

TASHKENT REMAINS
11-13-97

REVISE 11/13/97 9:00 AM

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
WOMEN'S WELLNESS CENTER
TASHKENT, UZBEKISTAN
NOVEMBER 13, 1997

Acknowledgments: From advance. Special word to people from Chicago.

Before I begin, I want to thank President and Mrs. Karimov and the people of Uzbekistan for the warm welcome and generous hospitality we have received in our short time here. I have come to Uzbekistan and to Central Asia on behalf of my husband, the President of the United States, and the American people, to reinforce the young but strong ties between our countries...to witness firsthand the move you are making toward democracy, civil society and an economy centered around open markets and private enterprise. I have also come to bring you a message of hope and solidarity from the American people, who are proud to stand with you.

All over the world, democracy is advancing. But democracy without the participation of women is a contradiction in terms. And women cannot participate in democracy unless they have access to what I call the tools of opportunity -- legal protections, education, credit, and, yes, quality health care. [*stories from women you met with this morning.*]

This center makes it clear that quality health care means comprehensive health care. Today, the Tashkent State Medical Institute, the largest and one of the finest in Central Asia, is committing itself to seeing to it that women have a place where they can get the medical care they need and deserve. I just had the opportunity to tour the center and see how it will help the women of Uzbekistan lead longer, healthier, more secure lives. It will help women safeguard themselves against sexually transmitted diseases. It will provide critical screening for cervical and breast cancer. It will provide pre-natal and counseling services for women in all stages of the reproductive health cycle. It will offer a wide range of family planning services, which is vital if we are going to reduce the rate of abortion in this country and Central Asia. And it will provide the resources to deal openly and candidly with the risks of alcohol, tobacco, poor nutrition, and drugs.

The work done here will reach far beyond these doors. When women are healthy, children are healthy, families are healthy, and countries are health. I hope this center will work to educate and raise awareness among men, so that they can take a more active role in the birth and care of their children and the health of their families. And I hope it will convince women -- most of whom work outside the home and care for their families -- that they must look after their own health.

This wellness center is a testament to the commitment and dedication of doctors and nurses throughout Uzbekistan. But it is also the product of an extraordinary partnership. As an American, I am particularly proud to be here because of the alliance you have forged with medical professionals at the University of Illinois at Chicago -- a world-class health center located in my home town. This partnership is broad. It includes neonatology and perinatal medicine. It also encompasses education -- in medicine, nursing, and hospital management. When we form partnerships like this, both of our health care communities learn something from the other. Both of us win. But, the real winners, of course, are the women and children of Uzbekistan.

I am also proud of the role the American International Health Alliance and the United States Agency for International Development have played in this effort. As many of you know, this is one of 13 wellness centers in the New Independent States -- all based on a model of comprehensive health care created by the Alliance. In fact, yesterday I was privileged to open another such center in Almaty, Kazakhstan.

Finally, I would like to make special mention of the contribution of non-governmental organizations to this effort -- and of the role the American people and American companies have played in contributing supplies through the U.S. government's Operation Provide Hope. Just a few months ago, I was privileged to help launch the 500th American humanitarian airlift to the NIS. This airlift brought \$22 million of medicines, supplies, and equipment to Uzbekistan. Of that, approximately \$2 million has been delivered to the Tashkent Medical Institute. Many of these medicines and materials are here at the Wellness Center. I am also proud that the University of Illinois at Chicago has itself provided supplies and equipment to this project. This wonderful public-private alliance is a clear demonstration that the American people care about the people of Kazakhstan during this historic transition.

But the opening of this center is most of all a tribute to the people of Uzbekistan. The Second State Medical Institute and Tashkent City Health Administration have provided the space for this center and made its construction possible. The city will also keep the center running. Together, you are building a strong foundation not only for the health of all your people, but for the future of your country.

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**FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
TALKING POINTS FOR BRADLEY FELLOWS
TASHKENT, UZBEKISTAN
NOVEMBER 13, 1997**

I want to thank the people of Uzbekistan for their warm welcome and extraordinary hospitality. I have come to Uzbekistan and Central Asia on behalf of my husband, President Clinton, and the American people to witness firsthand the important progress you are making as you move toward democracy, civil society, and an economy that helps all citizens to reach their full potential. I have also come here to reinforce the young, but strong ties between our two countries.

That is why I wanted to meet with you. Because the future of this country and the future of our alliance will depend on you -- Uzbekistan's young people. I am particularly pleased that we are joined today by so many students who have taken part in the Bradley High School Exchange Program. Since its establishment by Senator Bill Bradley in 1990, the program has provided the opportunity for thousands of students from the Newly Independent States to come to America each year -- to live with American families, to attend American schools, to deepen their understanding of American culture and society.

This program yields immeasurable rewards. I am very eager to hear how it altered your life, your outlook, your perceptions. I would like to learn what effect it had on your family and your community when you returned home. As someone who has had the privilege of meeting with your counterparts and hearing about the program over the years, I know that the Bradley students make very real contributions to the people of the United States. To begin with, you remind us of something that is too easily forgotten: that freedom is a blessing.

I hope that your time in our country, in turn, renewed your commitment to democracy. I also hope that it underscored the fact that the work of democracy is never done. A democracy requires constant commitment on the part of its citizens. There are no days off. After more than two centuries of democratic government, we in the United States are still trying to get it right.

It is clear that we have much to learn from each other. Later today, I will travel to Bukhara. Tomorrow, I will go to Samarkand. In both places I am very eager to learn more about how the ancient and modern people of Uzbekistan have managed to forge a society that honors so many different religions, that accepts people from so many different places. I imagine these values, grounded in respect and based on tolerance, have much to do with the fact that both these cities are more than 2000 years old.

Before we begin, I want to make two statements about how I hope we can extend our partnership. First, I am proud that as part of our Partnership for Freedom Initiative, the United States government will increase support for the Bradley High School Exchange Program -- along with other educational exchange initiatives designed to promote understanding around the world. Second, we are committed to creating a new alliance between the government of Uzbekistan and the United States to recognize excellence in teaching. The Teaching Excellence Awards would go to outstanding teachers of English and American Studies from around your country. The awards would bring teachers together to share techniques. The schools where award-winning teachers work would receive important educational materials. And the teachers who win would have the opportunity to visit the United States -- to learn about our educational system and to teach us about yours. I am also delighted that as part of this program, award-winning American teachers will come to Uzbekistan to meet with students, fellow teachers, and members of the educational community.

I am delighted that we have had an opportunity to meet today. Now, I very much look forward to hearing from you.