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REMARKS BY THE FIRST LADY  
IN PRESS BRIEFING

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

SECRETARY ALBRIGHT: Well, good morning and thank you all very much for coming here this morning and being here at the Department of State. We have a few other activities going on in the building today, which explains this particular setting.

This afternoon, we're having an event at the White House with the President in observation of International Women's Day, and we wanted to preview that event with you here now and have a discussion with you -- something that we'll not have an opportunity to do this afternoon. And, as you know, I'm very honored to have the First Lady with us here today, and Bonnie Campbell, who's the Director of the Justice Department's Office of Violence Against Women. I would also like to introduce Theresa Loar, who is the State Department's Senior Coordinator for International Women's Issues, a position created by Congress in which Theresa really is doing a fantastic job. We are at this all the time.

And to get us started, what I wanted to do is to invite the First Lady to give us an idea what to expect from the President and from our event this afternoon.

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you very much. And sorry I didn't see the folks in the second row, but, hello. Thank you for coming.

Thank everybody for coming. And congratulations to you on your upcoming nuptials. That may be the big news that comes out of this. (Laughter.)

I really appreciate this opportunity. A year ago, the Secretary and I gave speeches here at the State Department on International Women's Day about the intentions and plans of the United States to pursue as actively as possible within our foreign policy an emphasis on women's rights and an emphasis on working with like-minded countries and NGOs in order to further the agenda that came out of Beijing.

It was a fitting day to give such speeches because ever since its beginning at the turn of the century, International Women's Day has been a catalyst for change. And as the Secretary said, in a few hours we will be joining the President, the United Nations Secretary General, Attorney General Reno, a number of members of Congress and a member of the Thai Parliament and other leaders to celebrate the progress that has been made, and to talk about the new steps that the President is directing the administration to take to further our objective of ensuring the human rights of women around the world.

Since the Beijing Conference, even though it's been a relatively short period of time, there has been a rather significant, measurable progress in furthering the agenda set forth at Beijing. Governments, non-governmental organizations and individuals have all demonstrated their commitment to that agenda. Everywhere I go -- and some of you have traveled with me on these trips -- I spend a considerable amount of time meeting with non-governmental

organizations, as well as representatives of governments and with individual women, to talk about the challenges and obstacles that a particular society faces, and to share ideas about what we can do together to try to further this agenda. I've seen a lot of progress just within the years that I have been traveling. And that progress is testament to the growing awareness around the world of the importance of these issues.

But there is more that needs to be done and more that we in the United States can do to give leadership and support to these efforts. And among the announcements that the President will make is that we will continue to build on the Violence Against Women Act that was passed here in the United States, in this administration, by announcing that there will be an additional \$10 million over the next two years to respond to requests from governments and NGOs to help them fight violence against women abroad.

Bonnie Campbell will speak more to that point in a few minutes. But I know, personally, I've referred many visitors from around the world to Bonnie Campbell. And she has had a great deal of impact in helping to provide technical assistance, encouragement, experience from the United States in order to make the issue of

violence against women -- which really surfaced at the Nairobi Conference, but took really serious steps out of Beijing -- into reality.

Some of you have written about issues of trafficking of women. We think there are at least a million women trafficked across borders every year. I would personally argue that it's probably more than that, but at least we can track about a million. And we know that a lot of the countries that are the sources of this trafficking are in the former Soviet Union -- countries that are facing economic difficulties and problems. This is an international problem that needs to be confronted internationally.

Today, the President will ask the Attorney General to make sure that our laws here at home are going to be of help in working with multilateral organizations, as well as individual nations, to do a better job in combating trafficking. The President will announce a partnership with the government of Ukraine to fight trafficking to and from that country -- one of the countries most affected in the last several years.

We need to do more to warn potential victims about the advertising that they respond to for jobs as nannies or waitresses or whatever it might be that entices them. We need to strengthen law enforcement's response in order to try to stop trafficking at its source. And, again, we can provide you more information about that. We will convene an international conference to spotlight what is being done to combat trafficking.

One important tool in the fight for women's rights that the United States does not have is the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women -- also known as CEDAW. Despite the fact that our government signed this treaty almost two decades ago, despite its proven track record as a very good strategy in a number of countries around the world and in multilateral efforts to improve women's rights, the United States stands alone among industrialized democracies -- along with countries like Sudan -- in not ratifying this. And today the President will again call on the United States Senate to act to ensure that this treaty can be ratified by July of this year, in time for the 150th anniversary of the Seneca Falls Convention.

Finally, we will announce today \$2.5 million to help support the women of Afghanistan who have been brutalized, silenced and rendered invisible by the Taliban. We will fund grass-roots organizations to help provide women in Pakistani refugee camps with the services they need now and the skills they'll need eventually when they return to Afghanistan. And in Afghanistan we will work with non-governmental organizations to help train women to become community health workers and address basic health issues, especially those that affect children.

All of this comes out of our concern about the rights of women. It comes out of this initiative that has really taken shape

in this administration. It comes out of the leadership that this Secretary of State has given to women's issues and it is something that we hope will gain greater and greater awareness among the American people and be something that we can continue to speak out again and again about and celebrate progress with respect to the next International Women's Day, and the next and the next and the next. But we feel very strongly about this, and as you'll see this afternoon, it is a major part of how we view American foreign policy and our role in leadership in the world.

SECRETARY ALBRIGHT: Thank you very much, Mrs. Clinton. I think all of us know that we have no better spokesperson on this subject than the First Lady, who is so highly respected abroad as she talks about women's issues as part of our overall foreign policy. And everywhere I go, everybody keeps congratulating me on the fact that we have such a First Lady.

The main point that I would like to add is that the initiatives announced today are part of an ongoing strategy to identify and seize the opportunities to advance the status of women around the world. And a year ago here at the Department, as the First Lady said, we had a meeting to begin a process of advancing the status of women as part of the mainstream of American foreign policy. And today's announcements and remarks by the President and the First Lady and the Attorney General will reflect that.

We have made ratification of CEDAW a priority. I had a discussion with Chairman Helms about it yesterday; it's not his favorite treaty, but I have made very clear that it is an administration policy. We have made the treatment of women a key element in our policies towards Afghanistan and in our discussions with the Taliban. And I think some of you who were with me while we were in Pakistan and visited the refugee camps know how important that trip was and the sense that we gave to them about our concern about their condition.

In our human rights reporting and international law enforcement activities, we place new emphasis on the halting of trafficking of women and girls. And this agreement that we have developed with Ukraine I think is just one example. I was in Ukraine a few days ago, and it was a subject that we talked about at length. I think it's very a very important initiative.

In fact, wherever I go, I do try to meet with NGOs or community leaders who are working on human rights issues or on initiatives to help women. I think it is a way of showing that America cares about their work and that we will help wherever we can. It clearly is a great learning experience for me, and I enjoy those meetings tremendously. In some countries, it's also a not-so-subtle way of saying that America is watching and that we expect the rights and safety of human rights workers and NGOs to be honored.

More broadly, in our development of refugee assistance programs, we're taking into account more and more of the special

needs of women. And partly this is to keep women and children from being exploited or abused. And obviously we know that they are especially vulnerable in refugee situations and it's partly because, to a great extent, development depends on women.

What is interesting -- yesterday I was in Canada, and we were talking generally about the great role that they play in peacekeeping operations, and we discussed the importance of sensitizing peacekeepers generally in terms of the way that they deal with women in situations where they go into these countries. We have found that when women gain the knowledge and power to make our own choices, women are often able to break out of the cycle of poverty in which so many societies remain entrapped, and birth rates stabilize and environmental awareness increases and the spread of sexually-transmitted diseases slows and socially constructive values are more likely to be passed on to the next generation.

Again, just to tell you how much it's a part of all our discussions, again in Canada yesterday, where we talked about the necessity of dealing with future threats of weapons of mass destruction, we talked about the fact that if women in societies knew more about what the problems were, that it would help spread the word. So it's just a common theme in terms of the way that we deal with all foreign policy issues, of kind of using women's basic networks to get a problem out to the whole society.

And, really, this is how social progress is made and how peace and prosperity are built. That's why making the advancement of women a part of our foreign policy is not only the right thing to do, but I think it's the smart thing to do. And I can tell you that as you think about the next century and what it will be like, the movement to recognize the rights of women to empower them economically and politically, and to curb violence and exploitation I think is going to be one of the most powerful forces for shaping the globe.

And you can see now how the momentum is building on every continent. Everywhere, there are ripples from Beijing. The countries have developed their own systems for following up on Beijing, and we keep in touch with them. And it has just created a whole growth in terms of how women deal with their own societies and how we deal with each other. I think that for us, it's been important because we have put women's issues into the mainstream of foreign policy.

Now, before opening all this up to you, I would just like to invite Bonnie Campbell, who really has been such a leader on the issue of violence against women, to say a few words about the Justice Department's participation.

Bonnie.

MS. CAMPBELL: Thank you so much. When I was contemplating what I would say today, I realized -- and, Mrs.

Clinton, I know you will remember -- it was really three years ago this month that the President appointed me to head the Violence Against Women Office. I have to be very honest. I could not at that time have imagined how passage of the Violence Against Women Act and the obvious support of this administration would resonate around the world. I did not anticipate that. It has been an interesting and very wonderful experience for me.

It occurs to me that having a First Lady who has framed around the world and for us women's rights as human rights, which seems so basic, and a Secretary of State who quite literally shines a very bright light on these issues of violence against women, is the main reason that these issues have resonated. But there is also this notion of sort of a critical mass happening around the world.

My job, of course, is to focus on fighting violence against women at home, and I find that there are so many intersections with what happens globally. We very vigorously, every day, work hard to address domestic violence, sexual violence, stalking here at home.

When the Violence Against Women Act was signed into law, it was the first time the federal government had ever spoken to these issues of violence against women. And it's a partnership arrangement that we have with the states where most of these cases are investigated and prosecuted and heard. An important piece of the partnership is roughly \$2 billion going to the states which drives, as you can imagine, a great deal of energy and creativity and much-needed resources are added.

We understood when the Violence Against Women Act was passed, and when I was appointed, that a critical piece of transforming attitudes about violence against women would be elevating the public's awareness that no longer, for example, is domestic violence just a private dispute between two people and something that's not fit for legal adjudication, but rather, it is now a crime and it will be treated as seriously as any crime committed by a stranger.

It seems that having this administration in every way make that statement over and over again -- in Beijing, around the world -- struck a chord around the world. And I have the feeling that everywhere the First Lady goes, I'm then shortly visited by people who have been suggested by the First Lady that they meet with us, that we can share about our experiences how we got the Violence Against Women Act passed.

When I was fortunate enough to go to a Vital Voices Conference in Vienna -- I'm not a diplomat, so I really didn't understand in dealing with women from the former Soviet Union and other Eastern Bloc countries how little their experience with democracy ever has been. And when I talked about getting the

Violence Against Women Act passed, they had these blank looks, like, "well, how do you do that?" Our engagement is so important -- how do you get a law passed where there is none? Why did the federal government in our setting speak to these issues? What were our goals? How do we do that?

Needless to say, in the context of our commitment to holding justice systems around the world accountable for protecting women from violence, became the mantra. It literally has been in a way that I could not have anticipated. We always articulate our goals very clearly. Needless to say, trafficking of women, which will be an important topic for us today, is violence against women. And we understand it also to be another one of those intersections with the rest of the globe. I talked -- in Teresa's wonderful parlance, we talk in terms of technical assistance, but it's really sharing of experiences and partnership -- not unlike our partnership with the states, in many ways -- where we can figure out together what are the best mechanisms.

But the goals are always the same: to hold justice systems, whether they are in the United States or any other region of the world, accountable toward the protection of women and children. To change the public attitudes about these crimes. It's not ever acceptable to be violent to women and children or to traffic women for sexual exploitation or slave labor -- not ever -- under anyone's cultural history or scheme. And finally, how do we come together where we live to stop it? And it turns out that we really can't do it without each other.

Yesterday I met with, along with many people from the Justice Department, with a delegation from Italy who really wanted to share with us their experience with trafficking in Europe, and to encourage us to view trafficking as a very significant, challenging, organized criminal entity that we will see, if we haven't already seen, in as big a way as they are. The sharing of information from the perspective of our prosecutors is critical -- because now we will meet again, probably next month; we will talk about how we literally share intelligence and information that is crucial to learning more about trafficking trends and enabling us to prosecute these cases.

Indeed, the world seems very small. I know just sitting here trying to recall the people from around the world with whom I have met, way too many to recount, but I have met with people from Thailand and Italy, as I said; and numerous places in Mexico; the U.K., Israel, Greece, Poland; numerous countries in Africa. The interest in what we're doing and the interesting partnership is absolutely profound to me.

Part of the problem I think we encounter -- and I'd be happy to address this more when we have opportunities for questions -- is that trafficking in particular is so shocking. When I go home to my wonderful state of Iowa, it's very difficult for them to believe that anybody anywhere would actually enslave human beings and sell them. I must tell you it is -- (inaudible) -- which I think is

one of most important consequences of today, from my perspective that the President, the First Lady, the Secretary of State, the Attorney General and others will say, unequivocally, this is happening, it is horrible and it's unacceptable.

I'm really honored to be here with both of you.

Q Madame Secretary, Mrs. Clinton, a great deal of the leadership on this, of course, as you know, has come from the United Nations, like the Beijing Conference. And I'm wondering if you could address what we can do about your efforts to get the U.N. dues paid by Congress and the insistence now by Congress again that family planning -- which is so crucial to women around the world, be taken back as a condition of approval of the arrears.

SECRETARY ALBRIGHT: Well, first of all, we have all argued loud and clear that it is essential for the United States to pay up to the United Nations. These are dues and bills of a club, basically, that we started and we consider as a major help to American foreign policy and in American national interest that the United Nations function effectively.

Last year, I was very pleased that we were able to work out some excellent legislation that was able to pay back the bulk of our arrears, as well as lay down some very important benchmarks for United Nations reform and which we believe. And it was held up by a small group of members who believed that the issue of family planning should be attached to a national security issue.

I have now testified a number of times to the following point, which I deeply believe: I think that the issue of family planning is one that is a highly debated issue in the United States and the question of pro-choice and pro-life. And I happen to be on one side of the issue, as is the First Lady, and there are very good people on the other side of the issue. It is an issue of major importance and it should be debated, but it should be debated separately. It is a custom in the United States to be able to vote an issue up or down on the basis of its substance, and not on the basis that it is attached to national security legislation.

And it continues to be put forward that way and we are in danger of shutting down our foreign policy. And so we are saying that it's an important issue, it should be debated separately and we should allow it to have an up or down vote and move the rest of the legislation not only to do with U.N. arrears, but the IMF replenishment, the supplemental that also will have Iraq and Bosnia in it, as well as some natural disaster -- ways to help -- on its own merit. We cannot tie up these important issues with another important issue, which is the discussion on family planning.

Q No compromises?

SECRETARY ALBRIGHT: Well, I think the issue here is that it ought to be separated. It's very hard on an issue of this kind. There are really good people on both sides. I believe that, because it's an issue of such importance, and it should not be attached to national security legislation.

Q If CEDAW is this important to the administration, why hasn't it been pushed more aggressively early on, from the very beginning of the administration in 1993?

SECRETARY ALBRIGHT: I have made it very clear that it is an issue of priority for the administration. And I have done it, interestingly enough, when Chairman Helms invited me to go to his college in North Carolina, where the loudest applause that I got was on CEDAW and paying back U.N. arrears. So I have made it very clear. I did again yesterday. And if you note the various speeches that I have made, it has been a high priority issue for us. It is blocked, and we are going to continue. And today the President will also remake his point on this, as the First Lady just has.

Q To follow up on the question, what is it that makes you hopeful that this convention is going to be ratified either this year or by July, when the United States has avoided it for so many years, pretty much half of my lifetime? I mean, what makes you hopeful that it will get done by July or even by the end of the year?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I think we're hopeful because if we could get sufficient public attention paid to the convention and more people like we are concerned about how the United States looks standing on the wrong side of this issue with some pretty unsavory company, that it could very well have the intended effect of giving it enough momentum to overcome the objections that people have to it.

What we're looking for is a discussion about it. I mean, we haven't even been able to have a discussion. It's never even gotten to that point. So a lot of the objections which are bandied about on right-wing radio stations and in brochures and pamphlets that people send across the transom, they've never gotten a hearing because we've never been able to have a national debate about this. And I'm hopeful that the more attention that's paid to it and the increased emphasis that we're all putting on it will at least bring about that discussion.

MS. LOAR: There's also a lot of groups across the United States who are working to advocate, at the state level, at the national level, who have been in touch with their members of Congress to indicate their support. And these are groups of -- church groups and civic groups and women's organizations who have been very active in the last several months in a campaign to get greater attention to this treaty and to try to get some action on it.

Q I'd like to address for a minute what -- used to calling "real men don't do it." You're sort of expanding here the definition of national security and foreign policy interests of the

United States with these kinds of issues that we're not on the traditional national security agenda. How do you get bureaucracy to incorporate an issue like this into its planning for events or issues

SECRETARY ALBRIGHT: Well, we do it here on a daily basis by making very clear that women's issues are national security issues because they are the basis of how societies operate. And when there are programs here that have to do with refugee assistance or environmental issues or -- I think, as I mentioned, what I found interesting yesterday, as I said, my discussion in Canada about that women need to get more involved in discussions about weapons of mass destruction. So we are -- it's kind of a daily input in terms of how all our issues are handled that there is a sensitivity raised about the fact that women are not just victims of policies, but can actually be proponents of policies that assist the entire world in terms of developing the world we want to be in, in the 21st century.

Theresa, you might want to talk some more specifics.

MS. LOAR: I can tell you that with Secretary Albright at the head of this department, her example sends very strong signals. When Assistant Secretaries go out to the region, they come and ask me for a briefing -- what are the issues; who are the people I should be working with; what of your issues, your points, can I be sure to incorporate in this trip. This is not the way it was a few years back at the State Department. This is a sea change. This is a dramatic change in the one year that there's been a great emphasis on this. And it really has to do with example at the top and it has to do with follow-through throughout the whole State Department.

It's also when the Secretary goes on trips. You know how the Secretary -- this complex paper process works -- there's a tasker that goes out to the whole building, these are the issues we think she should work on. Well, our issues are incorporated into that and we're part of that tasker. So we are alerted whenever the Secretary is traveling to see how we can put some of the issues that we are particularly working on, on her agenda. And it's been a tremendous response.

Of course, when the Secretary raises it, then we have, -- the reason Bonnie Campbell, for example, is meeting with Italians is because the Secretary raised the issue of trafficking with the Italians at the G-8 Summit last June. The Italians responded very quickly -- how can we work with you, how can we do the kind of working group that you have at your government on this issue.

Q Mrs. Clinton, you mentioned in your opening remarks that the former Soviet Union has some of the worst trafficking problems of women. And I know that Secretary Albright mentioned in her opening remarks that she takes up this issue repeatedly in all her meetings, no matter what she's meeting about. And I wanted to ask both of you, in your dialogues as Secretary of State and the First Lady, what are the Russians -- how are they responding when you

raise this issue? And if you could just sort of articulate what kind of response you get initially.

SECRETARY ALBRIGHT: Well, I think that when I have raised it -- and I just raised it in Ukraine and then with the Russians earlier -- is basically I think they are originally surprised at the fact that this is going on and that they are concerned about it. I think that they -- I think as Bonnie also said, there's a lack of understanding about how a system works and what the government officials can do about this particular problem. So it's a matter not only of telling them that there's a problem, but that it is something that they can do something about. And I found generally a positive response, that they want to work on this. I think they see it as unacceptable and also as a mark against them as they try to be a part of organized democratic communities.

MRS. CLINTON: Yes, I have found the same.

Q And just to follow up on this, what ideas do they have about making changes and trying to stop it?

SECRETARY ALBRIGHT: Well, they do want to know about how they get laws passed and what they can do about it. I mean, part of their problem, generally -- and I think we've had this discussion on other issues -- is that as communist systems have moved from centralized systems where they controlled everything and they knew how to get things done, they have now moved to trying to deal with developments of civil society and various pieces of enterprises that they have no control over. And so they ask -- you know you criticized us when we were centralized, how do you expect us now to do it when we're de-centralized. And we talk about how legislation can be done.

Q The administration has talked very tough about the Taliban in Afghanistan in particular, and has had intensive discussions with members of the Taliban. And I wonder whether you feel like you're getting anywhere with them, whether there has been any response that you consider positive to your message? And does the administration consider at all the possibility that if the civil war were to end there, that the pipeline would -- the United States might oppose a pipeline there until they identify --

SECRETARY ALBRIGHT: Well, first of all, I mean, we have been pressing them in public and private, and Carol, you were with me when we were in Pakistan. I think that we make very clear our objection to the way that they treat women. We have committed up to \$2.5 million in new funds for women's grass-roots organizations in Pakistan and ways of providing training. I think we -- it is very much a part of our thinking as we deal with Afghanistan, generally, is a subject that is raised all the time and that we feel that by keeping at it, we are making some progress. It's a very tough issue, I'm not trying to sugar-coat this in any way. It is certainly a priority for us and we keep stressing it. I've given a number of --well, portions of speeches on this and I know that the First Lady

has too. So it's up there as a big issue for us.

Q The President's trip to Africa is fast approaching. Could you give us a sense of what -- to what degree these are problems in the countries he'll be visiting, and do either of you plan special events or forums that will address --

MRS. CLINTON: I don't know that the Secretary is actually going to be able to make the trip, but in the planning for the trip -- we will be going to Ghana, Uganda, South Africa, Botswana and Senegal, and in each of those countries there's a long list of issues that the President will be addressing. And where appropriate, these issues are going to be a part of that mix.

I'm also looking for opportunities to meet with people in each of those countries, both in the government and outside the government, on issues affecting women and children. I'm particularly concerned, as I said when I went to Arusha, about the systematic exploitation of women and children by using them in military conflicts. And that's an issue that I hope to be able to address in the various forums there. We may have some further information -- either before the trip or during the trip to announce with respect to these specific issues that we've been talking about here as well.

Q Mrs. Clinton, could you talk about your role or your input into the President's decision not to accept any compromise language on the overseas abortion funding that's now held up money for the IMF and the repayment to the U.N.?

MRS. CLINTON: I don't have anything to add to what the Secretary said in describing what the government's position is.

Q Do you have conversations with the Secretary or with the President about your feelings about it?

MRS. CLINTON: I never talk about my conversations.

Q One of the issues, certainly of the former Soviet Union, as far as trafficking of women goes -- closely is economic --(inaudible). I missed if there was -- is there any economic incentive that goes along with --(inaudible)-- a partnership?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I don't know that there's any economic incentive that is directly tied to this initiative, but certainly Ukraine receives an extraordinary amount of American assistance right now, much of it aimed at economic initiatives. And one of the points that we've tried to make over the last several years in talking about these issues is that women and women's opportunity to make income has to be seen as part of economic growth and development. So we have changed in the last several years a lot of American aid programs and investment initiatives to focus on women. So it's not -- I can't say that it's a direct quid quo pro, but it is certainly part of our overall belief that the more women who are empowered to be economic actors on their own behalf and for

their families, the less likely that they would be pulled into some of these other difficulties.

MS. LOAR: Actually, Cynthia, part of our initiative with the government of Ukraine is a big component on economic empowerment. And that's a big part of it because that's something they had identified as a need. And that's a very preventive measure and it's part of our long-term assistance, so it will be an important part of that.

Q Can I just follow up? In term of -- it is well documented around the world -- in Israel and other places around the world that they are host countries. How well documented is trafficking in women in some of these countries?

MS. CAMPBELL: Let me tackle that. We are in the process right now of assessing the answer to that question. We prosecute very vigorously, so we know there is trafficking and we are trying to understand the trends.

But I do need to make a few points about the difficulty in amassing the data. First of all, like most other forms of violence against women, trafficking is vastly under-reported, often dealing with illegal immigrants, people holding false documents, people who are literally locked away in brothels. I mean, if they were enforced prostitution, walking the streets, we'd see them, but they're not. They fear retaliation, personal violence, violence against their families. They fear deportation. And, frankly, our ability to provide services because of their immigrant status is often very challenged. So we're trying to assess what are the trends, where are we seeing it, where is it coming from.

The President's directive, I think, will be enormously helpful in directing the resources, but also understanding what we need to do by way of providing services. From a prosecutor's perspective, if you want to prosecute traffickers, you have to discover who they are, where they are, from whence they come, how they got people illegally into this country; and then you have to have victims who are willing and not afraid to testify. And those two challenges are enormous. And we are diligently -- because even before Theresa's directive to look at trafficking, the Attorney General had asked us to look at it. So I hope shortly we'll know more than we know now. But the data are very sketchy and they are difficult to gather and assess.

Q The President is going to Latin America, too. It's a very wide area, very diverse. What are the issues --

MRS. CLINTON: Are you talking about when the President goes to the Summit of the Americas in Santiago? I should let the Secretary respond officially on that, but certainly much of the follow-up to the first Summit in Miami is going to be on that agenda.

SECRETARY ALBRIGHT: The President has asked that we

focus basically on three subjects. One is on education, as a whole -- and I think that both he and a number of the other Latin American leaders are very interested in getting the whole education level up in the hemisphere -- and the importance of that across the board to issues in each of the countries on questions of trade and questions of narco-trafficking. Those are the kind of central themes. But there are a number of other aspects that will obviously flow from that.

From what I know -- I'm sure you will corroborate this -- the President is looking forward very much to this summit and sees it as a very good vehicle for working even harder for establishing a partnership within the Americas that we consider very important to us throughout the world in terms of pursuing our national security agenda.

Q (Inaudible.)

SECRETARY ALBRIGHT: Well, that will certainly come up in terms of the education issues, in terms of all the issues, because it's an underlying issue. Let me also say I'm very glad -- as you know, there are not a lot of women foreign ministers. There are 11 in the world and a lot of them in this hemisphere. And Mexico now has a woman Foreign Minister, Rosaria Green, who happens to be part of my original -- group in New York. So we have our network of woman foreign ministers who are pursuing also within their countries some of the women's issues and it's what we talk about when we -- in addition to all the other subjects we talk about when we have conversations.

MRS. CLINTON: Hanging out with the foreign ministers.  
(Laughter.)

Q I work for Newsweek and I'm actually based in Mexico now. Two questions: One is, you know, I live in a pretty sexist society now and I often wonder whether or not the two of you, or any of you, have experiences when you're trying to convince people that these should be on the agenda -- finding experiences where they don't get the fact that these are important issues, how you convince them. Do you have to bully them? Do you sweet-talk them? And then also, very specifically, the Rosaria Green point, do you foresee anything in terms of Mexico's foreign policy related to women's issues because she's now the foreign minister?

SECRETARY ALBRIGHT: Well, life is not too different, you know, throughout the world. (Laughter.) I think we all have the same experiences and we all get together and share them. And I must say that one of the fun things that I have done, as the First Lady just said, hanging out with the foreign ministers in New York during the General Assembly -- eight of us -- at that stage there were only 10 women foreign ministers -- met and we talked about common experiences. And the combination of bullying and sweet talking, I think, we all know how to practice both arts.

Q Can you think of an example just to illustrate how you -- or even a success that you would say was really hard won, bringing somebody around to the realization that something was an important point?

SECRETARY ALBRIGHT: Well, I think with Rosaria Green especially, she in New York was very much a part of a women's group that we had. I originally got together the women permanent reps. There happened to be seven of us, so we called ourselves the G7. (Laughter.) But she was there as a part of the United Nations system and was responsible for a lot of women's issues. She has now taken over --

(End of side one of tape.)

(Begin side two, in progress.)

I think that from my discussions with her she is looking at ways that women's issues can be more a part of their whole system.

But with her, she is also doing what I've tried to do, which is to try to increase the number of women in their foreign service and try to get more women out into representing their countries. I must say, I was asked often how I would be received by Arab countries, and I went to my first meeting of the Gulf Cooperation Council, and the first meeting I said, you may notice that I don't look quite the way my predecessors have looked; and this time you've all been very generous to me and next time we get together we'll talk about women's rights. And we did.

Q Did they chuckle when you said that or did they think you were joking?

SECRETARY ALBRIGHT: Yes, yes, of course they chuckled. What did you expect? (Laughter.) But I do think that they have made a point of discussing with me some of the opportunities for women in their societies. And I have to tell you that as the representative of the United States and as a woman, I have been greeted in all countries with the highest respect. And I think that having a woman represent the most powerful country in the world is a message in itself that they react to.

MRS. CLINTON: Let me just follow up on that and say that in addition to the personal progress that can be marked by people who have achieved high positions, such as our Secretary of State and the other women in foreign ministries, I think you have to look at the extraordinary progress -- and it gets back to the question about how you institutionalize this -- that has occurred just in the last five years. There was a recent article talking about all the progress that has happened in the last two and half years from Beijing. But there was long process that led up to Beijing, starting in about 1993 and maybe even earlier, but that's

when I first was aware of it.

And I think you can mark progress in individual countries. You can mark progress in multilateral kinds of events, focusing on these issues affecting women. And I think you have to view it, as I do, as a kind of historical process. You move from the theoretical to the rhetorical to the practical and policy implications. And the theoretical has been there for a long time. There's been work done for about the last 30 years demonstrating the important connection between development of women and democracy and other kinds of progress that are not only good for the societies in which they take place, but are in the interests of the United States.

And then you can move to a rhetorical basis, which we certainly have seen done in Beijing and other places, where we begin to put a vocabulary out there that people can begin to accept and then it all of a sudden comes echoing back to you, to the practical implications. And there are enormous practical implications. And I think you can even look within our own administration. I mean, certainly when some of us started talking about something like microcredit a few years ago, it wasn't even a known issue among many people within the State or Treasury or Defense Departments, and now it's embraced as an element of American policy both at home and abroad because of the results.

So I think there are many examples. And progress isn't always in a straight line and it isn't easy. But I think that with persistence and with a capacity to show these results we can continue building on it. And that's, of course, one of our objectives from today, is to demonstrate that.

SECRETARY ALBRIGHT: I think the First Lady and I have to leave. And I actually am going to go meet the Secretary General. And just as an example of what has happened is he has named a woman as Deputy Secretary General, one of the women that have been part of the original group, the Canadian permanent representative. He has a woman High Commissioner for Refugees, and a woman who is his High Commissioner for Human Rights. So it's moving through the system.

Theresa will be happy to stay to answer some more detailed questions, but I thank you.

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you all very much.

Q Thank you.

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