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ADDRESS BY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
THE FIRST LADY OF THE UNITED STATES
THE UNIVERSITY OF ZURICH
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Thank you very much. President Cotti; Governor Buschor; Rector Schmid; and Ambassador Kunin, my friend. I am very grateful to be here on this occasion and I wish to thank the sponsors of this event, the Swiss American Chamber of Commerce and the Swiss National Council Women's Organization. I have long wanted to spend time in your country. I've only had the opportunity before today for a very short visit to Geneva. And I feel after today-- looking forward to the rest of my stay-- that I have been given the appetizer but not permitted to eat the meal, so I'm looking forward to returning as soon as I possibly can, to see more of Switzerland.

It's a particular honor to be here at the University of Zurich, a jewel in the crown of Switzerland's institutions of higher learning, and home to many of your country's leading teachers and intellectuals--including a Nobel Prize-winner. And I was pleased to learn in doing my research for this visit that the first woman in the German speaking world graduated from this university--in 1867.

Universities such as this one are the real incubators of the democratic values that we share together. They are the practice fields for responsibilities and opportunities that come with living in a free society. When we walk through the doors of great universities, such as this one, we are reminded of how important free speech and free thought are. And we see these places as collective meeting points for men and women of different backgrounds, interests, opinions, and aspirations. It is our universities, here in Switzerland, and in my country, and around the globe, where many of us first learn to strike a balance between the rights and needs of individuals, and those of the larger community.

That will become an even more important task in the years ahead, because striking the balance between the individual needs and community needs will be one of the challenges of the next century and we will need more than ever to lift up and cherish those institutions of democracy that teach all of us how to live together--our schools, our places of worship, our community associations, as well as our daily actions as citizens--hold us together as diverse people, and strengthen our efforts to work toward the common good. It is these shared values, and this commitment to a vibrant civil society, that will be our bulwark in the new millennium, because we face so many changes around our globe.

And as two of the world's oldest democracies, Switzerland and the United States, bare a special responsibility to help lead the way into this new time. We understand well the challenges of building a democratic nation, and the struggles we face in perfecting our democratic ideals. In fact, we have stood together as "Sister Republics" since our earliest moments as democratic nations, and we have learned valuable lessons from each other. We know, for example, that Thomas Jefferson greatly admired Swiss authors, whose writings on the theory of natural law, and the inalienable rights of individuals are thought to have inspired Jefferson as he was writing

the Declaration of Independence.

And then in 1848--when Switzerland was establishing its modern federal state and drafting its Constitution--you looked to our Constitution, and its system of checks and balances. And I want to take this opportunity to congratulate you on the historic occasion of the 150th anniversary of the Swiss Constitution. It is these traditions and how we have mutually reinforced one another, learned from each other, helped to lead the way to democracy, that we must again turn to in these times.

I saw in action your longstanding commitment to democracy, when I visited the Children's Parliament in Luzern. There I saw some of your youngest citizens--boys and girls between the ages of eight and fourteen--being given real responsibility. They were allotted money from the city council which they then had to debate and decide how to use on behalf of the children of their city. It was an extraordinary experience, because I watched these children standing and talking with great poise and clarity about whether or not to go forward on a project to build a playground. Well one might think that that's a rather trivial subject, but I saw the teaching of democracy in action--I was very impressed. And I also came away even more convinced that we have to do a better job in my own country in instilling in our children a respect for democratic values and teaching the next generation the skills they will need, not just to be leaders, but more importantly, citizens. I commend the people of Luzern for this innovative project. But I also believe that we must all do more to pass on the values that we have inherited.

We share this strong bond, but we always stand in danger of seeing it frayed between our governments and our people if we are not vigilant. There are so many challenges, especially to young people today, such a need for instant gratification in the media driven world in which they live. So many other role models that the adults around them who are teaching them and parenting them and caring for them, that the challenge of teaching the values of democracy has grown even more difficult.

Our two countries share other bonds as well. Switzerland has been a strong trade and investment partner, and as many as 200,000 American jobs have been created as a result of Swiss investment in the United States, and I thank you for that. We also share a deep love of music and the arts, and have a long history of cultural exchange--from a play about William Tell that was performed in New York City in 1796--to the recent visit of the Zurich Symphony to Washington D.C.

Our two nations are also committed to common efforts in confronting threats to international peace and stability, which include joint measures to combat money laundering and organized crime, and cooperation in preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction.

While our two countries are held up as models of pluralistic democracies, people often forget how long it took to shape these democratic institutions. In our own country, we are struggling with some of the unfinished business of our democracy. We are working very hard to

make sure that we truly are a united people, taking advantage of the many diverse backgrounds, races, ethnic groups and religions that populate America. We are also trying to face squarely the ongoing inequality and discrimination that continues as a consequence of America's history of slavery and racial division.

My husband's Initiative on Race seeks to educate all of our citizens about the realities of race in America today, to encourage constructive dialogue to work through these issues, and to develop solutions. There are some in our country who say we should not raise this issue--we should just ignore it, we should pretend that it is taken care of, that it is in fact divisive to try to talk about how we can live together, and that race will never be solved, so why confront it. My husband's opinion, which he holds very strongly, is that we always have to face our history, we have to face the truth of who we are in order for us to move beyond, and I hope that in my country the President's Initiative will succeed in encouraging dialogue among people across the lines that too often divide us.

I look also to Switzerland because I know you share a commitment to maintaining balance and cohesion in a multi-cultural society. Your system of cantons drawn together in a united federation, reflects the common aspiration of our two countries: out of many, one.

Issues of tolerance and equal opportunity are some of the toughest challenges we face. But we are not alone in doing so. Across the globe, from Bosnia to South Africa, we are witnessing similar efforts to confront the pains and divisions in societies. We are looking to see how truth and reconciliation in South Africa can overcome the hatred and divisiveness of the past. We are hoping that the peace that has been created in Bosnia by armed force will lead eventually to the peace that should be between people without force.

These are the same pursuits driving Switzerland to take an honest look at its own history, and to address the issues that arose during World War II, and the terrible events of the Holocaust. The Ambassador mentioned the group of students who are here from the Neufeld Gymnasium in Bern, who have worked together to raise money to aid survivors of the Holocaust, and I will meet with them later today. They are individual students determined to make a difference, young people who embody the finest spirit of humanitarian assistance. They also reflect the efforts that the Swiss government, as well as the private sector here, are taking to seek answers to the past, and to assist the survivors of the Holocaust.

Switzerland is to be applauded for its willingness to face these issues. You have taken major strides to uncover the truth and serve the cause of justice, through historical commissions, through mechanisms to return dormant accounts, and through the establishment of funds that are already helping needy Holocaust victims--many of whom are the double victims, first, of the Holocaust and then of communist repression in central and Eastern Europe.

These are, I know, difficult steps, and you have faced them courageously. Today, I want to encourage you to stay on the constructive path you have chosen. We all have much to do to

bring this tragic chapter of European history to a just end. And we owe it to the victims, not only of the Holocaust, but we also owe it to ourselves, to complete that task. The spotlight of history, whether it is on race and slavery in the United States, or Apartheid in South Africa, or the Holocaust here in Europe, can be harsh, but it is only through facing that history that we can strengthen our commitment to democratic ideals and to keep working together to fulfill those ideals.

And we shall learn the lessons of the past, because we ignore them at our peril. At the beginning of this century, there were many who believed that democracy would flourish, that there was no stopping the progress that had taken hold in so many parts of the world with the industrial revolution. And as we are about to close out this century, we know, sadly, that the promise that was looked to by many was not met, but that instead, we have one of the bloodiest centuries in human history. But now as we start this next century, how much more have we learned, how much more can we do together, if we are honest and committed to meeting the challenges of the future.

As more countries embrace democracy and free markets, we see that they will too be challenged. How will they be able to adjust to the rapid pace of change, global competition, and the information revolution, all which are creating new pressures on every institution in society. Many of these new democracies formed recently with the collapse of communism, are looking to the experienced democracies, like the United States and Switzerland. They want to know how they can live peacefully together, how they can transfer power, how they can have a system of checks and balances; and in many ways countries like ours bear an enormous responsibility because of the example we set and the hope that we give to so many.

Because today the greatest threat to democracy is no longer a communist monolith with imperial designs, but the volatile economic, political and social conditions that have emerged in the aftermath of the cold war. And our most powerful tool to ensure balance in these volatile times will not necessarily be our military might, or our financial might, but instead it will be our commitment to democratic values, and our willingness to invest in strong and vibrant civil societies.

Just look around the globe, there is such a superficial homogenization, people on every continent wear the same jeans, eat the same fast food, listen to the same music, but these surface similarities do not override a longing for identity and meaning in our lives. Despite improving material conditions in advanced economies such as ours, families seem under even greater stress. In my country, the gap between the rich and the poor grows wider. The social safety net of health care, education, pensions, decent wages and good jobs, is in danger of fraying for those less educated, less able to navigate this new world.

In too many places, women are denied their rightful place as full participants in the life of their societies. We know that a nation's progress depends on the progress of its women. I'm pleased that my country and yours worked closely together in preparing for the Fourth World

Conference on Women held in Beijing. We shared the same positions on important issues, including women's rights, violence against women; women in armed conflict; and the health of women and girls. And I know that both of our countries will continue to work to ensure the fullness of equal rights for women around the world.

It is issues such as these, of social and economic inequality and discrimination, that pose unavoidable questions for us as we approach the 21st century:

Questions about how to balance individual and community rights and responsibilities; about how families will raise children in the face of pressures from the mass media and the consumer culture; about personal identity and work in an age of globalization, and information and high technology; about the role of how people will be able to preserve their ethnic pride and value their national citizenship; how nations will protect their sovereignty while cooperating regionally and globally with others; about how or whether multinational corporations will be regulated within and across borders; how governments will combat threats from international cartels, terrorists, and rogue states. These are just some of the new questions for democracies such as ours.

As my husband often says, our challenge as democratic nations is to balance the competing and often contradictory pressures of global integration and global disintegration.

There is in the United States and across Europe a serious debate underway about how to sustain economic growth without tearing apart the social fabric of our communities. In the United States, we believe that we have to keep all three of our primary institutions in tact, what I call the three legs of the society stool: a free market economy, our democratic government, and a strong and vibrant civil society. But building these three are far more difficult today in many respects. What does it mean to have a free market in a time of global capitalization, what does that mean to labor, what does that mean to the social structure of countries, what does that mean to the individual. Governments are under pressure because of the rising expectations of what they are to do, but in many respects, the decreasing capacity to perform. And probably the most important factor, the one that created our democracy and yours is neither the free market nor the government, but the civil society, how people organize themselves, what they believe, what values they pass on to their children.

Because we know that building and sustaining democracy is more than just allowing free elections, or creating free markets, or even protecting people's rights. It's also about the internalization of democratic values in people's hearts, minds, and everyday lives. It's about developing an "alliance of values" based on a shared belief in freedom, opportunity, responsibility, community, and respect for human rights.

Over 50 years ago, Winston Churchill spoke in this room, at this university. He urged the re-creation of the European family, after the horrors of the war. He called for "an enlarged patriotism and common citizenship," values that are no less important today.

In many ways, Switzerland has always recognized the importance of such a broadened "alliance of values," through your commitment to providing humanitarian support around the world. I thank this nation for your generous contributions in assisting developing countries, international institutions, and non governmental organizations (NGOs). From helping to eliminate toxic waste in Hungary; to improving milk production in Poland; to reducing pollution in Slovakia; to assisting the world's earthquake victims, to the legendary work of the international Red Cross, Swiss foreign and humanitarian aid continues to help countries meet the difficult challenges of tomorrow.

Many countries have also benefited from Switzerland's commitment to lend your "good offices" to help mediate conflicts and establish international norms.

Individuals, NGOs, and governments working together can make a difference. When I speak at Davos I want to remind the Americans in my audience how important it is that the United States remain engaged in just such work around the world. That we continue to support international institutions, humanitarian aid, development assistance, it is only through that kind of outreach that we will be able to set the example and provide the help that so many of the new democracies require.

We know there are no easy answers to the challenges we face. We have to work everyday, day in and day out, year after year, to make democracy work. I've had the privilege to speak in some of the new democracies in central Asia and central and Eastern Europe, and I had told them how long it took for us and it's still taking us in the United States to perfect our union. We entered into democracy not only denying women the vote, but also taking our Black slaves and saying they were not even human. We fought a civil war to end slavery, we gave women the vote finally in 1920, we had to have a Civil Rights Movement in the 1960's, all which were efforts to live up to our stated aspirations and ideals. But we were given the time to do that. The pressures of the global media age and rising expectations did not press in on us as they do today on so many of these new democracies. Everything is at such a pressure point when you have so many competing interests as there are around the globe today. That is why it is more important than ever that countries such as ours remain engaged fully and offer to the new democracies, and to the people within our own borders, the help and support they need to become full active citizens in the world.

As I participate in the discussions in Davos, I will be thinking particularly about how to ensure a better future for our young people, for the bright young boys and girls I saw this morning in Luzern, for some of the students I saw on the outside and I look at here in this audience here at this university, and for my own countries children; and I will be hoping that the leaders of democracies, not only government officials, but business leaders and academic leaders, all citizens of our two democracies will understand how important it is that we do even more today to realize Winston Churchill's hopes of 52 years ago.

We have the tools to create that alliance of values, that expanded citizenship, that dream of democracy and freedom that inspired our two countries so many years ago. And I don't think we have much time to waste in doing so. We will have to rethink how we structure so many of our own institutions, and then how we lead in the world and demonstrate the effectiveness of democracy in the face of so many other difficulties. But knowing something about my history, and a very little bit about yours, I'm confident that the example of our two countries, the work we have done together, the leadership we have given, and the willingness to face some hard questions about who we are as peoples, will serve as an enduring example to our own people, and to people around the globe, that democracy is worth investing in, worth taking risks for, and worth having for ourselves and our children as the best possible way of moving into the future with confidence and hope.

Thank you for being that example for so many years. Thank you for being such a friend and partner of the United States, and thank you for what I know you will do in the future. Thank you very much.