

India Independence

PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION

**FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
REMARKS FOR THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF
THE INDEPENDENCE OF INDIA
WASHINGTON, DC
AUGUST 15, 1997**

I am delighted to join all of you for this special celebration of the 50th anniversary of the independence of India. Not only does this occasion mark a milestone for the people of India, it represents a triumph of the democratic values and aspirations our two nations share.

More than 200 years ago, the birth of American democracy gave rise to new and enduring ideas about freedom and progress in a pluralistic society. So, too, has India's experience over the past half century been an inspiration for people around the globe.

I had the great privilege of traveling to India two years ago, where I saw firsthand the dynamism and energy of the country and its people. It was a memorable visit for me and my daughter, not only because of the extraordinary sites we visited, but because of what we learned about India's efforts to build a thriving and inclusive economy and society. Although our stay was brief, we understood much more why the American writer Mark Twain called India "the most extraordinary country on earth." And we could see how the relationship between our nations is rooted not just in trade, economic issues and geopolitics, but in a common humanity and common vision of the kind of world we want ours to be.

I know that the President feels deeply that the United States and India share goals and values and that our nations must work together to meet the challenges of the coming century. The President looks forward to advancing this work. And tonight I am pleased to tell you that he will travel to South Asia next year, including India and Pakistan. And I know he will enjoy his trip to your country as much as Chelsea and I did.

Although he couldn't be with us tonight, he asked me to convey his congratulations and best wishes to all of you -- and all of the people of India -- on this silver anniversary.

We share in saluting your country on this momentous occasion. And now, I would like to present the President's message.

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