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Ciragan Palace
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PRESERVATION**

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**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.

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