

PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION

Departure/Almaty, Kazakhstan

**FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
STATEMENT UPON DEPARTURE
ALMATY, KAZAKHSTAN
NOVEMBER 12, 1997**

I want to thank President and Mrs. Nazarbayev -- and the people of Kazakhstan -- for their extraordinary hospitality. In this beautiful city, I was privileged to see how you are preserving the rich cultural heritage of your past, while charting a new course for the future. I was especially impressed by the strong steps that citizens here are taking to foster private enterprise and civil society.

Over the last two days, I learned firsthand how governmental and non-governmental organizations are working to expand the circle of opportunity to include all citizens -- including women and young people -- as you write the first chapters in a success story of prosperity and freedom. I took part in a discussion with a dynamic group of local students who are building a new future for Kazakhstan by teaching their peers how to use their voices to address important issues like the environment and human rights. I participated in a ribbon-cutting at a new Women's Wellness Center, where the people of the United States have joined with the people of Kazakhstan to make sure that women have access to comprehensive health care. I was honored to address and then to meet with women from throughout Kazakhstan and Central Asia, who are working to see to it that women are full participants in the lives of your country.

I hope that in this short time I have been able to convey the warmth and friendship the American people have for the people of Kazakhstan -- and how much we look forward to hosting President Nazarbayev during his visit to the United States later this month. When I return home, I will bring with me wonderful memories of the people I met here, excitement about the progress I've seen, and an even greater sense of the common bond that unites our two countries -- a bond that has been deepened by the warm welcome Kazakhstan has extended to American investors. Americans will continue to stand with the people of Kazakhstan as they courageously fight for a new future of democracy, prosperity, and freedom.