clinic that is the first in that country to offer a broad range of health services for women. I heard them in Romania when I met with teachers who are developing a new pedagogy that emphasizes civic participation and democratic values. I heard them in Ukraine when I met with nurses who had just started their own professional organization. I heard them in Hungary when I visited a center that is helping the minority Roma community overcome barriers to education, employment and full participation in Hungarian society. I heard them in the Czech Republic when I met with leaders of non-governmental organizations who are involved in local projects to protect the rights of children and to safeguard the environment. I heard them in Belarus when I spoke with women health professionals struggling to bring quality health care to the critically ill children of Chernobyl. I heard them in Russia when I talked over the radio with listeners throughout the country on a women-owned radio station. I heard the voices of women asking "what do we do now? We are educated; how do we use that education to be part of democracy?" And I heard them in Poland when I sat around a table with women representing different political points of view and participated in one of the most important of democratic acts, disagreeing with one another respectfully, as we debated the issues that were important to us. And I heard women's vital voices in Bosnia where I was told by a teacher how she kept trying to keep her students learning despite a horrific war. How I was told by health professionals the struggles that they faced treating the wounded and how they were all committed to rebuilding their lives. You bring these voices here, these voices that I have heard, and now we must determine what we do with those voices.

Do we merely use our voice for our own personal advantage? Do we take our educations, do we take whatever fortunate advances we have been given at this point in history, and only work for ourselves? That is a perfectly legitimate choice. To be a successful politician, to have power for oneself, to be a lawyer or a judge, to be a business leader, to have economic gain for oneself in a democracy — that is our choice. But I hope that the vital voices represented here will do something else as well. To use our experience, our voices, to speak on behalf of all people, to give voice to the voiceless. (Because we know very well in my country and in each country represented here that there are many women who do not have the education we have. There are many women who are held down by cultural and historical

traditions, prevented from exercising the choices they might want to make. We know there are poor people who can only dream of coming to Vienna or sitting in a hotel room looking down at Manhattan. And we know, or we should know, that we ignore the needs of all our people at our peril, that part of the great challenge we face in our democracies is to be sure we create conditions for all men and women to make the choices that are right for their lives. And women particularly have an opportunity at this point in history to express that commitment of conscience, to make clear that, yes, we want to be successful on our own, we want to be held accountable and responsible for the choices we make because we want to be seen as full human beings. But that is not all we want, we do want to help create societies and a world where the opportunities for all children, young boys and young girls, are available to them in ways we could not have even dreamed a few years ago.

When we met, many of us in this room, together in Beijing we came to declare in clear and unequivocal terms that women's voices must be heard and we offered a clear proposition: that a nation's progress depends on the progress of women, that the strength of a political system depends on the inclusion of women. That the vibrancy of an economy depends on the full contribution of women. That the richness of civil society depends on the participation of women. That human rights are women's rights and women's rights are human rights. And I have been asked what did I mean when I said that. And I have always been amazed that I would be asked such a question. I was on a Voice of America call-in program one day and I received a call from Iran, and the speaker on the other end, a man, said that he had heard that I said that. What could I have meant? And I said, "Well, I meant what I said and if you will just shut your eyes and imagine the rights that men have, those are the rights women should have as well." And the reason we want those rights is not merely to make a statement, not to be part of a political movement, but because we want our dignity to be respected as human beings and we want to be part of building a democratic world.

We have seen changes since Beijing. Here in Central and Eastern Europe, we have seen in Albania the birth of a parliamentary caucus devoted solely to issues affecting women. In Bulgaria, a non-governmental organization is teaching judges and lawyers and citizen jurors about the legal rights of women. In Ukraine, there has been a new government ministry devoted to women's affairs. In Lithuania, new services are being given to support the needs of elderly women. In Poland, we have seen created one of the largest micro-enterprise networks in the world, a new agency sponsored by the Polish and American governments and the World Bank whose sole mission is to teach women important new job skills and to help them find well-paying jobs.

And yet, despite the progress, since the fall of the Berlin wall, since the conference in Beijing, we have a lot of work to do. Because the transition from communism to free markets and democracy has created new obstacles to women's realization of their God-given potential. We have seen new stresses and sacrifices imposed on women. Throughout the region, cuts in pension and childcare, kindergartens and health care has meant that women are shouldering a double burden that was heavy enough to begin with. The oppressive structures of Communism may have been torn down but the new structures and standards necessary to advocate for women's rights and to protect women from exploitation are not yet fully constructed. The hard work of building these political, legal, and economic standards and structures must include women and it is what you have been speaking about here. That is why this conference comes at such an important time, for it is enabling us to share practical ideas and methods to advance the presence of women in the political, legal and business

spheres.

Exchanging ideas and strategies enables us to learn from one another and take these ideas home. But that is too rare in our own world. When I am privileged to travel as I do, I always meet with groups of women for informal discussions. Whether I am in Bangladesh, Romania, Poland, Nicaragua or Chile, I find that women have much more in common than might appear on the surface. And yet I also find that even in those cities where I am meeting with women who represent the academia or the professions or business or politics, they often do not speak to one another. They sometimes do not even know one another. They are surprised to learn what the woman down the street is doing to assist them in their work. We cannot build strong civil societies without working together and creating associations that enable us to make progress on the issues we care about. That is why this conference has the potential for creating new networks and associations of support, within countries and between countries.

The United States government, largely through the Agency for International Development, will continue to support a broad range of programs that provide grants, training, and technical assistance to citizens to strengthen democracy at the grass roots. We want to be part of building democracy and we especially want to be part of enabling women to participate in that process. Today we build on the commitment we have made, a commitment to local groups that are working to protect the environment, or improve health services, or spark economic development, teaching children basic democratic values. Working to create that area between the market and the government which is crucial to the continuation and progress of democracy. We call that 'civil society.' And it is only civil society that can inculcate the values of democracy, those habits of the heart. It is only through our families, our religious organizations, our associations at the civic and the neighborhood level, our trade unions, our other groups where we come together voluntarily joining in forums to create better opportunities that we will really create democracy. The market place can do better than any other institution the work of creating wealth. But the market place, which knows the price of everything, knows the value of nothing. That is not the market place's job. The government has to preserve order, has to provide the basic services but it cannot reach the heart. It can stir the emotions. It can, as we all know, create demagoguery, but it cannot in those very small sacred places of the heart do the work that can only be done voluntarily through the civil society. And so the United States Agency for International Development knows that, and that is why so much of its work has been aimed at this middle, this important part of every democratic society. And today I have the honor of announcing that the United States will commit three million dollars next year to projects that will directly support the objectives of this conference. These funds, which are entirely new funds, will be reserved solely for efforts that help women enter and ascend the realms of politics, law and business. Moreover, we will continue to see to it that women have full and complete access to the entire range of democracy and business programs that we support. These efforts will supplement the work of this conference and the work that you do everyday. We know what the symptoms of inequality and oppression look like in real life. We see them when women are beaten or sold or denied credit or refused a job because of gender or passed over for promotions or treated with disrespect and not listened to. But we have to do what we can to alleviate those systems, those symptoms of injustice. And yet we cannot lose sight of their root cause — disrespect for women's spirit as human beings and citizens.

Here in Vienna in 1993, leaders from around the world gathered to craft the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women. This is what they called for: the

universal application to women of the rights and principles with regard to equality, security, liberty, integrity and dignity of all human persons. That word dignity is essentially the premise on which our democratic efforts in our respective countries will stand or fall. It is time for us as a global community to understand once and for all, we have run out of excuses. Here we are at the end of the twentieth century, at the heart of a continent that has been scorched by war time and time again. If the history of this century teaches us anything, it is that whenever the dignity of any group is compromised by a derogation of who they are, of some essential attribute that they possess, then we leave ourselves open to having our own dignity questioned. Where we do not respect the dignity of others, we do not make the dignity of any of us safe from attack. If this century has a lesson that is redeeming, it is that by extending the circle of citizenship and human dignity to include everyone without exception, we have the hope that can come to those of us who believe that by working together we can create a better life for ourselves and our children. If we take seriously what you are talking about here at this conference, and you go home and bring the message of excitement and solidarity that you have achieved here, you will not change anything overnight. But your voice and your work, added to the inexorable, incremental steps that are necessary for change in a democracy will create the conditions for change. And then we will have a glimpse of seeing what a newsroom and a courtroom will look like with women fully participating. What the corporate board room and the political back room will consist of when women take their rightful places. We will see more clearly what can happen in the home when women are given the respect and dignity they deserve.

I am very much in awe of the stories of many of you. I can only imagine the strength that it took to have done what you have done in this audience, to join Charter 77, to march for Solidarity, to expose human rights abuses, to make freedom's voice carry over the heads of those who would silence you. I think of all this and I ask myself how you kept your focus, through those years of totalitarian oppression, on what was most important in the human heart. Perhaps the answer lies in a speech that was given in Austria seven years ago, just after the fall of Communism. Part of it goes as follows:

"Many of us who in recent years strove to speak the truth in spite of everything, were able to maintain an inner perspective, a willingness to endure, a sense of proportion. an ability to understand and forgive others and a light heart, only because we were speaking the truth, otherwise we might have perished from despair."

Many of you will recognize the words of President Havel, talking about the totalitarian lies that recently prevailed in this part of the world and of the heroic individuals like so many of you who struggled against them. Those words are just as true today, even though the burdens and obstacles are nowhere near what oppressed Europe for so many years. But we know that it takes strength to keep your voice heard. We know that it takes courage to stand up for those without voices. All of you who tore down communism did so because you believed in democracy and freedom and the human heart and spirit. Now you fight for women's rights because you believe in the same values. One barrier is rubble, the other is crumbling. With the strength of our commitment and the power of our voices that barrier too will surely fall. If we keep faith with those values that brought you to this day, if we work with one another, if we enable all of the voices of men and women who believe in freedom and hope to be heard, then the dreams that brought us here will be realized and we will be able to look back at this conference and say to ourselves "Women's vital voices played a role in creating the kind of world I am proud to call my own." Thank you very much.

Q & A Session
after the
First Lady's Speech at the Vital Voices Conference
July 11, 1997

[First portion of this section inaudible due to central audio feed problem]

Mrs. Clinton:

Anything we can do to create good opportunities for girls and women, I think, will benefit many, many women. But I also believe that in many different societies for different reasons, an individual woman's chances for pursuing her own dreams will be enhanced if other women work together to change social, historical, and cultural conditions that hold women back. There are many women who have attained a good education and then are told that they cannot succeed in the area they wish to work in for artificial reasons. So the individual woman has to do what she can to prepare herself, but then as part of our vital voices we have to make it possible for every woman to be able to pursue whatever her ambitions or dreams might be. I also think there is another element, and that is the sort of psychological barriers that are the internal barriers to many women's success. Women who feel that they are not entitled to pursue their own dreams. Women who feel that, if they make a choice to pursue an education or to pursue a job, they are making a choice not to pursue family or relationships. So I think we have to enable women to feel that they can attain that balance between work and family that is so difficult in all societies, which many of us have worked on for many years, and support young women so that they feel comfortable making these choices.

Question:

There's a lot of violence on TV in America, which also influences our cultures. What can you do to stop it?

Mrs. Clinton:

Well, I agree with that. I deplore the violence that is depicted on American television and in American movies, and we -- my husband and the Vice-President and Mrs. Gore and I -- have worked very hard over the last several years within the system that we have, which is a not only a free and open-market place of ideas, but with our first amendment to the Constitution, we have very broad protections for anything that is characterized as speech, which most television programs and movies are. And you may have heard that just two weeks ago, our United States Supreme Court struck down a law that the Congress had passed and the President had signed, trying to limit pornography on the Internet in the United States. So they take a very broad view of what is protected under our Constitution. So, within a limit, we have tried to do several things. The President has advocated that a computer chip be built into new televisions so that programs can be blocked out by parents exercising authority over their television set, so that the television set can be programmed in such a way that certain stations and programs cannot be seen. So, that will work for younger children, but then we know older children will spend their time figuring out how to break the system, but at least, you know, for a few years parents will have the illusion of control over their children again, and even an illusion in these circumstances is comforting to some extent. And we've also worked with the television to create labels for television programs, so that parents can make better decisions about what they permit their

children to watch. And finally, we have encouraged the entertainment industry to create different kinds of programs. Now, I think having said all that, I am not hopeful about being able to limit the violence on American television or in American movies. We have too much freedom that is given for good reason to be able to prevent that. And it sells, unfortunately. People watch it. It's like driving by an automobile accident. You know you shouldn't, but you slow down and you look and are interested and stimulated by such programs. So we are doing what we can from the governmental level. In my book It Takes A Village, I urged parents and other citizens to boycott certain programs, not to buy the products that are advertised on programs, to use citizen action to make a statement about what programs should or should not be seen on our television. But I think that many of you in countries with different legal systems will have to be working very hard to try to create a situation in which you are not flooded by the most violent television programming from our culture, and I continue to try in the United States both to limit it and to get citizens and especially parents to exercise more authority with children and to try to limit the effect of it. I think it is one of our most serious problems because it is part of the conflict that is developing between 'are we creating in our society citizens or consumers' and it is a very difficult problem.

Question:

Speaking of your book, I liked your book about raising children. Do you agree that women should emphasize our central role in the family even as we advocate our rights?

Mrs. Clinton:

I do, because I am very committed to family and to my particular obligations as wife and mother, but I don't think every woman has to become a wife and a mother. If we are talking about democracy, it is very important to make clear that women should have a range of choices. There are women who wish to be full-time mothers and commit themselves to that task. That should be a respected choice. There are women who do not choose to marry, or if they marry, do not choose to have children. That should be a respected choice. So, the vast majority of women in our countries will try to do both, as I have and as most of you have, to have a family and to have work that is important and meaningful to me. That balancing act that we're all engaged in must also be respected and more support must be given to women who are attempting to do that. But the larger point I would make beyond individual women's choices and being respected for these choices, is that whether or not we make any of these choices, every one of us has an obligation to do what we can to make sure our children are well raised, and that our children have the health care, the education, the safety, stability, and all the conditions that will enable them to grow to their own potential. So, whether or not a person is a parent, or however many children a person has, every one of us will be affected in the quality of our life by how our children and the next generation are treated. So, I think that goes beyond the individual choice, and keeping the importance of raising children central to our political and economic and social consideration is not just a family's responsibility, it is the entire society's responsibility.

Amb. Hunt:

Before I ask you the last question and ask you to close your remarks with that question, I want to thank you personally for coming and I want to tell you that this conference, which has been hugely successful, would not have happened without some very generous help from organizations like Bank Austria, Austrian Airlines which flew about 160 people here, Nestle Corporation, the US Government, the European Union, the Soros Foundation, and a host of others. And I know that you are as impressed as I am with their generosity, too. If you could just say two sentences about the key question of this conference: What can Americans learn from our experience as Eastern and Central Europeans? What can Americans learn from Central and Eastern Europeans?

Mrs. Clinton:

Thank you, whoever asked that question. Because I think there is a great deal that Americans can learn from your experiences. I think, first, that it takes courage and perseverance to both win and keep a democracy, that the building of a democracy is an ongoing challenge and struggle, and that we can never take it for granted. And that many of you in this room and in the countries from which you come, have a much clearer idea of the importance of the values that underlie democracy than many people in my country do today. Because we have many people who have gotten very complacent in the United States. They don't take the trouble to vote. They don't defend the freedoms that we have fought for, and people in previous generations have died for. So, maybe it is a good thing that a society gets to the point of the United States and many of the European countries, where freedom is so ingrained in the fabric of life that we don't have to worry about it or fight over it any more. I think there's always a danger when people become complacent, because there's always the risk that demagogues and authoritarians will assert themselves and influence the minds of people and take over the political and economic structures again. So that is one important thing. The second point I would make is this struggle that I referred to earlier, in the new global economy, in the Information Age in which we are living, how do we live as human beings? How do we ensure that we are able to deal with the enormous number of choices that we have? Many of you came from countries where under communism you had no choices. Now in many countries we have so many choices that people are often bewildered about what is the right choice that they should be making. How do we create the right conditions, the balance between government and the marketplace, a balance of power that will create jobs and good incomes and economic opportunities, but will also provide support for people in a social safety net and will create an environment in which the marketplace does not determine everything. So, as you are struggling to make those choices, we in the United States will be watching you and supporting you, and together I hope that we will enter into the twenty-first century with a much clearer understanding of and commitment to those basic democratic values that we have worked on for so many years, but that you now hold as a trust for the rest of us. Because how you deal with democracy's new challenges will affect the United States and the entire world.



Texts of Remarks

by Hillary Rodham Clinton

President Vaclav Havel

Ambassador Madeleine Albright

Kevin Klose

July 4, 1996 in Prague

*Prague
to full a 8A
dlt.*

Following is a transcript of Mrs. Clinton's address as delivered at Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty headquarters in Prague today:

Thank you. Thank you President Havel. Ministers, Ambassador Walker, Ambassador Zantovsky, Ambassador Albright, Mr. Klose, distinguished guests, staff of the radios, and listeners across the Czech Republic, Central and Eastern Europe, and the new, independent states.

It is an honor to have this opportunity to speak to you on the fourth of July 1996. I am especially pleased to be in the Czech Republic with the United States Ambassador to the United Nations, my friend, Madeleine Albright. Ambassador Albright is a daughter of Czechoslovakia whose family was uprooted by war and repression. In the United States she found a home, and the opportunity to rise as far as her God-given talents would take her. But never once did she forget her roots. We Americans are better for her service, and so are the people of Central Europe and around the world who believe in the cause of peace, liberty and justice.

One of the ways men and women in this country and this region kept alive their faith in freedom before 1989 was through Radio Free Europe's broadcasts.

Today I am speaking to you from the new headquarters of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty in Prague. This itself is an emblem of the political, economic and social transformations that have taken place in Central Europe.

Not so long ago, members of an old Soviet-style parliament filled this room. Today hundreds of journalists report the real news from within these walls. Not so long ago, this was a place where ideas were suppressed. Today, it is a place where ideas are given life and a voice that delivers them from the heart of this young democracy to the Baltics in the north, the Balkans in the south, and all the way east to the Pacific Ocean.

Ask anyone who fought for liberty in Central Europe during the Cold War and they will tell you that Radio Free Europe was like a member of the family. I have heard of men and women who always placed their radios in front of a certain window, or on one side of the house, where the signal from Radio Free Europe came in the strongest.

I have talked to men and women who, for years, arranged their daily schedules around Radio Free Europe's broadcasts. President Havel has said that he and other Czech dissidents relied on Radio Free Europe to share their ideas with their countrymen and women. Were it not for Radio Free Europe, he has said, he might have spent more years in prison.

For four decades, Radio Free Europe unmasked the lies and deceit of dictatorship by broadcasting information about the world beyond the Iron Curtain and spreading a message of freedom, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law.

Now, Radio Free Europe has a new mission, but one no less urgent. It is helping to strengthen the foundations of democracy through news broadcasts, conferences about current affairs, and courses designed to promote an independent media in countries where a free press was silenced before. The United States continues to demonstrate its commitment to democracy by supporting Radio Free Europe's vital activities.

Today, Americans at home and abroad are celebrating our Independence Day, the 220th anniversary of our nation's birth. Throughout our history, America has represented an ideal of freedom, and of possibility and promise for humanity. Indeed, we are a nation of many different people, people from every corner of the world, but rooted in common values and hopes.

Our nation's story is of those values and hopes being realized. On our national seal is written: *E pluribus unum*. Out of many we are one - not just as a people, but in the democratic values that we cherish.

On this day marking America's independence, part of my heart is at home with my family and with the American people. But another part is here with you in Central Europe, a homeland to millions of Americans, a place where the principles of democracy have taken root, been nurtured, and now are flowering. I have traveled to this region on behalf of my husband to emphasize and strengthen the relationships between our countries and to celebrate your achievements in building strong democracies and dynamic market economies. I also carry a message of encouragement from America to people who might question the pace of progress or the pain of change. Perfecting democracy is a never-ending challenge, as my own country knows so well.

Over the past few days, I have had the chance to visit Romania and Poland. Now I am in Prague, one of Europe's jewels, where a Velvet Revolution peacefully buried more than 40 years of totalitarian rule in 1989. On Saturday, I will leave for Slovakia, Hungary, and Estonia. I only wish I had the time to visit every country in this region to see for myself the ways in which you are meeting the challenges of this extraordinary period.

Today, I would like to talk about the past and the future - a past that prevented old neighbors and friends from being partners, and a future that requires it.

For 50 years, a cruel and arbitrary line divided Europe. On one side of that line, people came together to contain the threat of Communism moving West. On the other side, tyranny and domination forced people to exchange their freedom for the false promise of a utopian ideal and a distorted sense of social stability.

Today, the Berlin Wall, as we know, is gone. There is no Iron Curtain. The line has been erased. In country after country, Communism has crumbled; democracy has come alive. The threat of nuclear war no longer hovers over us. Opportunities for peace and prosperity are greater than ever before. And the prospect of a new and even more dynamic civilization in Europe and the West is before us.

In Russia tens of millions of people exercised their democratic franchise by voting and opting to shape their future through peaceful, free choice. What a hopeful milestone for Russia and us all.

Yet at the same time, we feel the strains of growing global competition and scarcer resources. The rapid pace of change -- the superficial homogenization of the world -- inflames old tensions and weighs us down with new ones. In every country in the world, families are under greater stress. The gap between the rich and the poor grows wider. Even in countries with advanced economies, the social safety net -- education, health care, pensions, good wages and jobs -- is fraying.

The greatest threat to democracy today is no longer a Communist monolith with imperial designs, but volatile economic and social conditions that emerged with the collapse of the old regimes and the demagogues and dictators that can be generated.

These challenges are not unique to Central Europe but to democracies new and old. To meet them, the West needs to expand its democratic family by opening up the institutions that have served us for decades. But even as we do this, we must recognize that democracy is not just about institutions; it is also about the internalization of democratic values in people's hearts, minds and everyday lives.

Along with wider political, economic and strategic alliances, we must consciously develop an alliance of democratic values to guide us as we confront the unavoidable questions of the 21st century: Questions about how to balance individual and community rights and responsibilities; about how families will raise children in the face of pressures from the mass media and the consumer culture; about personal identity and work in an age of globalization, information overload and high-technology; about the roles of women in society; about how people will be able to preserve their ethnic pride and value their national citizenship; about how nations will protect their sovereignty while cooperating regionally and globally with others.

But how do we convey to ourselves, and especially to our young people, the values upon which this alliance is based -- the values of opportunity, responsibility, community and respect for human dignity?

We do it the way it has always been done best; by building and strengthening civil society, a term I borrow from social scientists and philosophers who use it to describe the countless daily associations and actions that weave together the fabric of democratic life. In the early 19th century, de Tocqueville observed that voluntary organizations, activities, philanthropic associations, had already become a hallmark of American citizenship and a distinctive part of our national life.

Civil society is the vehicle for our values, the way we convey who we are and what we stand for. And when we encounter the inevitable setbacks and historical bumps in the road, the alliance of values that fuels civil society is what will carry us through.

In the short time I've been in Central Europe, I've already met with people who are forging this alliance of values and building democracy from the ground up. Earlier this week, I met with teachers in Romania who are developing a new pedagogy that emphasizes civic participation and democratic values. I met doctors and nurses caring for children with AIDS and leaders of voluntary organizations who are training citizens to participate in elections.

In Poland, I met leaders of non-governmental organizations who are helping citizens protect the environment, improve health services, promote women's rights and strengthen the free press.

And here in the Czech Republic, another set of free and fair elections has recently taken place. And the most remarkable thing about these elections was how unremarkable they were. Candidates debated, people voted, ballots were counted, and political leaders sorted out the consequences to form a new government. That's what we call a democracy based on values in action.

In Slovakia, Hungary and Estonia, I will meet with people working to strengthen the role of minorities, incorporate women into the full life of their societies, promote an independent judiciary and free democratic institutions.

In many cases, America and Americans are supporting these local efforts. And what we are creating together is more than the training of nurses and teachers, more than the strengthening of an independent media, more than the cleaning up of dirty water and polluted air.

Paul
Snyder

cratty

What we are creating together is an ethos of responsibility, caring and initiative that allows people to participate fully in the civic life of their communities and their countries.

We in America are also discovering that we have much to learn from you. As you -- the people of Central Europe --- construct democracy from the ruins of dictatorship, we Americans are reminded of just how precious freedom is, and what a stake we have in democracy's success around the world.

We also can offer, though, some lessons from our own experiences. The first is that democracy is a messy business that requires patience, hard work, flexibility and the acceptance of its inherent imperfections. For more than two centuries we Americans have been striving to perfect democracy and we will continue to do so but without any assurance we will ever fully succeed. Human nature guarantees that democracy requires constant nurturing and vigilance. But we can never waver from the struggle because nothing is more precious to us than the freedoms our ancestors struggled to preserve.

The second hard lesson is that democracy asks us to live peacefully as neighbors with people who are different from us and whom we may not even like. What most of us discover is that we share more in common than we think, and that we are stronger as a people if we overcome our superficial differences and unite around our shared interests and ideals.

And the third lesson is that democratic values must be steeped into our daily lives. President Woodrow Wilson, whose name graces the railway station and a boulevard near here, once said that "liberty does not consist...in mere declarations of the rights of man. It consists in the translation of those declarations into definite actions." Americans have taken that idea to heart.

Just last week, I was in Seattle, Washington meeting with a group of mothers who have formed a national organization to help fight crime on our streets and in their neighborhoods.

Community groups and civic associations across America raise money for their local schools, libraries, parks and hospitals. Nearly every town and city in America has voluntary church groups, Scout troops, sports leagues, book clubs, historical associations that act as mediating influences both on government and on the forces of a market economy.

Americans also come together when our values are endangered. As you may know, several dozen churches serving African-American congregations in different parts of the United States have been burned by criminals in the past few months. Our citizens have not met these acts of evil with silence or indifference. In nearly every instance, men and women of goodwill -- and all religious faiths -- have banded together to repair buildings and rebuild spirits in the aftermath of these anti-democratic hate crimes.

No country is free of purveyors of hate and fear. But the measure of a country's dedication to the values of opportunity, responsibility, community and human dignity is how it resists the forces of darkness and intolerance.

In this century, we in the West have traveled together with you down a long and hard road, with many setbacks and tragedies along the way. But you never relinquished your faith. And neither did we.

Ambassador Albright has told me the story of how in 1995, during the 50th anniversary celebration of the end of World War II, she visited the lands of western Bohemia, lands that were liberated by American troops in 1945. In every town and village she visited, the Czech people were waving American flags -- flags with 48 stars. The American troops had passed out the flags a half a century ago, when America had only 48 states. And these men and women in the Czech countryside had preserved those flags, held on to them year after year of Soviet domination, just as they had preserved their faith that freedom would finally come.

Freedom has come, and now it is up to each of us to determine what freedom will mean.

Last night, it was a beautiful evening in Prague, and I walked across the Charles Bridge. It was filled with young people, talking, laughing, listening to music. And I could not help but think that throughout Central Europe there were groups of young people doing the same.

But I was also reminded of the young men and women of earlier generations who lost years of their productive lives in prison or exile to make sacrifices for the values we celebrate today.

And I thought too of all the young people who fought and died for the freedom to form their own ideas, speak their own words, make their own decisions and dream their own dreams.

I cannot tell you what any of the young people on the Charles Bridge will do with their lives. But I know that it will be their choice, without fear or coercion from any ideology or government.

Many will make mistakes along the way. But it is our duty, having struggled so long to arrive at this moment of opportunity, to pass on to them a clear understanding of the values that will guide their choices as well as the decisions societies make. And that depends upon our own alliance of values being articulated, given meaning, taking root.

In President Havel's eloquent words: "we are not accountable solely to our party, our voters, our lobbies and our state, but in fact to the entire human race, including those who come after us, and that the decision on the worth of our deeds will ultimately be made beyond the realm of the mortals around us. In the language of today's world; this means nothing more than to harken, in our various dilemmas, to the voice that speaks to us from the depths of our conscience."

That voice is now free to speak. Let it speak. Let it speak of the values and ideals that brought us to this point and that should guide us now into the future that awaits.

May God Bless my country and yours. And may God Bless our common cause.

* * *

Following is a transcript of introductory remarks by U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Madeleine Albright today at RFE/RL headquarters in Prague:

Thank you very much. As someone who was born in Prague, it is a great pleasure to visit the new headquarters of Radio Free Europe in this city. And you can only imagine what a special feeling it is for me to be here with America's spectacular first lady, Hillary Rodham Clinton, and to introduce her to Central Europe's spectacular first city.

It is a special privilege for this Czech-American to introduce the man who did so much to bring this historic broadcasting facility to the Czech Republic and who indeed has done as much as anyone to ensure the survival of Radio Free Europe in the post-Cold War era. That man is Vaclav Havel, president of the Czech Republic.

President Havel is known to RFE listeners. He was the voice of free Europe. He was a leader among those who dissented from Communist rule. He was an architect of the successful transition to democracy. He has been and remains one of the great moral leaders and philosophers of our era. And as President Havel knows so well, at the heart of freedom is a commitment to open exchange of information and opinion.

Communists sought to control those ideas and that information. But Radio Free Europe defied them. Those who advocate freedom believe when people are able to think for themselves, to make their own choices, to choose their own leaders and to express themselves politically, culturally and spiritually in their own manner, all of society will benefit. New and exciting ideas will find the soil fertile and grow. Life will be richer and we will find deeper meaning in our own lives and greater communion with others.

No institution has been more effective as an instrument for the full and open transmission of information than Radio Free Europe and no individual has been more eloquent an advocate of freedom or a more insightful instructor of freedom's responsibilities than Vaclav Havel.

* * *

Following is a transcript of introductory remarks by Czech President Vaclav Havel today at RFE/RL headquarters. He spoke in English:

Thank you Madeleine (Albright). Nice to have you home. It is a great pleasure for us all to welcome Mrs. Hillary Clinton to the Czech Republic. I deem it an honor that she has accepted my invitation. Mrs. Clinton is esteemed by many in this country as a first lady who has filled this position with a sense of purpose and dedication. I am delighted that we shall hear her speak now.

The house where we have met for this occasion was once a symbol of the rule of totalitarianism over this country. Now with Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty as its occupants it has become a focal point spreading a message of freedom, peace and democracy to a great part of the world. It is significant that the voice of the First Lady of the United States of America will address us right here today.

Hillary, the floor is yours.

Following is a transcript of introductory remarks by Kevin Klose, President of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty:

Ladies and gentlemen, President Havel, Mrs. Clinton, Ambassador Walker, Ambassador Albright, Ambassador Zantovsky [Czech Ambassador to the United States], government officials, ministers, and distinguished guests.

On this Independence Day, 1996, the 220th celebration of the United States, we are also celebrating the second anniversary of the decision to move Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty to the former Federal Parliament Building here in Prague. We are deeply honored that Mrs. Clinton has chosen our headquarters from which to make an historic Independence Day address.

I am pleased to note that another greatly admired First Lady, Eleanor Roosevelt, broadcast a message of hope to the Soviet peoples from our New York bureau in January, 1958. And as Mrs. Roosevelt's address was carried to millions immediately, so Mrs. Clinton's address today will be carried eastward by our transmitters and satellite connections to our broadcast lands.

History has taught that democracy cannot live in an information vacuum. Indeed, a well-informed citizenry is essential for democracy and free-market economies to flourish. This powerful historic truth guides our radios each day. Our services in 23 languages provide accurate, objective news and information to millions of people across 11 time zones.

Citizens in newly emancipated lands can be freed from the past by the power of information itself to establish civil societies. The stakes are enormous. Civil societies that guard human freedoms across our broadcast region can guarantee a stable, peaceful future for all of Europe and the world. Our mission, to assist democratic change, to combat nationalism and racism, must not falter.

Thanks to the generosity and farsightedness of President Havel and the Czech government, matched by the wisdom and responsiveness of President Clinton and the United States government, we are here. We are proud to say to all, "Come to Prague."

Here at the radios you will find 350 Czechs and Americans, and men and women from more than 20 other countries, working in harmony and partnership to broadcast truthful information for the sake of our homelands and the futures of our children.

Thank you, one and all. Thank you, Mrs. Clinton, for joining us to celebrate our Independence Day.

Ladies and gentlemen, with great pleasure I introduce the United States Ambassador to the United Nations, Madeleine Albright.

###

**FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
STATEMENT UPON DEPARTURE FROM ROMANIA
BUCHAREST, ROMANIA
JULY 2, 1996**

I leave Romania with new admiration for this country and for the courage of the Romanian people.

Although my stay was brief, I saw clear signs that democracy is taking root. Despite great obstacles and a long legacy of communist rule to overcome, the people of Romania are now poised to enter a new era politically, economically and socially and to take their place in the Democratic family of the West.

I was proud to see the ways in which the United States, through public and private sources, is working with the government and non-governmental organizations to help build the foundations of democratic society and improve health, education and civic life in Romania.

When I return to the United States, I will think back fondly on my visit here. And I will know that the Romanian people are on the right path to a successful democratic future.

**FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
STATEMENT UPON DEPARTURE FROM SLOVAKIA
JULY 6, 1996**

I am glad to have had this chance to visit Bratislava, a city that has played an important role in European history, and to have met with people striving to make a difference in this period of historical opportunity.

During my brief stay, many people told me of Slovakia's accomplishments and of the challenges still confronting the nation as it seeks to rejoin the democratic family of the West. Democracy depends on the full participation of all segments of society, and I was gratified to meet with so many Slovak citizens and representatives of non-governmental organizations who are embracing the principles of democracy and trying to integrate them into the life of their country. I also met with President Kovacs and Prime Minister Meciar, who were generous in sharing their views about Slovakia's aspirations for progress.

To the government and people of Slovakia, I offer thanks for the hospitality and warmth extended to me today.

###

**FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
STATEMENT UPON ARRIVAL IN ESTONIA
TALLIN, ESTONIA
JULY 8, 1996**

This is my first visit to Estonia, and I am grateful for the opportunity to be in a country that has left behind a terrible legacy of totalitarianism in favor of democracy and freedom.

To the Estonian government and people I bring a message of encouragement and support from America. We admire your courage, tenacity, and commitment to democracy and free market economics. And we will stand by you as you complete your democratic journey and rejoin the free nations of the West.

While in Tallin, I will meet with government leaders, representatives of non-governmental organizations and others involved in the building of democratic institutions in Estonia. I also hope to learn more about the rich history and culture that speaks to Estonia's European heritage and orientation.

To the government and people of Estonia, I convey my sincere thanks for the warm welcome you have shown me.

FINAL

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
STATEMENT UPON DEPARTURE FROM ESTONIA
TALLINN, ESTONIA
JULY 9, 1996

I leave Tallinn today inspired by Estonia's example as a country that has lifted itself from the darkness of occupation to a place among the democratic nations of the West. Even on this short visit I could see that Estonia is enthusiastically embracing the democratic values so necessary to reuniting Europe in the post-Cold War era.

While problems remain, particularly in the area of inter-ethnic relations, I talked to many government leaders and private citizens of different backgrounds who are confident that Estonia can prosper and thrive as a free, democratic and multi-ethnic society.

I will return home with high hopes about Estonia's future, and a warm place in my heart for the Estonian people. This is a beautiful country, one which I look forward to visiting again. To President and Mrs. Meri and the people of Estonia, I offer my deepest thanks for making my visit so special.

###

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
REMARKS FOR 500th HUMANITARIAN AIRLIFT SEND-OFF
ANDREWS AIR FORCE BASE
JUNE 17, 1997

I am delighted to join all of you in celebrating the 500th airlift of Operation Provide Hope, this wonderful partnership between the Departments of State and Defense, private industry and voluntary organizations to bring much-needed medical supplies, food, clothing, and most all, hope, to the people of the former Soviet Union.

For more than five years, Operation Provide Hope has been quietly and efficiently delivering some \$1.8 billion worth of humanitarian assistance to hospitals in the New Independent States. This 500th airlift, which will carry \$7 million of donated medicine to Uzbekistan, demonstrates America's continuing commitment to strengthening our world's newest democracies and to securing the well-being of their children and families.

I have seen firsthand the difference Operation Provide Hope has already made in the New Independent States. More than three years ago, I was on hand at Children's Hospital #4 in Minsk, Belarus when Operation Provide Hope delivered shipments of medical supplies, equipment, beds and linens. At the Savior's Hospital for Peace and Charity in Moscow, I visited a pediatric ward equipped with beds donated by Operation Provide Hope. In 1995, at the Left Bank Center for Maternal and Child Health Care in Kiev, I had the honor of announcing Operation Provide Hope initiatives to upgrade a hospital in Donetsk and to bring insulin, antibiotics and other medicines to the people of the Ukraine. And just last year, I hosted a ceremony at the White House to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster and recognize the efforts of the American relief community, including Operation Provide Hope's airlift mission to aid the Chernobyl victims of Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova.

At each hospital I visited, I saw the extraordinary work being done by health care professionals under extremely trying circumstances. Doctors and nurses told me of chronic shortages of medicine and supplies -- everything from syringes and simple antibiotics to chemotherapy medications and MRI machines.

So I am extremely proud that America could come together to help meet these needs. Private companies and relief organizations have provided 80 percent of the medicine and supplies sent abroad. Military planes have carried these supplies around the world to the New Independent States. Relief workers based in these new countries have worked to make sure the supplies reach the people who need them most. Through the American International Health Alliance, American hospitals have formed partnerships with hospitals in the New Independent States, offering them training and technical assistance. Today's airlift also begins Operation Provide Hope's 12th hospital upgrade project. The Department of Defense will send \$15 million in medical equipment and hospital supplies, as well as a 35-member team to install the new machines and train the staff at 16 hospitals in Uzbekistan.

Operation Provide Hope represents the best of what the United States can do in the world.

It is a testament to American teamwork, compassion and faith in democratic values. These airlifts and shipments also play a powerful role in American diplomacy: In lands where American military planes once inspired fear and loathing, they are now couriers of hope and friendship.

Foreign humanitarian assistance is not a short-term investment. The people of the New Independent States are struggling to build the infrastructure and institutions needed to sustain democracy and repair the human spirit after harsh decades of totalitarianism. It is our moral responsibility, as believers in freedom and democracy, to help them.

To the members of Congress, and members of the Clinton and Bush administrations who are present today, I want to say thank you for your leadership on this project. To the private-voluntary organizations, the pharmaceutical companies, the Departments of State and Defense, congratulations and thank you for your dedication and commitment to Operation Provide Hope. And to the ambassadors of the New Independent States who are here today, thank you for all of your support and assistance in making these airlifts and shipments possible.

###

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

March 27, 1996

**REMARKS BY FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
AT THE CIRAGAN PALACE
ISTANBUL, TURKEY**

MRS. CLINTON: It is an honor to be with you here in Turkey today, and to experience firsthand the splendor of one of the world's greatest cities.

Before coming to Istanbul, many people described for me what it is like to stand on one continent and look across the water to another. Today, I can see even more clearly that Turkey is the cross-roads of Europe and Asia -- a bridge between eras, peoples, ideas, visions and cultures.

I would like to thank the people of Turkey for extending such a warm and gracious welcome to me and my daughter and those traveling with us. To the President and Prime Minister I owe special thanks for their warm hospitality yesterday in Ankara.

I know that my husband is very much looking forward to meeting with President Demirel in Washington this week -- and to building on the many values and aspirations that the American and Turkish people share.

Our nations have been friends and allies for the better part of this century -- indeed, we have stood side by side through many international crises. We are strategic partners working together to bring peace and stability to many trouble spots today. President Clinton was most grateful for Turkey's participation in the recent anti-terrorism summit in Egypt. The United States looks forward to strengthening that friendship in the years ahead.

In a world so often torn by tensions of geography, ethnicity, religion, and history, Turkey gives us a glimpse of a more hopeful future. Here, we see not a clash of civilizations, but a coming together of East and West, European and Asian, traditional and modern, and men and women.

We see Islam co-existing with secularism. We see proof that such a co-existence is not only possible -- but advantageous to all segments of society.

Yet looking in almost every direction from here -- east, west, north and south -- we see examples of what happens when the ideals of respect, tolerance, civility and reconciliation are lost.

Just a few days ago I was in Bosnia visiting American troops in Tuzla, where I also had the opportunity to speak with the Turkish commander of the troops your country has sent as peacemakers.

Violence and ethnic cleansing in the past four years have claimed far too many victims in Bosnia. Our troops -- and yours -- and the many civilians and non-governmental organizations at work in the former Yugoslavia are not just helping build a lasting peace; they are helping the people of that war-torn land build a multi-ethnic, multi-religious democracy.

It won't happen overnight, nor can we expect it to. The United States has been working to perfect democracy for more than 200 years. Turkey continues to strive for the democratic ideal 73 years after the founding of the Republic.

A strong democracy requires economic stability, religious and social harmony, a healthy and educated population, a free and open system of justice and a political process that does not exclude any person because of gender, ethnic origin, race, faith, or station in life.

No nation can achieve the ideals of democracy if it fails to uphold the rights of all citizens. Respecting human rights means respecting the views of those who may disagree with their governments. It means granting citizens the freedom to assemble, organize, and debate openly. It means not denying people their life or dignity because of the peaceful expression of their ideas and opinions.

It also means ensuring that women throughout their lives are guaranteed access to what I call the tools of opportunity: education, health care, jobs, credit, legal protection and political freedom.

This is particularly urgent today. We are not just at the dawn of a new century but on the frontier of a new world. Although we have witnessed the long rule of

dictators and controlled economies giving way to democracy and free markets in country after country, we also have seen a resurgence of ethnic and religious strife around the globe.

Rapid and profound change has created unprecedented opportunities for peace and prosperity, but also has inflamed old tensions and weighed us down with new ones.

The challenge of deep poverty still confronts us. The challenge of living together in peace and harmony in the face of ethnic, religious and other tensions among peoples has never been greater. The challenge of putting people first, of including all of our citizens as full participants in our economic and political lives -- men and women, rich and poor, people of all races and creeds -- has yet to be met.

These ancient challenges are compounded by the stresses inherent in a time of global transformation.

The so-called Information Age holds great potential: modern technology enables us to communicate more quickly and understand each other better. Yet we also know that it poses a difficult problem: A vast majority of our world's people are not equipped with the skills they need for the new global economy.

And if consumerism is the primary message being transmitted, the explosion in material expectations will put additional demands on institutions ranging from the family to the government. Those expectations are not likely to be realized quickly or fully.

Together we must address both the opportunities and the difficulties that confront us today -- for ourselves, our families, and the future of our children.

The question is what we can do to create a better future for all of us. I believe that one place to start is by ensuring that women are fulfilled in their own lives and able to participate fully in our national lives.

Women represent half the world's population. And yet in country after country, they lack access to education, to health services, to jobs, to political and civil rights.

Where women lack access to education, health care

and economic opportunity, children tend to be less educated, less well nourished, and families tend to be larger and poorer. Where women are illiterate, the environment is often poorly managed and democracy remains fragile.

One lesson we have learned over the past decade is that where women prosper, countries prosper.

The education of all people, and especially women, reaps enormous dividends for societies. Education is not only about acquiring skills; it helps us understand and tolerate differences and learn the value of civility. Education holds out the promise that we can live together more harmoniously. It helps us understand the unsettling changes in our lives today and manage those changes. Education is as important to peace as it is to prosperity.

To bring women more fully into our national lives, we must be committed to the education of girls and women. They must be able to attend school -- not just to become literate but to gain the knowledge and expertise they need in areas such as medicine, engineering, management, computer science and many others that will enable them to contribute to the prosperity of their families and their nations.

Women must have access to health care, especially the care they need as new mothers. Wives, together with their husbands, must have access to family planning services so that they can make voluntary, responsible and informed choices about the size of their families. And children -- girls as well as boys -- must have access to preventive and curative medical care that will enable them to grow into healthy adults.

I recognize that some people still regard education and health care for girls and women as "soft." Often these matters are dismissively labeled as so-called "women's issues" that do not belong at the center of debate about the serious challenges of our time. I would argue strongly, however, that social development, especially investments in women, are as important to the prosperity and stability of a nation as investments in free markets and trade.

But even assuming you agree with my argument, what is to be done to bring about strategies for such development?

That question deserves far more analysis and discussion than I can offer today. But let me suggest

that governments, businesses, the non-profit sector and individual citizens must all play a role in ensuring that those investments are made for the betterment of our nations and of our global family.

First, governments must continue to expand the general conditions required for democracy and market economies so that we can unleash the creative energies of millions of people who are prepared to act responsibly and take advantage of opportunities available to them.

Where social services are limited, and when women have no access to them, growth will be uneven and prosperity hindered. My own country is engaged in a vigorous debate right now over government's role in providing social services because we have seen that a significant number of our citizens are not equipped to share in the rewards of the newly emerging economy.

Every government must invest more resources in the education and health care of children, especially girls. This should be a priority that takes precedence over competing budgetary demands. For some countries, it means providing schools and clinics where they are needed and incentives for families to educate and provide health care for all their children. For a country like the United States, it means delivering existing services more efficiently and with greater accountability for outcomes.

Although governments have primary responsibility for creating a climate that encourages economic growth and social development, businesses also have a role to play.

Businesses are increasingly pressured to think about short-term profits, but they must begin to recognize that the social costs of doing business often have medium and long term economic consequences. Depleting natural or human resources destroys and undermines confidence in markets. The world needs socially responsible business leadership today more than ever.

No matter how much governments and businesses do to encourage social development, they cannot achieve such goals alone, nor should they be expected to. Citizens, cooperating in non-governmental organizations like many of those represented here, must also take initiative and even provide the lead. NGO leadership is typically highly motivated and energetic in pursuing a vision of a better world, and increasingly governments and the private sector are relying on NGOs for guidance

in making social and economic investments.

I believe that it is only through the responsible involvement of all segments of society -- along with individual citizens -- that women will become full partners in society and democracy will be preserved and strengthened.

Yesterday, I had the honor of laying a wreath at the mausoleum of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk in Ankara. Ataturk's enduring vision of an independent, prosperous, modern and secular Turkey has enabled this nation to overcome obstacles and conditions that have impeded progress in many other countries around the world.

He, more than almost any other leader in this century, understood that a nation that wished to control its own destiny and compete in the world had to invest in its single greatest resource -- its people. And he understood that women were a critical part of that equation.

In 1923, he said that "it is scientifically improbable and even impossible for a society to progress if it does not march toward the same goals with all its men and women."

Ataturk led Turkey farther along the path to gender equality than many Muslim and Western nations. Thanks to his reforms, women in Turkey have enjoyed significant positions in government, medicine, the law, and the academy.

By insisting that women take part in the political and social life of the country and by insisting that girls and women be educated, Ataturk not only improved the lives of Turkish women, he improved the lot of Turkish families and Turkish society as well.

Yet I also know that in every country, including my own, much remains to be done to protect the gains that have been made on behalf of women, to improve their opportunities as citizens and to strengthen the foundations of democratic society.

Illiteracy among women continues to be an impediment to economic progress for an entire nation. Pressures caused by population growth disproportionately affect women, but also significantly

affect families, communities, health care systems, schools, and government. And the ongoing abuse of women in and out of their homes -- a tragedy that occurs in every socio-economic class in every country of the world -- undermines the stability of families and inhibits the contributions that women can and should be making to society.

The influence of women must also be felt in the political arena, both as voters and as elected officials in government. Having too few women engaged in the political process diminishes the potential of democracy in too many countries. I am particularly aware of this problem because, in the United States, women won the right to vote more than 75 years ago. Yet tens of millions of women fail to exercise that right today.

Ataturk was ahead of his time in believing that women were vital to the progress of society. His vision of economic progress, human development, and citizenship remains our vision today.

Turkey knows, as America knows, that democracy is the best hope for all people and all nations to live together peaceably and to realize the God-given potential of all men and women.

If we all take our personal responsibilities seriously, and use our voices and votes to fulfill our nations' economic and political aspirations, we will create a better world for all those who follow us, whether they are men or women, boys or girls. Ultimately, that is what should motivate political, economic, and social decisions here in Turkey in America, and around the world.

Thank you very much.

###

transcript

**FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
REMARKS TO THE WOMEN OF AUSTRALIA
SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA
NOVEMBER 21, 1996**

Thank you very much. I am delighted to be here in this magnificent opera house, one of the architectural wonders of our world.

I want to thank Mrs. Howard for the warm hospitality that she and the Prime Minister have extended to my husband and me in Sydney and Canberra. I also want to thank Senator Newman for her words. Which I deeply agreed with, in terms of the agenda that confronts us and our mutual need learn from one another as we work on these problems. And I would be honored to take the message back that perhaps we could even strengthen our relationship. Thank you, too, Ambassador Dalrymple, for chairing the host committee. And I want to thank someone else -- Kaarn Weaver -- for the wonderful job you do every day in representing the United States in Australia.

Let me also thank our sponsors this afternoon: The Australian Center for American Studies at the University of Sydney, the New South Wales Branch of the Australian Institute of International Affairs, and the Research Institute for Asia and the Pacific, also at the University of Sydney.

Finally I want to thank the Australian people we have met and seen waving in crowds along every street we have traveled. You have made my husband and me feel so welcome and have only increased our desire to return with our daughter to this extraordinary country. The timing of our next visit, and whether we come in disguise, may depend more on the outcome of the golf match my husband is currently playing than on scheduling concerns. He may wish he had encountered a shark in the harbor - rather than on the fairway.

This is my first visit to Australia. I must confess that, while growing up, I was like many Americans who had a sense of Australia from seeing movies, images of the vast outback: Much like our Wild West, a place occupied by roguish types like Ned Kelly and filled with kangaroos. Just as, I assume, Australians who have not yet visited the United States might perhaps think that our country is one long-running episode of Melrose Place, not to mention that all our children like to dunk basketballs and wear baseball caps backwards.

I was thinking about our countries when my husband and I

arrived here the other evening from Honolulu. A few years back I had read Jill Ker Conway's memoir, The Road from Coorain, which included a memorable passage about her return home after a long sojourn in Europe. In it she describes flying into Sydney and seeing -- from above -- the beauty of the harbor, the golden beaches and the "grey-green city" lying at the edge of a continent.

At that moment she finally understands Australia's unique orientation in the world. The country, she writes, looks "across the vast expanse of the Pacific, not to Europe, but to Japan and Continental Asia."

Having read that passage, and being here for a few days now, before I travel to the Philippines and Thailand -- the Near North, not the Far East -- I feel better oriented in our world too.

Despite the thousands of miles of ocean that separate your country and mine, we are bound together in friendship and partnership based on common experiences and values.

We are united, not least, by our commitment to democracy and the values that democracy seeks to uphold. As proponents of freedom, we rejoice in recent developments around the globe: There is no Iron Curtain any more. In country after country, dictatorships have crumbled and democracy has come alive. The threat of nuclear war no longer hovers over us. As my husband said yesterday in Parliament, opportunities for peace and prosperity are greater than ever before. And the prospect of a new and even more dynamic century beckons us.

B.A. B.A. to A.A.
Yet at the same time, many people in our countries and around the world feel the strains caused by global competition and the rapid pace of change. The superficial cultural homogenization of the world means that people from Boston to ~~Brisbane~~, Paris to Perth, and Moscow to Melbourne may wear the same jeans, eat the same fast food, and listen to the same music. But these surface similarities do not and cannot override a longing for identity and meaning in their own lives. Despite improving material conditions in advanced economies, families seem under stress. The gap between the rich and the poor grows wider. Even in the United States and Australia, the social safety net -- health care, education, pensions, good wages and good jobs -- is in danger of fraying for those less able to navigate this new world.

These pressures pose unavoidable questions for all of us as we approach the 21st century: Questions about how to balance individual and community rights and responsibilities; about how parents will raise children in the face of the influences of the

mass media and consumer culture; about personal identity and work in an age of globalization, information overload and high technology; about the roles of women in society; about how people will preserve their ethnic pride and value their national citizenship; about how nations will protect their sovereignty while cooperating regionally and globally with others.

Thinking about these challenges, and how free nations like ours will respond to them, we may need to be reminded that democracy is not just about our legally protected rights, elections or even free market economies. It's about the internalization of democratic values in people's hearts, minds and everyday lives. It's about how, in the absence of either hot or cold wars, democracy is rooted in the experiences of our young people. It's about developing among democratic nations what I call "an alliance of values" that withstands tyranny and terrorism. An alliance based on the shared values of freedom, opportunity, responsibility, community and respect for human rights.

Building and sustaining democracy has always required a balance of power that allows those values to flourish: A balance of public political power, private economic power and the power of civil society, those formal and informal networks that bring people together to make decisions for themselves and for the common good.

Democratic values are at risk when that balance shifts to the extremes: When government becomes too cumbersome or too intrusive or too restrictive. When the marketplace, which by definition knows the price of everything but the value of nothing, lures citizens into becoming merely consumers who care only about satisfying their personal wants. When civil society, which consists of local organizations, and philanthropies, and volunteer associations, and neighborhood groups and individual families, is weakened by larger political and economic forces.

Every generation faces the task of achieving the proper balance of power so that democratic values can survive and thrive.

Whether we succeed at this task is particularly important for women, whose voices are still too often silenced in too many parts of the world. It is equally important for women in countries such as ours who are still striving to attain and define their place in government, the economy and civil society and claim their share of personal, political, economic, and civic power.

During the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, I said that women's rights were human rights -- and

human rights are women's rights. One would think that at the end of this century that should be an unremarkable statement. I have been overwhelmed by the response that speech received. And also bewildered that the proposition should be open to question.

A few months ago I appeared on a radio program for the Voice of America. I fielded questions from all over the world. And many callers referred to my Beijing speech. And one male caller asked what my statement about women's rights really meant. I told him to imagine the rights men had and wanted and to apply them to women: the right to be valued as a member of a family, to be protected from violence and exploitation, to be assured equal access to the tools of opportunity -- health care, education, legal rights, political participation, economic empowerment -- tools that equip an individual with the capacity to make responsible decisions for one's life. Where women are given human rights they help create conditions in which they, their families and communities flourish.

Yet we know that even in advanced democracies such as ours, where these conditions are present for the vast majority of women, women's roles and rights are still being debated. They are being debated among women as well as between men and women, with implications for whether our democracies will meet the challenges of the future.

I know that some of you may recall we recently had an election in the United States. Many critical issues were raised during the campaign. But for the first time in America, a new set of concerns took on political importance -- concerns about enhancing the quality of our lives, about raising children, about meeting the demands of work and family.

Why were these issues suddenly at the heart of American politics? Because they are real issues on people's minds -- kitchen table issues -- and about how public and private power should be balanced to address them.

For example, will a new mother and her infant be allowed to stay in the hospital as long as a doctor deems it necessary -- or will private business considerations determine when they are ready to be sent home?

Will parents be allowed to take time off from work to care for a sick child or a loved one -- or will they be forced to choose between meeting their responsibilities to their jobs and meeting their responsibilities to their families?

The Family and Medical Leave law, the first piece of legislation my husband signed as President in 1993, took on greater political significance because my husband's opponent and

End of

C.W.

women's

issues

have come

to forefront.

In U.S. -

child-care.

leaders of the other party in Congress disagreed about the law and the need to expand it. Family leave became a leading issue during the campaign, along with maternity stays for new mothers and how to protect health care coverage for older and poorer Americans, the majority of whom are women.

Even the book I wrote, It Takes a Village, became an issue in the campaign after it was attacked as an endorsement of government taking a dominant role in the raising of children. Anyone who reads the book knows that was not its theme. Rather, I argued that, although families bear the primary responsibility for child-rearing, ~~each individual and institution in society~~ has a responsibility toward children as well. The village of which I wrote is not a geographic location but a community of shared values and relationships.

People all over America started coming up to me at campaign appearances I made on behalf of my husband wearing buttons that said "It does take a village" or "I am a villager" or "Welcome to our village." They recognized that building a sense of community based on mutual responsibility not only helps all of us to work for our own ends - but also to help each other succeed as well. From what I know of your country, that is an unassailable tenet of your social contract even though you may disagree over the specifics.

Many observers in America, however, were perplexed that these issues were so important to voters this year. Accustomed to discussions of defense, diplomacy, economics and trade, some commentators never really caught on that so-called "women's issues" mattered because -- at root -- they were about the way that men and women live together and in society.

Such issues instead were often dismissed as marginal to the larger challenges our nation is facing or derided as "the feminization of politics."

What an unfortunate term. After all, don't fathers worry about how long their wives and babies can stay in the hospital when they need care? Don't men want to be able to take time off when a family member is gravely ill? Don't sons want to ensure that their elderly parents have health care coverage in the later stages of life?

Instead of the "feminization of politics," I prefer to think of this phenomenon as the "humanization of politics" in America. What we saw being played out in the political arena was how in a democracy people's personal concerns can become political if they use their voices -- and their votes -- to define them.

That represents a maturing of politics. The gender gap we

heard so much about in the American election was simply a measure of how women, who are experts on the hazards and vicissitudes of life, voted their self interest and their values. In so doing they delivered a clear message that the issues they care about deserve to be on the front burner of national politics.

I have come up with my own term for this phenomenon. Like some of you, I studied political science in college. I have followed politics closely in my years as a citizen activist and political spouse. And I have come to a fairly good understanding of the historic concept of *realpolitik* among and between nations.

What women are saying today -- loudly and clearly -- is that national politics is not just about *realpolitik*. It's also about *real life politik*, how we live together.

I realize there will be women who disagree with me and with each other about specific issues and where the balance of power between and among institutions and individuals should rest. In my country, some women believe the President and Congress over-extended government's power in legislating family leave and the length of maternity hospital stays. In contrast, other women think government needs more power to control economic forces that can disrupt the lives of families and communities.

And some women are just plain squeamish when the subject of power arises. It is something, they believe, that should be discussed quietly behind the scenes and exercised -- if at all -- by women only within the scope of their personal lives.

Regardless of where we stand on any particular issue or on the larger question of balancing the powers in our lives, we must acknowledge that much is at stake for women collectively in this debate. Not just in the United States but here in Australia and around the world.

Will democracies on every continent come to understand that issues affecting women are not soft or marginal, but are central to the progress and prosperity of every nation?

Will public and private institutions help empower women with the tools they need to expand their choices and take responsibility for their lives? And by that I mean, among other things, will education be affordable and accessible to all women so that they can acquire the skills and knowledge they need to help themselves and contribute to society? Will businesses initiate policies that make work more family-friendly, like child care, flexible hours, or parental leave? Will employers value women by paying them equal pay for equal work?

Will law enforcement and justice systems act more

efficiently to protect women from violations of their legal rights, particularly from violence in their own homes?

Will financial institutions provide credit for women -- especially poor women who, with access to small loans, can lift themselves and their families out of poverty?

Will individual women be respected for the choices they make about family, work and personal growth -- and will they be able to make those choices free of the burden of other people's and society's expectations? Will we stop pigeon-holing women and invoking stereotypes that limit their potential? Will we admit that there is no formula for being a successful or fulfilled woman in today's society? That one can choose full-time motherhood and homemaking. Or be committed to work outside the home without marriage or children. Or, like most of us today, balance work and family responsibilities. And that each of our choices will be supported and respected.

Yesterday at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra my husband and I visited the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. One of the honor guards was a woman. I was heartened that she had the freedom to choose military service as a way to fulfill her aspirations. This was the right choice for her. It would not necessarily be the right choice for me, or for many of you. But we should all be able to celebrate the diversity of experiences that women are choosing for themselves today.

And finally, will we acknowledge, once and for all, that issues of concern to women do not just affect women but affect men too?

These are the questions we are struggling to answer. They are about the balance of power and about the balance we seek in our lives and in the larger community we share.

I welcome the debate. It is a great debate. It is a contentious debate. It is a necessary debate for any democracy on the eve of a new century.

And I am optimistic that women will help to shape the answers we seek. I'm optimistic because I have met women throughout the world who have seized this moment to make their voices heard on behalf of themselves and democracy's values. I have met women in Northern Ireland -- Catholics and Protestants -- who are working together to address the root causes of sectarian violence. I have met women in South Africa -- blacks and whites -- who helped lead the struggle to end apartheid. I have met women in Bosnia -- Croats, Serbs and Muslims -- who are transcending long-standing ethnic hatreds to keep the peace in that war-torn land. I have met women in Russia, Poland, the Czech

Republic, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, the Baltic region and in Mongolia who are leading the effort to build democratic governments, free market economies and civil society from the ruins of dictatorship. I have met women in South America who are joining forces to improve literacy and health care for women and children throughout the continent. And I have met women in South and East Asia who are working to provide economic opportunity for the poorest of the poor through small loans and credit.

I have met women in my own country who have come together to make their streets safer, their schools stronger, and the environment cleaner. And just in the few days I have been here, I have met women who are enriching this nation through their contributions to politics, law, science, education, the arts, journalism and so much else.

Some of the women I have met are famous. But most are not. They are not high-level diplomats or professional negotiators. They have not been elected to office. They aren't wealthy or connected in the right social circles.

They simply took it upon themselves to get organized and to make their voices heard. They had faith in their own capacity to affect change. And they were not going to wait around for someone else to do it for them.

So I am hopeful. Because every country and every time has its Caroline Chisholm, Edith Cowan, and Mother Mary McKillop -- women who, well known or not, understand that we must find common ground. And that on that common ground we will build a society that is in balance, where our democratic values are alive and where individuals can live up to their own God-given potentials.

Mary Wollstonecraft once said "I do not wish women to have power over men, but over themselves."

That is what we are all striving for. This is what will ensure progress for women and their families, safeguard democracy, and make the world a better place for our children and ourselves. That is the challenge women face in the 21st century.

Thank you very much.

###

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

March 19, 1996

REMARKS BY FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
TO THE COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
NEW YORK, NEW YORK

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you so much. I am delighted to be here. I want to extend my congratulations to the council and to Lesley Gelb, Pete and Dwayne and all who have not only kept it going, but have kept it vital, and for this invitation to come and speak with you about women and development.

When a friend of mine found out that I would have this opportunity, which struck him as somewhat odd, he asked what my subject was. And I told him that I intended to talk about women and development. And his response was all too typical. He said, "Well, why would the council really care about that?" And I think it's a great tribute to the council and to all of you here that you do care about this issue, which I believe is among the most compelling, yet most overlooked, in the foreign policy arena. I also believe it has direct consequences for how we attempt to develop our own country.

My ideas on this subject are rooted both in personal observations and experiences here at home and overseas, and in the growing body of research and literature about social development.

Some of you may have wondered how I've spent my time lately. Among the areas that I have spent time working on for the past three years are those that effect women's' development and their children, with particular emphasis on what we as a nation can do both alone and through multi-lateral arrangements.

I have been very fortunate to meet with women literally all over the world. I've met with new mothers in Jojakarta, Indonesia, who gather in their village each week to learn about family planning and better nutrition for their children. I have talked with doctors and nurses in Belarus and Ukraine who are trying to keep alive the children of Chernobyl. I have met with women from Tokyo to London to Ottawa to Santiago, to talk about what we have in common, what we can learn from one another and how we can best utilize our resources to assist in the process of development.

never dreamed possible. And as a result of their cooperation through SEWA, they were beginning to influence local government, police and commerce, all because they were finally recognizing they had a contribution to make and had been given the tools of opportunity needed to make that contribution.

That is but one example of grass-roots enterprises targeted at women that are reshaping local and regional landscapes around the world. Many of the projects that I have visited have received some support from the United States Agency for International Development. And after seeing those dollars at work on several continents, I am more convinced than ever that small amounts of American aid can be a catalyst for untangling the web of poverty, illiteracy, inadequate health care and cultural hostility that today still prevents women and girls from becoming full and equal partners in their societies.

I am also pleased that based on these results -- which we can point to and measure -- the Clinton Administration has doubled the investment in social development through the development banks.

These investments that we make with our tax dollars are not a one-way street. In fact, I have also visited projects here in the United States, projects that have borrowed from what works overseas. Not only from a project like SEWA, but other microcredit enterprise projects, most notably one begun by Dr. Mohammed Yunus, the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh. I have also visited projects run by FINCA, another microcredit enterprise bank in Latin America.

I wish that all of you could have been with me in Bangladesh, to visit the village that was picked out to show me the way the Grameen bank worked in action. It happened to be a village of Hindu untouchables, and once that village was selected, the village down the road a few miles demanded that they too wanted a visit. It was a Muslim village. Because of my schedule there was no way that I could go to both villages, so for the first time ever the Muslim women came to the Hindu village. They worked together to prepare the village for my visit. I met with all of them in their borrowing groups, and listened to them tell stories about the way their being a borrower of the Grameen Bank had changed the way they looked at sending their daughters to school, working outside their homes, cooperating to sink wells. It was one of the most amazing experiences that I have ever had.

And then half a world away, in a barrio in Managua, Nicaragua, I met with women that had borrowed from the FINCA bank. After they finished telling me about their own enterprises, I asked if they had any questions. And one woman said, "I saw you on television, talking to other women very far

away. I think in India. What did you talk to them about? What do we have to learn from them?"

That's the kind of experience that I have also seen beginning to be replicated here at home. We are starting to invest in microcredit efforts. I have visited a program called Mi Casa, in Denver, that helps many women on the model of the Grameen Bank or SEWA, to acquire the same skills and the same access to credit that transformed lives many, many miles away.

I will never forget one woman in Denver who said to me that she had tried for years to borrow enough money to be able to expand a small bakery business because she considered herself the best baker in her neighborhood in Denver. She would go to the bank and the bank would tell her she didn't have enough collateral, she didn't have enough experience. They weren't going to lend even the \$1,000 she asked for, until finally she found this program at Mi Casa. She said, "You know, many great ideas die in the parking lots of banks." I thought that was a telling statement, because in this country, particularly with the way banking has changed, many, many ideas die in the parking lots. And to provide credit to small entrepreneurs, to those who are on the brink of poverty themselves but who have a market in neighborhoods and communities that other businesses shun, is one of the best investments we can make in helping to lift our own people out of poverty.

Certainly, we know that the kind of investments that work in helping people to become self-sufficient -- particularly in an economy as complicated as ours -- will take time and effort, just as it has taken time and effort elsewhere. But we are finally beginning to put into action some of what we have learned. The Small Business Administration is making more loans than ever to women. And through the Treasury Department we are finally seeing the Community Development Financial Institutions Fund, recognizing through new Presidential awards, programs to honor outstanding American micro-lending organizations.

Certainly these kinds of cross fertilizing lessons -- that we can learn from because we have helped to seed them elsewhere and to bring them home here -- are a way of demonstrating that our national interest must take root in the values that we profess here and abroad.

There is another example I would like to mention, and that concerns our support for family planning programs to help stabilize populations, to help reverse or ameliorate the environmental degradation and to help reduce abortions in the developing world.

At the moment, roughly 100 million women cannot get or are not using family planning services because they are poor,

uneducated or don't have access to care.

Some 20 million women will seek unsafe abortions. Some will die, some will be disabled for life, some will go through with unintended pregnancies, some will find their lives, their opportunities therefore curtailed. If the United States does not want women here and elsewhere to have abortions, then the United States should do more to support family planning programs, particularly in overpopulated developing nations.

I have visited hospitals where I have seen half of the women admitted being there as a result of the consequences of self-induced abortions. Most recently I visited a hospital in Salvador, Brazil. I saw classrooms throughout that hospital displaying charts and diagrams of information about reproduction and family planning. I also met with the Minister of Health, who told me about what a difference it was beginning to make that USAID was supporting family planning information and services. And he said something that I have long remembered. He said, "The rich women and the middle class women here in Brazil have always had access to family planning. It is only the poor women who have not." And so even there, in a predominantly Catholic country, there is growing recognition that family planning saves lives, and that American aid to such efforts is in our interests as well as those who need help.

Now I'm not suggesting that through microcredit or family planning programs, or through any of the other social investments that I believe make a difference, U.S. foreign aid is a panacea for women or for developing countries. Nor am I starry-eyed enough to believe that every just cause in the world, whether or not it is related to women, is ours to embrace.

But I do believe that as long as discrimination and inequities persist, and are so commonplace around the world -- so long as women are valued less, fed less, fed last, overworked, underpaid, not schooled and subjected to violence in and out of their homes -- the potential of all of us to create a stable, peaceful, and ultimately prosperous world will be far from realized. And that in turn affects stability, peace and growing prosperity that is in our national interest.

If we care, as we do, about opening foreign markets for American goods and services...if we care about making our country secure in the face of new post-Cold War threats...if we care about enlarging the world's community of democracies, then I believe we have to address the conditions and circumstances of the world's women, who after all comprise more than half of the population, but are 70% of the poor and two-thirds of those who are not taught to read and write.

So many of the everyday indignities and tragedies that women

around the world face -- seeing a child die of malnutrition, watching a son go off to school, but not a daughter, being forced into prostitution or indentured servitude, being barred from the bank or the ballot box -- are reversible if enough women have enough education and enough authority over their own lives.

Women remain the primary caretakers of the world's children and elderly, and families throughout the world rely on women for emotional support and increasingly for outside income. In a time when the pressures of consumption and technology place greater burdens on family life in virtually every country on the planet, women will be relied on even more to sustain and protect the family unit. And investing in those women will ensure that they have at least an even chance of being able to do that.

The single most important investment any developing nation can make today is in the education of girls and women. What we are discovering in country after country is that education is not just a means of acquiring knowledge, but that it has positive effect on women's health, nutrition, wages, and level of political participation.

Deputy Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers, who has studied for a number of years and written about the economics of women and development, argues that, "investment in the education of girls may well be the highest return investment available in the developing world."

Today, more than 600 million women worldwide are denied the opportunity for education. I have seen some of the reasons and talked with people about why women fall into that category. It's so clear that for many families, sending a girl to school still makes no economic sense since the girl will be sent away to live with someone else's family. Sending them to school in the face of the daily struggle to survive, planting crops and harvesting them, and fetching water, and doing all of the other domestic chores, makes no sense. Sending a daughter to a doctor when money is scarce, or feeding her when she is hungry but the boys have not yet eaten, makes no sense in the cultures and the reasoning of so many families.

But where we see exceptions to that kind of thinking, we see positive results. Take the very poor state of Kerala, in India. Now, Kerala has the highest literacy rate and life expectancy, as well as the lowest infant mortality rate, in India. "Why?" many people have asked. The answer seems to lie in their tradition of investing in health care and education, and including girls in that investment. We have also seen that a commitment to education is slowly making a difference in countries as far from one another as Jordan, or Pakistan, or Nepal.

In Bangladesh, I saw the struggling efforts of a country to

deal with the problem of girls not attending school. I visited a school run by the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee, a non-governmental organization, that believes education is a precondition for economic development. They also believe that educating girls is essential. Because of that, some of the BRAC schools have been burned, because extremist groups disagreed with educating girls and even with education itself. The schools keep being built.

Also in Bangladesh, I have seen the government working to provide incentives for families in two ways: The food for education program, where very poor families are enticed to send their children, including their daughters, to school in return for food allotments, given out every week. And then, as further encouragement to give girls the chance to go onto secondary school, the government is actually paying families by depositing a small amount of money in a bank account, so long as the girls attend school.

In Sri Lanka, women have had the right to vote for the better part of this century. Not surprisingly, they also demanded and received more education. So again, Sri Lanka, in comparison, has the region's best health care system and lower maternal mortality rates than many wealthier nations.

Outside Lahore, Pakistan, in a very small village, I met with ten women who talked to me about how they view their children's' futures. We were sitting in a dusty courtyard of a school that had been built for girls to receive primary education. One mother of 10 children, 5 boys and 5 girls, said that she had sent her daughters to this school, but now that her daughters had graduated, there was nowhere for them to go. There were no secondary schools nearby, and the family would not send the daughters, unlike the sons, to attend school somewhere else. That woman asked me, and the other mothers echoed her, if I would pass on to the government of Pakistan their interest in having a secondary school for girls built in their village.

Many of the problems that stand in the way of educating girls are ones that will take both government action and the concerted support of non-governmental organizations.

But we can begin to see the results. Chile has made enormous strides thanks to education reform and a return to democracy. I visited a poor area of Santiago where the schools are open on weekends to accommodate parents' work and provide babysitting. I also saw other examples of efforts to involve parents in their children's' education, and to persuade fathers to accept parenting responsibilities.

The United States recognizes the truth of what we are now learning about investing in girls education. And in Copenhagen,

last year, I was pleased to announce a new \$100 million USAID initiative for girls' and women's' education in the developing world. The first distribution has been made to India. This American aid can make a huge difference. And certainly those of us who believe that investing in people, particularly their education, is good for the United States should be supporting such programs.

Sadly, though, there are some in our country today who question the value of our political, economic, military and social engagements abroad. They believe that our commitments to other nations, and even to multilateral arrangements including the United Nations, are undermining our national sovereignty and sacrificing American interests.

I believe that America's global engagement is essential to strengthening our free market interests and spreading our democratic ideals, as well as providing for our security. By contrast, it is isolationism and its corollary, misguided unilateralism, that pose a great threat to our position in the world, as well as to the hopes and dreams of hundreds of millions of women, children and men.

We are at a turning point, as many of you in this audience know far better than I, where we, as a nation, have to decide whether we will remain engaged and then how we will act upon that engagement.

Over time, we have learned that our ideals and interests cannot be divorced from the political, economic and social cross-currents swirling around us. And I hope we have also learned that engagement represents opportunities as well as obligations.

For these reasons, it is troubling to see our bipartisan tradition of engagement and multi-lateralism threatened today. It is troubling to see negative stereotypes fostered purely for narrow political purposes, whether it is the distorted idea that the U.S. military would be under United Nations command, or the public ridiculing of the U.N. Secretary General's name.

This brand of demagoguery is a poor substitute for a forward-looking and forceful foreign policy.

Social development, the investment in people and their potential, is foreign policy, not social work. It is a realistic and moral way for the United States to help expand the global economy, nurture young democracies, and improve our own chances for peace and prosperity.

So as we reconsider today, and as we look forward into the future about what kind of leadership our nation intends to

provide to the rest of the world, I hope we will consider as a very practical part of that engagement social investments in women that will create a dynamic a new source of energy for a growing global economy and civil society.

I believe this development policy must become a central priority of our own foreign policy, and also it must be understood as a part of what we need to do here at home. By following through on such an investment approach we have the chance to bring us closer to a world in which distinctions between men and women are viewed ultimately as complementary parts to a greater whole. And we...really converge to reconsider what is in our best interests both here at home and abroad. Thank you very much.

###

THE FOLLOWING IS THE UNOFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT OF THE REMARKS FOR THE SEVENTH CONFERENCE OF SPOUSES OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT OF THE AMERICAS AS DELIVERED BY FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON, PANAMA CITY, OCTOBER 9, 1997.

Good morning. Mrs. Perez Balladares, First Ladies, your Majesty, representatives of the nations of the Western Hemisphere, and Distinguished Guests: I am honored to be part of this Seventh Conference of the Wives of Heads of State and Governments of the Americas and to join you for a third year at this important meeting.

I would like first to thank the government and the people of Panama, especially our hostess for organizing this conference and for welcoming us with the hospitality we have come to associate with your country. My country, the United States, and Panama enjoy a rich and enduring friendship -- one that will grow only stronger in the new millennium. For even as our century-old partnership at the canal comes to a historic moment of transition, we will always be bound by mutual respect and a shared commitment to securing the blessings of democracy for all of our people.

I think it is fitting that we gather in Panama for our annual conference. Panama is truly the crossroads of the Americas -- a nation that literally brings our hemisphere together. The diversity of this country -- ecological, cultural and ethnic -- is a microcosm of all the Americas.

We have come together here from across our hemisphere in hopes of building a better world and better lives for all women, children and families. In many ways, our task is more difficult and more complex than that of the canal builders a century ago. Instead of mountains, we seek to move hearts, to change old attitudes, to banish hunger and disease and ignorance, to educate all our children -- and very importantly-- to empower the women of this hemisphere to participate fully in the life of our nations.

We are pursuing our goals at a moment in history that is full of hope, a time ripe for social change of the most positive kind. Across the Americas, military dictatorships have given way to freely-elected democracies. For the first time in decades, or perhaps the first time ever, we have millions of people enjoying the right to choose their own leaders, to form their own opinions based on information gathered by a free press, to speak frankly and to meet in support or opposition to a cause.

- 2 -

Yet, we all know that every democracy, whether newly formed or centuries old, is fragile. The process of building and tending a democracy is never-ending. Democracy can only take root when its principles are internalized in the hearts and minds of all people. And democracy can only thrive when no one fears the consequences of standing up or speaking out for justice. And democracy can only achieve its fullest potential when women are not barred by law, by ignorance, by tradition or custom, or by intimidation from making their voices heard at the ballot box, and from pursuing their most cherished dreams.

That is why I believe this portion of our conference, aptly called "rights and participation," is so important. Empowering more women to seek and claim their rights as citizens and as human beings is the only way we can ensure that our democracies -- old and new -- survive and thrive into the 21st century.

I am told that the word "empowerment" does not translate very well. But I am sure that every woman in this room knows its meaning well. "Empowerment" means the right to participate in the political and economic life of our countries. "Empowerment" means being able to lead lives free of sexual and domestic violence. Empowerment means access to justice under law, to education, to health care, to credit and property ownership.

In short, empowering women means making sure they are treated as full citizens in their countries. No nation can hope to succeed in our global economy if half of its people lack the opportunity and the right to make the most of their God-given potential. And as we can all attest, in too many countries, my own as well, too many rights are denied and too many doors of opportunity remain tightly closed.

Too many women live in fear of violence at the hands of family members. For them, their home provides no refuge, the law no protection, and public opinion no sympathy. Domestic and sexual violence against women remains one of the most serious and under-reported human rights violations in our region. We must all work to instill new attitudes and new protections against this human rights violation -- domestic violence. As Secretary of State Madeleine Albright -- my country's first female foreign minister -- has said, domestic violence can never be excused as cultural. It is criminal.

Too many women, especially those who are poor and less educated, are unaware of their legal rights in the workplace, of their rights to own and inherit property, of their rights to vote and choose their leaders. While these laws may exist on the books, they have never come alive for too many women.

Too many women and children are trapped in an endless cycle of poverty -- a cycle perpetuated by inadequate health care, poor or no access to family planning and limited education.

- 3 -

But let us not forget that we already know many of the solutions to these problems. We already know what works to change and improve lives. Next week, I will be privileged to travel to Venezuela and Brazil and Argentina with my husband. There, I will be visiting microcredit programs, family planning and education programs -- ones that I, and many of you, have worked to support here in the hemisphere and all around the world. These efforts have long, successful records of empowering women to lift their children, their families, their communities, and themselves out of poverty.

There is also encouraging news to report on the three priorities that were established following our meeting at the Miami Summit of the Americas in 1994 -- the elimination of measles in the Americas by the year 2000, the reduction of maternal mortality, and education reform -- all of which we have heard about this morning. Last year, not a single case of measles was reported in 27 countries of the Americas. And while we may have experienced a setback with an outbreak of the disease in Brazil, as well as in my own country, we must stay on track to meet the goal by the end of the century. Every country in the hemisphere has joined with PAHO in efforts to improve prenatal and obstetrical care and reduce maternal mortality, and many of the women in this room have contributed greatly to that effort. We have brought institutions and individuals together through the Partnership for Educational Revitalization in the Americas to boost public primary education. In Honduras, El Salvador and many other countries, more children are staying in school longer and graduating from primary school. And we have helped to elevate education reform and revitalization to the top of our respective countries' national agendas, where it belongs.

But the topic we are focusing on now -- the promotion and expansion of women's legal and political rights is perhaps the most difficult challenge we face. Slowly, but surely, we are witnessing legal reforms to raise the status of women in the home and in society. In Costa Rica, women have pushed through a law against domestic violence and worked to incorporate domestic abuse issues in police training. Many countries now have human rights ombudsmen with special offices dedicated to protecting the rights of women. In El Salvador, legislators have modernized rape laws, forcing perpetrators to face prosecution. They've also passed laws forcing politicians to prove that they have paid child support before running for office. A very good model. Here in Panama, legislators have reformed the Family Code to better regulate such matters as alimony, child support and child custody. Throughout Latin America, we see new laws encouraging more women to run for office. In my own country, we have introduced Comprehensive Violence Against Women plans that provide counseling for victims, training for police officers, and prosecution of offenders in all of our 50 states. These are some of the ideas we need to share with each other so that women throughout our hemisphere can experience the same improvements in their lives.

None of this progress would have happened if women themselves had not spoken out, demanded change and forced governments to respond to their needs. We must encourage more women to make their voices heard, to join together in both grassroots and national organizations to press political changes beneficial to all women, and to encourage women to take their

- 4 -

responsibility as citizens seriously to vote in local and national elections, and send more women into public office.

Only women ourselves can make democracy work for us and for our families. It is a message that is coming alive in countries all around the world. Last summer at a conference in Vienna, I was privileged to meet with a group of women from the newly-democratic countries of the former Soviet Union. They had just begun to recognize the power of independent citizen action to address challenges as diverse as the trafficking of women for prostitution and the improvement of health care. And they had gathered to share ideas, to renew and strengthen their faith in democratic values and freedoms. This kind of convening of many, many women might be beneficial for our hemisphere as well. To bring together women who are working on the front lines for the kinds of changes that will lead to the improvements we advocate. As our countries continue to expand our political, economic and strategic alliances, the women of this hemisphere can lead the way in building an alliance of democratic values that will strengthen our democracies into the next millennium.

In May, Secretary Albright and I visited the Inter-American Institute for Human Rights in Costa Rica. The organization was founded to defend and foster respect for human rights at a time when repressive regimes controlled the lives of many of the peoples of the Americas. Over the last decade, it has helped guide those countries along the difficult path toward democracy by advising leaders, educating citizens, and monitoring critical transitional elections. Today, the Institute's new mission is to help the new constitutional governments, their police forces, their citizens and children to understand and live by the principles of democracy — to create a true human rights culture in the Americas. Secretary Albright and I met with women activists and officials who told us that even though the governments had changed, the task of safeguarding and deepening respect for human rights remained as challenging as ever. A few years ago, the Institute began a Gender and Human Rights Program designed to educate women about their rights and promote the principle that women's rights are indeed human rights. Later this morning, there will be a ceremony announcing a \$4.8 million USAID grant to help the Institute continue with this important work, focused on women's rights.

Like the Institute, our work as individuals and as First Ladies of the Americas is far from done. We must continue struggling to make democracy mean justice for everyone, to encourage and empower all women to take their rightful place at the table and the government, in the corporation, and in every institution of society to use their talents to start businesses and pay back loans, to use their voices and votes to elect presidents and build peace. And we should not rest until we have repealed the laws, swept away the webs of tradition, stared down the forces of intimidation that stifle the potential of women and children and that keep nations from being truly democratic and free.

Last year, I participated in a call-in radio show for the Voice-Of-America. One male caller, who called not from our hemisphere, but from across the ocean, asked me very earnestly what I had meant when I said at the Beijing Conference on Women that, "Women's rights are

- 5 -

human rights and human rights are women's rights." I asked the caller to close his eyes and think of all the rights and privileges he enjoyed as a man. Then I asked him to imagine a world where every woman enjoyed those very same rights and privileges.

I know that if we continue the work that has been started by all of you and that we have done together, we can move our hemisphere closer to making that world a reality so that question in the future cannot even be asked. Thank you very much.

AS PREPARED

**FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
REMARKS TO THE WOMEN OF ARGENTINA
COLON THEATER
BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA
OCTOBER 16, 1997**

Acknowledgments:...and all the mothers in the audience on the eve of Mother's Day -- I am deeply honored to be with you and to be in Argentina.

I must confess that it is awe-inspiring to be in this magnificent theater, to stand on a stage that has been graced by the likes of Enrico Caruso and Maria Callas. I am almost tempted to sing. In the interests of preserving the warm and historic ties between our two countries, however, I will refrain.

But I would like to talk about powerful voices. The voices of women in our hemisphere and what we can do to make them heard -- about our shared commitment to advancing the cause of women's rights, advancing the cause of democracy, and making clear that the two are inseparable.

I can think of no better place to do this than in Argentina. The women of Argentina have long been pioneers on the frontiers of human rights and equality.

From the Argentine Beneficent Society to the National Women's Council to the Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo -- with whom I will meet shortly -- you and your forebears have forged a remarkable record of speaking up in your communities, caring for those who cannot help themselves, opening the doors of education to boys and girls, lifting up lives and voices for democracy and human rights.

We are pursuing our goals of equality at a moment in history that is full of hope, a time ripe for positive social change. Countries that were once paralyzed by debt or runaway inflation have embarked on tough reforms -- and now they are on the move.

Economic renewal has been accompanied by democratic transformation. Across the Americas, military dictatorships have given way to freely elected governments. For the first time in decades, millions of people enjoy the right to choose their own leaders, to engage actively in political life, to speak frankly, to meet in support or opposition to a cause, and to form opinions based on information gathered by a free and inquiring press.

Democracy, whether newly rooted or centuries old, is fragile. The process of building and tending it is on-going. Democracy flourishes when its principles are internalized in the hearts and minds of all people; when no one fears the consequences of standing up or speaking out for justice. And democracy thrives when women are not barred by law, by ignorance, by tradition, or by intimidation from making their voices heard at the ballot box, from pursuing their most cherished dreams.

In short, empowering ever-more women to seek and claim their rights as citizens and as human beings will ensure that democracies -- old and new - - survive and thrive in the 21st century.

The word “empowerment,” I am told, does not translate well. But I am sure that every woman in this room knows its meaning. Empowerment means the right to participate in the political and economic life of our countries. Empowerment means being able to lead lives free of sexual and domestic violence. And it means access to justice under law, to education, to health care, to credit and property ownership.

Empowering women means making sure our voices are heard and that we are treated as full citizens in our countries.

No nation can hope to succeed in our global economy if half of its people lack the opportunity and the right to make the most of their God-given promise. And, as we can all attest, in too many countries, my own as well, too many rights are denied and too many doors of opportunity remain tightly closed.

Too many women and children are trapped either in an endless cycle of poverty -- a cycle perpetuated by inadequate health care, poor access to family planning, and limited education -- or inside social constructs that impoverish their spirits and limit their dreams.

Too many women are unable to participate in the economic lives of their countries because they cannot get credit to start small businesses.

Too many women live in fear of violence at the hands of family members. For them, home provides no refuge, the law no protection, and public opinion no sympathy.

Too many women, especially those who are poor and less educated, are unaware of their legal rights in the workplace, of their rights to own and inherit property, of their rights to vote and choose their leaders. While these laws may exist on the books, too many governments have not enforced them and too few women have been made aware of them.

These problems may be daunting, but their solutions are in full view. Across the Americas, from Boston to Buenos Aires, there are cutting-edge, common-sense initiatives to give girls and women access to what I call the tools of opportunity: education, decent health care, legal protections, and credit. These efforts prove that women can be empowered to lift themselves, their children, families, and communities out of poverty.

Let me begin with **education**, for nothing outside the family is more central to advancing the cause of girls and women. And Argentina has long recognized that fact.

Our two nations have a history of warm ties. One of the most notable was the friendship between Horace Mann, the father of public education in the United States, and President Domingo Sarmiento, the father of education in Argentina, who was ahead of his time with his deeply held belief that girls should attend school.

The fruits of his conviction are there for the world to see today: In Argentina's strong and established system of education. In a literacy rate of 96 percent. And in a primary school completion rate of 90 percent.

Other countries in the Americas are rededicating themselves to improving access to and the quality of education for all their citizens. Education will be the centerpiece of the Second Summit of the Americas in Santiago next April, which will highlight models that are working.

Yesterday in Sao Paolo, for example, I visited an elementary school in one of the city's poorest neighborhoods. For years, the school struggled. Many students were not learning or even staying in school. Fortunately, the business community, recognizing the importance of education, got involved, and created the Institute for Quality Education. Working with the local government, they have transformed the school. Teachers who themselves may not have finished high school received training. Students were tested. Parents were encouraged to get involved. In less than a year, test scores in mathematics and languages went up more than 200 percent. Even in countries like ours, with higher levels of education, we have to do more to improve quality in both urban and rural areas and to ensure that all students have access to information technology.

Another tool of opportunity is Microenterprise, which provides modest loans to people -- mostly women -- who would not otherwise receive them.

I have seen all over the world how access to credit, which sparks a woman's entrepreneurial spirit, transforms lives. I would like to share with you two brief stories from the last few days.

In Panama, I visited a group of women who, with a small grant from the United States Agency for International Development, started a business growing plants and seedlings to sell in city markets and to the Panamanian government's reforestation programs. Within two years, the women had sold enough orchids, medicinal plants and seedlings to expand their business; their seedlings have restored 48 acres in one of Panama's national parks; and they were using their new income to improve their homes and send their children to school.

I met an equally impressive group of women when I visited another microlending institution in Caracas, Venezuela. The rather ordinary-looking building I entered did nothing to prepare me for the open-air rooftop terrace where we sat and talked. The space was spotless and lovingly cared for. The walls were adorned with weavings and art works the women had made.

As a light breeze blew in, one woman told me of the thriving taxi company she had started with a loan from the organization. She said that when she finally got her own business it was as if “the sky had opened up.” Another woman had received a loan to expand the empanada and juice stand she ran with her husband. Now they had a restaurant and a butcher shop employing 10 people. They had even been able to send one of their children to university. She said that the loan had given her the opportunity to “spread her wings.”

The women I met in Venezuela and Panama were impressive, but not unique. There are similar women all over the Americas. I have met them in Nicaragua, in Costa Rica, in Bolivia, in Chile, in Mexico, and in my own country. And I know they are here in Argentina as well. Because a real job is the best form of social welfare, microenterprise works for the individual and the society.

Access to quality **health care**, especially family planning and reproductive health services, is also crucial to advancing the progress of women.

Two days ago in Brazil, I-witnessed the signing of an agreement between my government and two Brazilian state governments to support a family planning initiative.

I first encountered the project when I visited a maternity hospital in Salvador de Bahia, Brazil two years ago. Men and women were getting the information that would enable them to make wise choices about planning their families. Mothers were receiving pre-natal and post-partum care. Infants were getting immunizations. Parents were being taught what to feed their young children and how to care for them. In short, family planning and reproductive health programs were integrated into maternal and child health services. Those with the least access and the highest risk were reached.

The result? Rates of maternal mortality and abortion decreased. Population growth and infant mortality rates went down, as well.

This is such a successful approach that the hemisphere-wide strategy to reduce maternal mortality, which was announced at the First Ladies of the Americas Conference in La Paz last year, is modeled after the work done in Brazil.

The promotion and expansion of women's legal and political rights is perhaps the most difficult challenge we face. Slowly but surely we are witnessing the emergence of legal reforms that will raise the status of women in the home and in society.

Domestic and sexual violence against women remains one of the most serious and under-reported human rights violations in the Americas. In Argentina, women have worked to incorporate domestic abuse issues in police training. Many countries now have human rights ombudsmen with special offices dedicated to protecting the rights of women. In Panama, legislators have reformed the Family Code to better regulate such matters as alimony, child support and child custody.

And in my own country, we have introduced comprehensive Violence Against women plans that provide counseling for victims, training for officers, and prosecution of offenders in all 50 states. Throughout Latin America, countries are finding ways to open up political participation for women at all levels -- from the grassroots to the voting booth. We need to share more of these ideas and actions with each other so that all women throughout the Americas can experience the same improvements in their lives.

That, in fact, was the aim of the First Ladies Conference I attended in Panama City last week.

At the conference, I also witnessed the signing of another agreement -- this one between USAID and the Inter-American Institute for Human Rights in San Jose, Costa Rica.

The Institute was founded to defend and foster respect for human rights at a time when repressive regimes controlled the lives of many of the peoples of the Americas.

It offered crucial support to the brave individuals throughout the region who spoke out against torture and repression at a time when such acts often meant risking one's job, one's home -- even one's life.

In 1990, the Institute embarked on a new mission in human rights advocacy: It established a formal program on gender and human rights. When I visited the Institute with Secretary of State Madeleine Albright in May, I had the opportunity to meet and speak with women who are in the forefront of women's rights issues throughout the Americas. As they said, there is little difference between violence in politics and violence at home. Both dishonor democracy. As the Secretary of State said, domestic violence can never be excused as cultural. It is criminal.

Across the hemisphere, efforts such as these are transforming lives.

None of this progress would have happened if women themselves had not spoken out, demanded change, and forced their governments to respond to their needs.

We must encourage more women to make their voices heard, to join together in both community and national organizations, to press for political change beneficial to all women, to encourage them to vote in local and national elections, and to send more women to office.

Only women can make democracy work for ourselves and our families. It is a message that is coming alive in countries all around the world. Last summer, at a conference in Vienna, I met with a group of women from the newly democratic countries of Eastern and Central Europe. They had just begun to recognize the power of independent citizen action to address challenges as diverse as the trafficking of women in prostitution and the need for better health care. And they had gathered to share ideas, to renew and strengthen their faith in democratic values and freedoms. This kind of convening might be beneficial for our hemisphere as well. As our countries to continue to expand our political, economic and strategic alliances, the women of this hemisphere can lead the way in building an alliance of democratic values that will strengthen our democracies into the next millennium.

In many ways, the women of Argentina and the United States have a wider spectrum of opportunities than the women and girls who live in the countries that lie between our own.

We are no longer consigned solely to lives like those described by President Sarmiento, where we, "look after the house, get the meals ready, shear the sheep, milk the cows, make the cheese, and weave the coarse cloth used for garments...The boys exercise their strength and amuse themselves...With early manhood comes complete idleness and ease." [From: Life of the Argentine Republic.]

Now I'm not sure any of us would use the words "idleness and ease" to describe our early adulthood. But we have come a long way.

That does not mean, however, that we do not face formidable challenges in our own lives and in the life of our society. Not only do we have a responsibility to work on behalf of women in our hemisphere and around the world who still struggle for the rights we have won, we must confront the new questions that have edged up to our frontdoors.

While the superficial homogenization of the world means that people on every continent wear the same jeans, eat the same fast food, and listen to the same music, these surface similarities do not override a longing for a deeper identity and meaning in our lives. Despite improving material conditions around the world, families are under new stresses. The gap between rich and poor in many countries grows wider. The social safety net -- health care, education, pensions, decent wages, good jobs -- is in danger of fraying for those less able to navigate this new world. And even for those of us blessed with good health, educations, and affluence, we also face pressing questions:

Questions about how we strike the right balance among our personal roles as wife, mother, homemaker, employed worker, citizen; about how we claim a personal identity in an age of anonymous globalization and high technology; about how families will raise children in the face of pressures from the consumer culture and mass media that undermine parental authority and glorify instant gratification.

This last question is of particular importance to those of us who are mothers concerned about the future of our daughters.

For we have not won our places in society, we have not fought for women's rights as human rights to stand by while the consumer culture does its best -- in my country and yours -- to objectify women and make girls believe that only their appearances -- not their hearts, minds or souls -- are important.

The fundamental task of a democracy is to pass its essential beliefs on to the next generation. Central among these is the conviction that women's full humanity is an unshakable God-given truth -- and that democracy itself can never be fulfilled unless countries come to know and uphold that truth as intimately as they know their own histories.

Last year, I participated in a call-in show for Voice of America. One male caller asked me very earnestly what I meant when I said, "Women's rights are human rights and human rights are women's rights" at the Beijing Conference on Women.

I told the caller to close his eyes and think of all the rights and privileges he enjoyed as a man. Then I asked him to imagine a world where every woman enjoyed those very same rights.

The acoustics in this hall are famous around the world. So what is said here may be heard from one end of the Americas to the other. Let us raise our voices on behalf of women to proclaim that we will not rest until we have repealed discriminatory laws, expelled the mythology about a woman's proper role, and stared down the forces of physical and psychological intimidation that stifle the potential of women and children.

I know that if we all continue to work together, adding voices to our chorus, we will make that world a reality.

as prepared

**FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
REMARKS TO THE INTER-AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK
WASHINGTON, D.C.
OCTOBER 20, 1997**

I would like to say a special word of thanks to the more than 20 million people who are joining us via radio around the world, and to the broadcasters and radio stations who are devoting valuable air time to carrying this conference. By shining a light on the problem of domestic violence, you are literally helping to save lives.

I would also like to say a very personal word of thanks to the people and governments of Panama, Venezuela, Brazil, and Argentina, whose countries the President and I were privileged to visit in recent days, and whose generosity of spirit I will always remember.

When I travel overseas on behalf of the United States, I always learn in new ways how very much human experience we share across national boundaries. The ideals and achievements we have in common derive from our noblest selves; some of the shared problems we confront in our different countries stem from the ways we all can fall short of who we can be. Today, I want to talk about one of those shared problems -- a devastating one.

This problem is all-pervasive -- and yet very difficult to see. In the United States and around the world, I have looked out over busy downtown streets or pastoral rural villages and seen women going energetically and competently about their everyday business. There is nothing visibly wrong with the picture. But I know too well that every country I have visited -- every country on this Earth -- shares a hidden part of the scene: when some of those women go home at night, they live with fear. Not fear of an invading army or a natural disaster or even a stranger in an alley; they fear the very people -- family members -- whom they are supposed to depend upon for help and comfort. That is the trust-destroying fear that attends every step of a victim of domestic violence.

For these women, home provides inadequate refuge; the law, little protection; and public opinion, even less empathy. Domestic and sexual violence against women remains one of the most serious and under-reported human rights violations in our region. As Secretary of State Madeleine Albright has said, domestic violence can never again be dismissed, as it so often has, as part of a country's traditional norms, or as a private set of assumptions about family life. Let us say it so loudly that every abuser can hear us: we do not believe that violence against women is 'simply cultural'; we believe it is simply criminal. And that is why the issue of violence against women is now being addressed as part of American foreign policy.

In my own lifetime, we have come a long way toward recognizing domestic violence for what it is. When I was a girl, domestic violence was still joked about on TV. When I was a teenager, it was no longer a joke, but neither was it taken seriously. Police were rarely willing to make an arrest. Only as an adult have I seen citizens -- many of them former victims of violence in the home -- rise up and say: we need to change our laws so that it is understood that it is just as much of a crime to assault a spouse as it is to assault a stranger.

A case in point is the United Nations Conference on Women. At the Nairobi conference in 1985, the issue of domestic violence was a barely acknowledged undercurrent.

Ten years later, in Beijing, it was front and center. It had made its way from the grassroots to the halls of power.

With this conference, our understanding has evolved one step further. Now we are acknowledging that domestic violence is not just an assault against a citizen -- it undermines democracy itself. For so long as women are held back from full participation in the lives of their countries by any means -- including by the kind of violence women disproportionately suffer -- democracy will remain incomplete.

So I come here with a simple proposition: no woman, no girl, should have to live helplessly any longer under the shadow of that fear.

This two-day conference -- which takes place during National Domestic Violence Awareness Month here in the United States -- gives us a remarkable opportunity to ease that distress among so many girls and women.

By sharing ideas, forging strategies, and learning from each other about what has worked in various communities to bring down the rate of domestic violence, we can help women throughout the hemisphere disperse the silence that has surrounded this issue. What many of you have done in your home towns and cities has saved lives. What we do here together can save many more -- and, of even more enduring importance, can change the climate of how societies see and hear domestic violence so that young women of our daughters' and granddaughters' generations need never know such feelings of isolation -- and so that young men need never believe that abuse is even remotely acceptable.

It's appropriate that we take on this conversation now. The challenge before us is daunting -- the movement against domestic violence dares to ask how to change behaviors and assumptions that are as old as recorded history. And yet, as a great American poet, Emily Dickinson, wrote, "I dwell in Possibility." Today, together, we dwell in possibility. For this is a moment that is infused with hope, in a time ripe for positive social change.

For the countries of the Americas are undergoing profound economic, democratic and social renewal. In the last two weeks, I witnessed this renewal firsthand in Panama, Venezuela, Brazil, and Argentina.

Countries that were once paralyzed by debt or runaway inflation have embarked on tough reforms -- and now they are on the move. In fact, the economies of Latin America are expected to grow at more than twice the rate of the United States' economy in the next century.

Economic renewal has been accompanied by democratic transformation. Across the Americas, military dictatorships have given way to freely elected governments. For the first time in decades, millions of people enjoy the right to choose their own leaders, to engage actively in political life, to speak frankly, to meet in support or opposition to a cause, and to form opinions based on information gathered by a free and inquiring press.

But I think we all know that democracy, whether newly rooted or centuries old, is fragile. It depends upon the free expression of the voices of all of its people. And democracy thrives when neither law, nor tradition, nor intimidation, nor simple ignorance -- nor the fear of physical pain at home -- bars women from speaking their truth from their hearts in public or at home.

A battered woman often feels that she and only she is living out this particular nightmare. That loneliness is part of the shame that is part of the silence. But sadly, the numbers show how very common is that lonely woman's struggle. Violence at home cuts across lines of age, race, education and class.

My own country has reason to be humble and prepare for hard work when it comes to this: 20 percent of all hospital and emergency room visits by women in the United States result from domestic violence.

And we are not alone. Across the Americas, the statistics on domestic violence present an equally sad and solemn litany.

And yet. And yet there is cause for renewed energy rather than for despair, since we now know that solutions are emerging into our view. The same countries that bear the burden of such statistics are also devising cutting-edge strategies to combat domestic violence.

Indeed, something historic is happening here that the rest of the world can emulate. The entire region has taken the lead in fighting violence against women. Domestic violence and protecting and expanding the rights of women was at the top of the agenda at the First Ladies of the Americas Conference I attended in Panama City.

Today, there are new laws against domestic violence and rape in Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Panama, and Peru. In these countries, loopholes have been closed. Enforcement stepped up. Prison sentences extended. Where there once were no laws against beating a spouse, now there are. Where there were laws, now those laws are tougher.

In Brazil, most major cities and towns have established special police offices to deal with violence against women. In Argentina, women have worked to incorporate domestic abuse issues in police training. Many countries now have human rights ombudsmen with special offices dedicated to protecting the rights of women.

I am proud that my husband has stood up as President to confront the violence and to protect American women. While grassroots organizing by women is vital to each country's tackling the crisis, it is only when men -- from the level of the men of the barrio to the level of the men of the Presidential palaces -- join hands with us to stand against violence against women that we will know our societies have truly been transformed.

In 1994, he fought for the Violence Against Women Act, which combined tough new penalties for offenders with funding for much-needed shelters, counseling services, public education, and research to help the victims of domestic violence.

The Federal penalties and prevention efforts included in this legislation have improved our ability to stop, prosecute and bring the full force of the law to bear on domestic violence. This landmark legislation established once and for all that domestic violence is not a matter of private differences, but rather an intolerable crime of one citizen against another.

The President also started the Office of Violence Against Women in the Department of Justice. And he appointed Bonnie Campbell, a distinguished former state Attorney General [Iowa] to head it.

Last year, the Department of Health and Human Services launched a 24-hour-a-day toll-free National Domestic Violence Hotline, so that those in trouble can find out how to get emergency help, find shelter, or report abuse. To date, the hotline has received more than 100,000 calls from all 50 states.

The President changed our immigration laws to protect legal immigrants suffering from domestic abuse. For too long, too many women stayed in abusive relationships because it was their only way to stay in this country.

They were forced to depend on an abusive spouse for citizenship. Under the new law, women may self-petition to become legal, permanent residents of the United States. No longer do they have to choose between abuse and deportation.

Finally, this administration has looked beyond our own borders. I am proud that the United States Information Agency and the United States Agency for International Development are working as partners with governments and independent organizations throughout the region to support initiatives to combat domestic violence.

It is important to point out the role non-governmental organizations are playing in this effort.

Let me give you just one example: The Inter-American Institute for Human Rights in San Jose, Costa Rica.

The Institute was founded to defend and foster respect for human rights at a time when repressive regimes controlled the lives of many of the peoples of the Americas. It offered crucial support to the brave individuals throughout the region who spoke out against torture and repression at a time when such acts often meant risking one's job, one's home -- even one's life.

In 1990, the Institute embarked on a new mission in human rights advocacy. It established a formal program on gender and human rights. When I visited the Institute with

Secretary of State Albright in May, I had the opportunity to speak with women who are in the forefront of women's rights issues throughout the Americas. As they said, there is little difference between violence in politics and violence at home. Both dishonor democracy.

The Institute and women throughout the Americas also have an important ally in the Inter-American Development Bank.

To many, the connection between a development bank and the issue of violence against women is a new one. But the connection is an example of the kind of real intellectual pioneering that can improve our societies from the ground up: the Inter-American Development bank has recognized the devastating effects of domestic violence on women, including not only physical injury, mental illness, loss of self-esteem. But it has also traced another level of damage -- a level that has an impact on development. The Bank recognizes that domestic violence has direct economic costs in terms of job loss, decreased productivity in the workplace and absenteeism.

Their conclusions? Women who are abused are unable to realize their full potential and contribute to their countries' development. What's more, violence against women drains scarce community and health resources and undermines productivity. A study by the World Bank concluded that domestic violence is as large a global health burden as cancer, heart disease and AIDS. Canada has gone so far as to estimate that its economy loses \$1.6 billion a year to domestic violence.

It is hard to express how important I think it is that the Inter-American Development bank is committed to working with governments to develop far-reaching programs to stop domestic abuse -- from training judges to creating networks to treat women who have suffered violence to putting on this important conference. And I would like to take a moment to thank Mayra Buvenick, the organizer of this event. She is a driving force behind the bank's efforts to see to it that a country's development is not measured solely in its balance sheets.

Investment in domestic violence will save individual lives. For that reason alone, it would be enough. But it has the potential to do more -- to teach a new generation of families that the rules have changed; that raising a hand in violence will not be tolerated.

We have made a tremendous amount of progress. But we have more to do. Let us remember that none of this progress would have happened if women themselves had not spoken out, demanded change, and forced their governments to respond to their needs.

We must encourage more women to make their voices heard, to join together in both community and national organizations, to press for change beneficial to all women.

The fundamental task of a democracy is to pass its essential beliefs on to the next generation. Central among these is the conviction that women's full humanity is an unshakable God-given truth -- and that democracy itself can never be fulfilled unless countries come to know and uphold that truth as intimately as they know their own histories.

10TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

Copyright 1997 Federal Document Clearing House, Inc.
FDCH Political Transcripts

March 12, 1997, Wednesday

TYPE: NEWS EVENT

LENGTH: 5769 words

HEADLINE: DELIVERS REMARKS WITH FIRST LADY HILLARY CLINTON AT A STATE
DEPARTMENT EVENT IN HONOR OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY; WASHINGTON, D.C.

SPEAKER:

MADELEINE ALBRIGHT, SECRETARY OF STATE
HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON, FIRST LADY OF THE
UNITED STATES

BODY:

ALBRIGHT: Thank you very much.

(APPLAUSE)

Thank you very much, Tim, for that exceptionally warm and friendly introduction.

Mrs. Clinton, Dame Eugenia Charles, Geraldine Ferraro, Members of Congress, Excellencies, and friends, I am delighted to welcome the first lady and all of you to the State Department's observance of International Women's Day.

I also want to thank that really great feminist Tim Wirth and Teresa Loar for the tremendous job that they are doing. When the globe is your constituency, you tend to be pretty busy, and no one burns energy more efficiently than our team at global affairs.

Let me begin this morning with one very simple statement. Advancing the status of women is not only a moral imperative, it is being actively integrated into the foreign policy of the United States.

(APPLAUSE)

It is our mission. It is the right thing to do. And frankly, it is the smart thing to do.

The reason is that, as we approach the new century, we know that we cannot build the kind of future we want without the contribution of women. And we know that, around the world, women will only be able to contribute to their full potential if they have equal access, equal rights, equal protection, and a fair chance at the levers of economic and political power.

Towards these goals, we have made progress. I said once that if I had been born a generation or two earlier, and if I had wanted to make a definitive statement on American foreign policy, my only option would have been to enter

society and then pour tea into an offending ambassador's lap.

(LAUGHTER)

Today, women are engaged in every facet of international affairs -- from policymaking to deal-making, from arms control to trade, from court room at the War Crimes Tribunal to the far-flung operations of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and to the top floor of the State Department.

So we have much to celebrate. We also have much further to go.

During my recent round-the-world trip, I met with six presidents, four prime ministers, eight foreign ministers, three defense ministers, two premiers, one chancellor, one secretary general, and one trade minister.

And if you put us all in one room, you would have had 26 suits and my skirt.

(LAUGHTER)

This lack of representation at the top is mirrored throughout the political and economic structures of most nations. Whether one is bumping against a glass ceiling or standing on a dirt floor, equality remains for most more aspiration than reality.

It is in America's interests to change this. Advancing the status of women is directly related to our foreign policy goals. We want to build peace and expand the circle of democracy. We want to sustain a growing global economy that creates good jobs for Americans. And we want to see a future in which the values we cherish are more widely shared.

ALBRIGHT: In each case, we can't get from where we are to where we want to go if women are left on the sidelines. Women must be integrated at every step of the way.

Consider, for example, the pursuit of peace. I am not among those who believe that if the world were run solely by women, war would disappear. The human capacity for folly and miscalculation is widely shared. But the history of this century tells us that democracy is a parent to peace. And common sense tells us that true democracy is not possible without the full participation of women.

The Beijing conference has created new momentum for women to speak out, get involved, organize, vote and become candidates for office. The vast network of non-governmental organizations that women have built is focused on these tasks. Greater participation translates into richer democracy and more representative policies. And in those regions where democracy makes the greatest difference for peace, women are hard at work creating and expanding the institutions for freedom.

I have seen in Bosnia the efforts of women's groups to heal the wounds of ethnic division. The women of that country are determined to build a society in which they, who have paid a fearful price for wrong decisions in the past, will have a role in making the right decisions in the future.

I have seen in Central Europe and the new independence states the birth of movements designed to give women a real voice in the construction of new democracies. This is crucial because women were hardest hit by the economic and social disruptions of recent years.

I have seen in Burundi hundreds of women from the Hutu and Tutsi ethnic groups working side by side to prevent in their country the genocidal violence that caused so much suffering in neighboring Rwanda.

During and since the women's conference, I have seen representatives of groups from around the world -- African, Asian, Latin, Jewish, Islamic and Christian -- joined in a common cause of sustaining the global momentum towards more open and representative political systems. That is their goal, and, as Americans, it is our goal. So is economic growth.

Since 1993, under President Clinton's leadership, we have negotiated more than 200 trade agreements, given a tremendous boost to international commerce, and created millions of new jobs. But for the world's economy to keep growing, women everywhere must have increased access to the building blocks of economic opportunity and power. A growing economy requires a modern economy. And as Turkey's Kemal Ataturk said seven decades ago, you cannot catch up with the modern world by modernizing only half the population.

Despite recent gains, women remain an undervalued and underdeveloped human resource. That is not to say that women have trouble finding work.

ALBRIGHT: In many societies, in addition to bearing the children, women do most of the non-child-related work, but often women are barred from owning land, excluded from schools, provided less nourishment, and permitted little or no voice in government.

It is no accident that most of those in the world who are abjectly poor are women. Frequently, they are left to care for children without the help of the children's father. Many are trapped at a young age in a web of ignorance and abuse.

Women are prepared to be full partners in sustainable development. But they need education, decent health care, access to credit, and protection from violence. They need knowledge, and the power to make our own choices.

We know from experience that when that happens, the cycle of poverty can be broken, birth rates stabilized, environmental awareness increases, the spread of sexually-transmitted disease slows, and socially-constructive values are more likely to be passed on to the young. That is a priceless and lasting gift to the future.

We also serve the future when we stand up for basic values of law and respect for the dignity of every human being. A half a century ago, a great American first lady was the driving force behind the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In Beijing, another great first lady eloquently reaffirmed America's commitment to that declaration and in its application to all people, specifically including women and girls.

we can
1. women
trade -
help of
women to
the partners

Now I don't know whether this resulted from a conversation between these two first ladies.

(LAUGHTER)

But I do know that the universal declaration reflects spiritual and moral values that are all central to all cultures. Respecting both the wondrous diversity that defines us and the common humanity that binds us, the declaration obliges all governments to strive in law and practice to protect the rights of those under their jurisdiction.

And by its very existence, it shows that whether a government fulfills that obligation is a matter not simply of domestic, but of universal concern.

Unfortunately today, around the world, appalling abuses are being committed against women. There are those who suggest that many of these abuses are cultural and there's nothing we can do about it.

I say they are criminal and it's the responsibility of each and every one of us to stop them.

(APPLAUSE)

It is encouraging that in the wake of Beijing, efforts to curb violence against women have surged. In country after country, we see projects designed to heighten awareness and gain for women greater protection under the law.

This matters because every time a special police unit is created to insure a prompt response to sexual or domestic abuse, every time a cooperative effort is undertaken to end female genital mutilation, every time a program is launched to halt the exploitation of women and girls, every time strides are made toward the equal valuation of women as individuals, family members and citizens, our world is uplifted and we are all enriched.

ALBRIGHT: In the effort to advance the status of women, the United States is a leader. But a leader cannot, and we are not, standing still.

At President Clinton's initiative, we are incorporating concerns related to women into the mainstream of American foreign policy. What does that mean?

For one thing, it means that the President's Interagency Council on Women, created last year to implement the Beijing Platform for Action, will be chaired this year by the Department of State. It means that our overseas aid programs will continue to emphasize projects that expand the ability of women to participate economically and politically, to gain access to education and healthcare, including reproductive healthcare, and to protect themselves against violence and disease.

It means that we will place special emphasis on the institutions of civil society that include women and refugee relief that is designed to meet women's needs. It means that we will continue to report honestly and thoroughly on violations of human rights, and that we will denounce those violations whether they are sins of omission by those who refuse to investigate or prosecute

domestic abuse, or sins of commission by dictators, such as those in Burma or extremists in Afghanistan.

It means that we will continue to back the International War Crimes Tribunals, because we believe that the authors of ethnic cleansing should be held accountable, and those who see rape as just another weapon of war should pay for their crimes.

(APPLAUSE)

It means that we will take part in a global effort to crack down on illegal trafficking in women and girls. And let me say that if those who traffic in drugs should be punished severely -- and they should -- so should those who traffic in human beings.

(APPLAUSE)

Finally, it means, because I said that I would tell it like it is, when I go to North Carolina in a couple of weeks to speak at the Jesse Helms Center, I will state explicitly that it is long past time for America to become party to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women.

(APPLAUSE)

As I think many people know now, I have a very good relationship with the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, and we agree when we can, and we disagree agreeably when we don't agree on the subject.

The integration of women into our foreign policy is an active, ongoing worldwide process. It requires working not only with other governments but also with non-governmental organizations and other agents of progress. It affects everything, from the design of aid programs to policy decisions made by our bureaus here in Washington, to embassy activities around the globe. And it reflects our understanding that progress requires not simply opening doors, but a vigorous effort to reach out and spread the word that the old era of injustice and repression must end so that a new era of opportunity and full participation may dawn.

Before closing, I want to say a few words about our next speaker, for she is certainly one of the women we have incorporated into the mainstreams of our foreign policy.

ALBRIGHT: During the past four years, Hillary Rodham Clinton has become America's most-respected and valued albeit unofficial ambassador. She has advocated America's agenda of peace, democracy, economic growth and law from India to Indonesia, from China to Copenhagen and from Ukraine to a memorable diplomatic and culinary experience in Ulan Bator.

(LAUGHTER)

She brings to her assigned tasks enormous energy, brains, commitment and volumes of eloquence. Those of you who have done public speaking know how hard it can be to excite an audience -- at least without getting into trouble.

(LAUGHTER)

Imagine how hard it is when that audience comes from 150 different countries and when most of them are sitting there with earphones on, wires going every way, listening to emotionless and not always accurate translation.

And yet, this woman, the honorary chair of our delegation, electrified precisely that kind of an audience in Beijing. Her message still echoes. Her contributions to American leadership continue to build. Her wisdom has become an international force for good -- all this and a Grammy award, too.

(LAUGHTER)

As secretary of state, I can think of no greater blessing than to have the first lady at my side and on America's side.

This weekend, at my request, she will travel to Africa, a region of great importance to the United States and to the progress of women. I look forward to hearing about her trip, and I know we all look forward to hearing from her now.

Please welcome our terrific first lady, Hillary Rodham Clinton.

(APPLAUSE)

CLINTON: Thank you.

(APPLAUSE)

Thank you very much. Thank you so much, Secretary Albright -- I still love to say that.

(LAUGHTER)

We are gathered today to celebrate International Women's Day in the heart of the State Department, and we do, as Americans, have much to celebrate starting with a secretary of state who, yes, broke a barrier by virtue of her own gender, but who much more importantly is committed to defending the rights, not just of Americans, but of citizens around the world regardless of gender.

Not only has Madeleine Albright broken many a glass ceiling, she has brokered many a peace. Not only has she opened many doors, she has opened many minds. And since she mentioned it, I would say that in my last conversation with Mrs. Roosevelt...

(LAUGHTER)

... she told me how pleased she was that her husband had appointed the first woman to the Cabinet in United States history, and how pleased she was that my husband had appointed the first woman secretary of state.

(APPLAUSE)

I thank Secretary Albright for her leadership, her courage, and on a personal note, her friendship.

CLINTON: And I am delighted that she has agreed to serve as the new chair for the President's Interagency Council on Women, ably assisted by Teresa Loar and Tim Wirth, and others of you here.

We all know that countless responsibilities face our new secretary of state, and all of us. Our foreign policy does not lack for challenges. We must continue to reduce weapons of mass destruction. We must realize the centuries dream of a wholly united, democratic and peaceful Europe. We must work to capture new opportunities in Asia, to seize opportunities for peace in the Middle East and other areas that are strategic not only to the United States, but to the entire globe.

We must work with our partners in Latin America, Africa and elsewhere to build an inclusive and expanding global economy. We must safeguard our people from the threats of terrorism, extremism, international crime, drugs and environmental degradation.

While all of these require our attention and commitment, today I have come to advance a simple idea -- and that is the seamless inclusion of girls' and women's needs in American foreign policy.

Despite the work they do, the families they raise, the communities they hold together, too many of the world's women, particularly in developing nations, live on the outskirts of opportunity and equality.

But let me be clear. This challenge is not confined to the developing world. We still have plenty of work to do here in the United States and in other advanced economies of the world to insure that women have a full stake in democracy.

One goal in every country should be to see that all citizens, regardless of race or gender or ethnicity or religion, have a full place at their society's table.

If you'll forgive just a slight diversion, yesterday I was in Arkansas. I visited people who had been hit by a terrible tornado in the morning. Even before that disaster struck, these were people already working overtime to build good lives, to reach their aspirations. The full benefits of American society were still a long way away for them. After this tornado, all that they had worked for, all they had hoped for seems lost.

Later that day, I spoke at an event that helps raise funds to send single parents, primarily women, to college or vocational school. I heard stories from five women, who told us what it had meant that their society in the form of those who had raised these funds reached out and told them that they could make something of their own lives.

CLINTON: They could go to college. They could support themselves and their children. They had heard the message that is even still too often conveyed in America -- that they weren't worth very much, that nobody really cared too much about them.

As one young woman said -- Five years ago, I was in a battered woman's shelter in Fayetteville, Arkansas. I had nothing. I not only didn't have a car, I didn't have a driver's license. And my face looked as though it had been run over by a truck. All of a sudden there were people there who convinced me that I could make something of myself and care for my nine-month-old son. I thought to myself, how can these people believe in me, that I could go to college, that I could support myself? How could these people care about me when my own husband didn't care about me?

Those stories, as I heard them, reminded me of stories that I have heard around the world -- as women in Bangladesh or India or Nicaragua or Chile stood up and told me what it meant to them to have someone believe that they, too, could make a living for their families, that the skills they had would be valued in the marketplace, that their children, especially their daughters, could have a better life.

The women last night were helped to return to school. And today, they are citizens of the United States in the fullest sense of that word.

Whenever disparities of wealth exist in our country and around the world, it means that people are left by the side of the road, detoured off the information highway, unable to take advantage of democracy's opportunities. What America must do for its own sake, as well as for the sake of its leadership in the world we are in today and that we are entering tomorrow is to promote democracy and civil society in every nation, so that all citizens -- every man, woman and child -- can live up to their God-given potential.

But one may ask -- Well it's fine for me to care about the women of Arkansas, but why should I or any American care about women in developing countries and around the world? Why should women, as Secretary Albright just eloquently explained, be a concern of ours and our foreign policy here in the United States?

Well, what the secretary said, and what this administration believes is that if half of the world's citizens are undervalued, underpaid, undereducated, under-represented, fed less, fed worse, not heard, put down, we cannot sustain the democratic values and the way of life we have come to cherish.

CLINTON: If, as a nation, Americans care about opening foreign markets for American goods and services, if we care about making our country secure in the face of new threats, if we care about widening the circle of peace and prosperity, then we must address the conditions and circumstances of the world's women.

You in this room know better than anyone else that our world is in a time of great transformation, heralding ever more democracy, leading, we hope, to ever more peace. But the great promise of this time is not without its challenges. Global competition, the information revolution, the rapid pace of change, create pressures on every society, from governments down to families. And these pressures pose unavoidable questions for us as we approach the 21st century.

How do we figure out ways to balance individual and community rights and responsibilities? How do parents raise children in the face of the influences

of the mass media and consumer culture? What do we make of what seems to be a conflict in many instances between personal identity and the work available in an age of globalization and high technology? What about the roles of women in society? How will people preserve their ethnic pride and value their national citizenship? And how will nations protect their sovereignty while cooperating regionally and globally with others.

Thinking about these questions, and how a free nation like ours will respond to them, we may need to be reminded that democracy is not just about legally-protected rights, elections, or free market economies. It is about the internalization of democratic values in people's hearts and minds. It is about how, in the absence of either hot or cold wars, democracy is rooted in people's everyday lives.

Given the changes that are going on around us, we can no longer gauge our interests around the world solely through power blocs and vast arsenals. Across the globe, here at home, at the end of the Cold War, we have been freed to focus on issues that edge right up to our own front doors. How do we educate our children? How do we ensure that families have proper healthcare? How do we ensure that democracies and free markets produce citizens, not just consumers?

CLINTON: I have said before that in this time of challenge around the globe, we know we will continue to cope with what is often thought of as the traditional balance of power among countries.

But I would also argue that we must now add to that balance of power : equation, often called Realpolitik, the idea that real life politik may be just as intimately connected with whether or not democracies survive and flourish.

These issues that we speak of today should not be considered women's issues, but certainly it is fair to say that women often, by necessity, become the world's experts on the hazards and vicissitudes of life, and they therefore often understand and appreciate more clearly that they have a vested interest in insuring that their societies and governments address these real life challenges.

I have seen for myself on continent after continent the solutions that women are forging -- new mothers in Jakarta, Indonesia, who gather every week to learn about family planning and better nutrition for their children; doctors and nurses in Belarus and Ukraine, who are caring for the children of Chernobyl; women from Santiago to San Diego, who are working on issues as diverse as education, crime and the environment.

These issues are central to our global democratic interests, for what distinguishes democracy is fair and genuine participation in every aspect of life. It should be too obvious to point out, but unfortunately it isn't, that giving women a stronger voice and fuller say over their futures is intimately related to the health of democracies because women are the majority in most countries and the world over.

America's credo should ring clearly -- a democracy without the full participation of women is a contradiction in terms. To reach its full potential, it must include all of its citizens.

Clearly, whether we succeed in strengthening democratic values around the world is of special consequence to women, who in our country and elsewhere are still striving to attain and even define their rightful place in government, the economy and civil society, and to claim their rightful share of personal, political, economic and civic power.

Raising the status of women and girls and investing in their potential means insuring that they have the tools of opportunity available to them -- education, healthcare, credit and jobs, legal protections, and the right to participate fully in the political life of their countries.

And that is why the United States must continue its bipartisan tradition of supporting initiatives that move our world closer to these goals.

Today, more than 600 million women worldwide are denied the opportunity of an education.

CLINTON: Women make up two thirds of those who can neither read nor write. Yet the single most important investment any developing nation can make is in the education of girls and women.

We are discovering that in country after country the benefits of educating women go far beyond the classroom and the school house. They go to stronger families, better health, nutrition, wages and levels of political participation.

I have seen how the support of the United States for the education of women and girls worldwide is paying off. I have seen how similar social investments -- also many supported by the United States -- can make a difference in countries as diverse as Brazil, the Philippines, Nepal and Pakistan.

Certainly, as I travel around the world and as many of you do likewise, we have seen with our own eyes that investing in girls and women helps to transform communities, which in turn can transform society.

Women will not flourish and neither will democracy if they continue to be undervalued inside and outside the home. I have had many experts in economic development around the world say to me that women's work is not part of the economies of countries, that women do not participate in the economic markets of the countries.

And yet I have seen with my own eyes as I've travelled through urban areas and remote world ones that women are bearing often the bulk of the load of the work that must be done to plant crops, to harvest them, to make it possible for small enterprises to flourish in market stalls.

So I know that women are working. Their contributions may not be counted in the gross domestic product of their societies, but they are of value. If all the women in the world tomorrow said they would not work outside the home, the economies of every country would collapse.

And it's time that we...

(APPLAUSE)

It is time that we honored and counted the contributions that women make both in the home and outside.

Investing in women also means investing in their health, and in turn in the health of their families. I am especially pleased that the United States has provided assistance through the United States Agency for International Development to assure that women, children and families have access to a full spectrum of low cost, high yield health care services from safe birthing kits for expectant mothers to basic immunizations for infants, to oral rehydration therapy to treat children suffering from diarrhea.

I want to say a special word about family planning and its importance in this larger effort.

CLINTON: Family planning is fundamental to letting women take responsibility for themselves and their children. Right now, however, roughly 100 million women worldwide cannot get, or are not using family planning services because they are poor, uneducated or do not have access to care.

Some 20 million women will seek unsafe abortions. Of these women, some may become disabled for life, some will have other health problems, but fundamentally the rate of unsafe abortions is in itself a tragedy. High abortion rates do not represent women's equality. They represent a failure on all our parts to help women prevent unwanted pregnancies in the first place.

If we really care about reducing abortion and fostering strong families, we must not back away from America's commitment to family planning efforts overseas.

(APPLAUSE)

And if we really care about making women equal partners in societies the world over, we must do everything in our power to fight violence against women. Whether it is a hidden crime of domestic abuse or a blatant tactic of war, no single social investment is a panacea for women or for developing countries. Nor should every just cause in the world be America's to embrace.

But I do believe that, as long as discrimination and inequities persist on a broad scale way against women, a stable prosperous world will be far from a reality.

Taken together our investments in social development are vital to strengthening free market interests, spreading our democratic ideals and enhancing our security.

Over time, America has learned that our ideals and interests cannot be divorced from the political, economic, social cross-currents swirling around us.

I hope we have also learned that engagement with the world represents opportunities at home, as well as obligations abroad.

Let me give you just one modest example. I spoke recently at a conference sponsored by USAID called Lessons Without Borders. At the conference, Baltimore's Mayor Kurt Schmoke told how government leaders from his city had gone to Africa to learn about simple low-cost strategies used on that continent to encourage parents to immunize their children.

Now similar programs are in place in Baltimore with community clinics, a vaccination van, door-to-door visits and the resulting higher immunization rates for children under three.

CLINTON: We can learn from our neighbors around the world. And many of the lessons we can learn, we will find, are lessons that have been helped to be taught by our own foreign policy engagement.

Less than one percent of our budget -- yet countless lives -- can be improved and we can improve lives here at home.

Before I close, I want to say word about my forthcoming trip to Africa. I was very honored to be asked to make this trip because I think that America's engagement in the world must include an engagement with subsaharan Africa. Contemporary history is story that citizens and countries are writing. And there is a new story that must be told. Every region is contributing its own chapter.

Africa has a remarkable story if we will only pay attention to it.

It is moving toward democracy. In the last six years, the number of democracies have jumped from five to 23. Africa is growing economically, moving from suffocating state-controlled economies to open markets that can give full life and scope to human endeavor.

Last year, 30 countries recorded positive economic growth. Africa is beginning to forge a new relationship with the United States, one based not just on aid but on shared ideals, mutual responsibilities, integration into the world economy, and partnerships designed to resolve conflicts and to meet common challenges.

To be sure, many of the African democracies are new and therefore fragile. Hope remains tenuous. Too much of the continent continues to be riven by disease, malnutrition, poverty, injustice, corruption, perilous conflicts and their terrible aftermath -- refugee crises that trap women and children especially, and lives that go from bad to worse.

And yet -- and yet, in spite of these challenges, for the first time, we can say that at this moment in history there in Africa grounds for far more hope than despair. And with the support of the United States, we can solidify that hope.

I will be privileged to visit Senegal, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Uganda and Eritrea. And I am pleased that so many of the ambassadors from those countries and other countries in Africa are with us today.

I hope to witness firsthand and to highlight each country's efforts to build democracy and a strong civil society. I will focus particularly on grassroots initiatives and on efforts that affect women and children.

I hope this trip will give the American people a renewed sense of the importance of our commitment to Africa.

CLINTON: I hope it will lay out exactly why we must do our utmost to support democracy and social investment in Africa, and to strengthen Africa's place in the community of nations.

And I hope it will show that American engagement must be measured not just in aid dollars or humanitarian efforts in the wake of tragedy and crisis, but in the democratic values we reinforce, in the human rights we defend, and in the conflicts we help resolve preventively.

There are, to be sure, issues of America's national security at stake. Instability in Africa -- whether it is rooted in war, in terrorism, in organized crime, in disease, in environmental degradation and poverty -- touches us too.

There are also economic issues at stake. Right now the United States holds only seven percent of the African market of 600 million people. By forging stronger economic ties with Africa, we will do much to secure the prosperity of our own people as well.

But finally, our greatest reasons for engagement with Africa are built on a positive foundation. Africa is on the move with a new generation of leaders. the fresh air of political reform, and thriving multi-ethnic societies.

As we look at the future for America's engagement around the world, we can see that, wherever we help to seed the ground for democracy, wherever we reach out to people out of mutual respect to help them help themselves, whatever we understand clearly that in this time of interdependence and interconnection that we all have a stake in the success of the other, we will make progress together.

Whether it comes to assisting and working with our friends in the new democracies in Africa or understanding the importance of our commitment to women and girls, America's interests are at stake. But far more importantly, America's values are at stake.

If we act upon those values we will help to lead the world into the kind of new future we envision as possible for our children and all the children around the globe.

Thank you very much.

(APPLAUSE)

END

NOTES:

- ???? - Indicates Speaker Unknown
- Could not make out what was being said.