

Forum 2000 Speech
Prague, Czech Republic
October 13, 1998

SPEECH BY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON AT FORUM 2000

Spanish Hall, Prague Castle
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PRESIDENT HAVEL:

Thank you very much Mr. Hans van den Broek for your address and mainly for your words on the crisis of complexity and what you said about the world governments. It's very important for this forum. Now I should invite you, Mrs. Clinton, to deliver your address.

HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON:

Thank you very much. I am honored to be here, and I want to thank President Havel for convening another extraordinary gathering of Forum 2000. I am told that during the Velvet Revolution, there were posters all over Prague with the message: "Havel to the Castle." Well, here we are, at the Castle, with President Havel, thinking about the future that awaits all of us.

With poetry and prose, no one has done more to spread the message of freedom and democracy throughout the world than President Havel. No one has worked harder to nurture civil society and keep us focused on the real questions confronting us as we end this century. He has reminded us that we live our lives not just as consumers, but as citizens, as diverse and spiritual beings. And no one has done more to make this castle a place for gatherings such as this, where ideas can be discussed and where all of us can do more to ask ourselves the hard questions about what kind of societies and world we expect to help build.

If we are gathered here today to talk about globalization, then I know there are many different reactions to that rather long word. It is hard sometimes even to define what one means by it. Certainly the increases in technology, the changes in the economy help us to define what we think we mean by globalization. We see the effects of rapid transportation and communication on our everyday lives. We are more interconnected, and I would argue, more interdependent than perhaps we have ever been. And as with any great sweeping change at any point in history, there are those who are the great proponents of globalization, whether they can define it or not, and those who are its great opponents, whether they can define it or not. So conversations such as the one provoked by this forum are extraordinarily important. We have to do more talking with one another across the lines that too often divide us, so that we not only can define what is occurring in our world today, but can summon up the will to take the forces that are at work and try to move them in a direction that will better our common humanity.

It is particularly appropriate that we would do this on the brink of the millennium and again I commend President Havel, and the organizers of Forum 2000, for choosing this theme this year. My husband and I have also done a lot of thinking about the millennium. We know it will come whether we think about it or not. Whether we do anything about it or not. We know that it will be accompanied by great parties on New Year's Eve, either 1999 or 2000 depending upon how it is defined. We know that there will be entrepreneurs who will produce products like "millennium toothpaste" or "millennium candy," so we understand that this event in history,

which none of us will ever experience again, has significance in and of itself. But then, what we give to that event and how we further define it can perhaps help us tackle some of the issues that you are dealing with at the forum.

We have adopted, in the United States, a theme for our discussions about the millennium: honor the past, imagine the future. And if one thinks about those two aspects of this theme, clearly, by honoring the past, one cannot shut ones eyes to it. There were many references yesterday night in the cathedral to the century that is just closing. We do ourselves no honor if we are not realistic enough to acknowledge all of the great violence and disappointment that came with this century as well as the great progress. So honoring the past requires us to be honest about our past. To take a hard look about where we have been and who we are in order better to live in the present and imagine a better future. It gives us this opportunity now to think through what we would do if given the chance to imagine a future where we could summon the political will, create the institutions, and provide an opportunity for all individuals, in whatever society, to feel that they were participating, and not only imagining, but creating their own futures.

Now, there are pessimists among us as we end this century and the millennium and there always have been at any point in history, but particularly at ends of points of time. I went back and read a little bit about the first millennium's end and about the panic terror where people supposedly gave away their possessions and hid in churches here in Europe, waiting for the end of the world. There was a rather controversial monk named, "Raoul Glauger" who lived in the tenth century. He consistently warned his local citizenry of impending doom. He had quite a checkered past- he was expelled from a number of monasteries, but he always has an audience. There were always people who were ready to believe the worst about themselves and about their futures. The earth did not implode as he had predicted, but there were great pockets of fear as there always are during times of transition.

So it is today, where the media is filled with doom and gloom and those who are more concerned about painting a pessimistic future than determining how together we can be realistic and optimistic. Even in that time so long ago, there were changes occurring that, coming out of so-called Dark Ages, set the tone for what was to come later. There was a spread of literacy, there was the emergence of craftsmen's guilds, and new universities were begun and new religious orders started. Not only in Europe, but in other parts of the world, there was the beginning of ferment about what would be the future and how it would be created.

Today, as we stand at the end of a very different time, we face some of the same issues that go to the root of who we are as human beings and how we define ourselves, our relations with one another, and whether or not we do summon the will required to create a better future. There is much to be optimistic about around the world and there is much to be pessimistic about. But clearly, whether one is able to define globalization or not, it is here to stay. There is no going back. There is no turning back the clock, doing away with computers, cutting off the Internet, stopping jet travel, preventing the mass media from bringing messages of different cultural ideas to remote parts of the world where they have never been heard of or seen before.

So our challenge, given the reality of what we face, is to ask ourselves some hard questions about how we will harness these forces of globalization, to deal with the important issues that

have always confronted humanity. Will the global economy lead to growth and stability for nations? Will it lift up the lives and opportunities for all citizens in the world or only those of us lucky enough to be in this fabulous hall, who have the skills to deal with information and the ability to navigate our way through this new world? Will it help us to humanize ourselves and each other? Learn from one another? Or will it drive us further apart into our own particular self-proclaimed identity as a way of protecting ourselves from the challenges of the outside? Will it inspire a race to the bottom of the economic ladder? Will we deplete our resources? Will we see our unique cultures uprooted by a one-dimensional consumer culture? Our spirituality replaced by an obsessive materialism? Will we retreat inward? Will the fear of the unknown, which is always there when we think about the future, be transformed into a plague of racism, nativism, and xenophobia?

If you stop for a minute and think about how popular culture imagines the future, it is not a pretty sight. Most of the recent movies demonstrate our innate fear about what is to come. Apocalyptic visions with only a few people left. Whole cities that can only survive under domes because we have depleted our natural resources. We don't even yet have a popular image of this new world that we hope we can create.

So what vision of the future do we dare to imagine today? I hope that out of conversations like this here and others that are going on throughout the world, we will begin to realistically parse through globalization. In and of itself it is neither a good nor an evil. In and of itself, we are offered tremendous opportunities if only we take responsibility to address our problems. As with every age, we have to take the world as we've been given it, not as we wish it were, either with a too optimistic or pessimistic vision. And we have to create conditions in which democratic governments become even more the norm so that all citizens are given a stake in their future. In which free markets benefit all people and not just a privileged few. And in which a vibrant civil society fosters free and active citizens who will, after all, ultimately determine our common human fate in the next millennium.

I often think of society with a very simple metaphor: as a three-legged stool. One leg is the government, another is the economy, and the third is civil society. Obviously we cannot sit on that stool if there is only one leg or two and we cannot sit on it if one leg is longer or shorter than the other two. Rather, we need three strong legs and a balance among them. They have to support each other. And so if we think about the challenges that confront us, it is simple for me to think about what needs to be done to make sure each of those three institutions and structures are strong enough to support society in the years to come.

We just heard a very eloquent description of some of the global governance issues confronting us, so we are not only talking about government in terms of national governments, but how we will create the institutions that will enable us to have strong governmental effects on runaway economies, on global capitalism, and other challenges. How we will redo international institutions like the IMF and the World Bank, to create new financial architectures to replace what was established more than fifty years ago at Bretton Woods. We know that government is an essential part of strong societies that will enable people to live up to their God-given potential, and yet in many parts of the world, particularly in my own country in the last decade or so, we have had a continued assault on government, as though the abolition or weakening of

government would create conditions that would better foster human enterprise and individual freedom. That is, I believe, a mistaken notion that hopefully we will put to rest as we end this century. We need strong and active governments, neither oppressive nor weak, but able to deal with the problems of their citizens and able to create public goods for their citizens to enjoy.

Similarly, with the economy, there are those who are great critics of the free market and those who are great advocates. Either position probably overstates both the capacity of the market and also the defects of it. We are working our way toward trying to create in the global marketplace some of the rules and regulations that will enable us to enjoy the benefits without suffering from its excesses. There is a lot of work to do on that front. So there are many tough questions posed by how we best structure and create governmental and economic institutions that will prepare the way for a better future.

But I wish to just concentrate for a few minutes on the third leg of the stool. That of civil society, of citizenship. The space that is filled between, on the one hand, the government, and the economy on the other. It is really in that space that life is lived. The economy is not an end in itself, but a means to an end. To create enough wealth that people can enjoy what is best about life. Government is not an end in itself, but a means to an end, to help us order ourselves so that we have the freedom and individual space to pursue our own interests. In that space of civil society exists families and religion, voluntary associations, art and culture, and learning, and most importantly, the training ground of what creates citizens from people. Economic opportunity can provide jobs and income, but economic activity alone cannot create the work ethic that capitalism requires. It can create consumers and producers of goods, but not citizens.

Governments alone cannot create citizens either. Only civil society can do that important job. As I have traveled throughout the world, I have seen how critical this component is, for us to imagine a kind of future that all of us hope for. I have seen what happens to people whose spirits have been crushed, whose economies have been driven into the ground, whose governments have oppressed their spirits. And yet, I have seen how their determination and support for one another can lift them up to rebuild their lives and families.

If one thinks about the challenges that confront us, we have to believe that nurturing civil society, creating opportunities for people to become citizens in today's world, is essential. There cannot be strong, sustainable, global economy without a strong global society. And there are some simple rules about how one creates citizens- simple to describe and very difficult to execute. We have to invest in people; that means education and healthcare. It means creating structures that value all people no matter whether they come from minority groups defined by religion, race, or ethnicity. It means that we look at civil society in any of our countries, as I look at mine, we can see clearly that we are not investing sufficiently and where we must do more.

Whenever I see, as I saw just a few days ago in Bulgaria, and as I have seen in so many parts of the world, great effort being made to make the transition to full democratic, functioning government and strong economies. I see also how there is great understanding growing up on the part of individuals and non-governmental organizations, that they have to play their role as well. Much of the work that was done successfully in the recent elections in Slovakia owes its

roots to the recognition by so many people there that non-governmental organizations and citizen activity were a necessary precondition for true democratic values.

If we think about how better we need to invest in people, then clearly, we have to reallocate the resources that are being produced by this global economy. We cannot be satisfied unless we are doing more to better educate all children and better prepare them to be citizens, to take their rightful places in their societies. And it goes without saying, I hope in this room, that that means educating both boys and girls to the fullest of their potential. It also means investing in people's dream and hopes by giving them access to credit, making it possible for them to create their own jobs and businesses. Not leaving them out by the great sweep of the global economy that pays little attention to what happens on the micro-level, but instead to create conditions in which local markets can grow and flourish and more people can participate in them.

I have met literally thousands of people now around the world whose lives have been transformed by something as simple as a loan of \$15.00 or \$50.00 or \$100.00. When my husband and I went to Uganda, we went with President and Mrs. Museveni out to a small village where we met women who because they were given access to credit had transformed their lives and in the process understood that they were worth something, that they had dignity and value and because of that, they understood better their citizenship responsibilities in a democracy. So within the civil society, the creation of small enterprises that then can grow into economic, viable ones is a way of giving people a stake in their own futures.

We also have to do more to ensure that people learn about their rights and responsibilities as citizens and then be encouraged to exercise them. There is good work going on around the world to help people understand how democracies operate, but there is not yet enough of that. I commend the European Union for its work in trying to create conditions in which people begin to learn, after so many years of being shut out of their political systems, what it takes to be a participant.

I have seen the effects of that in a very personal way. In Senegal, for example, several years ago, I visited a village where they were learning about democracy by performing skits for one another. Where people would stand up, make speeches, and others in the village would listen and then critique the speeches; where they would act out going to vote. Now that may sound very basic, but it gave those people their first understanding of what it meant to be citizens of a democracy. We have to take the abstract discussion of democracy, take the resolutions that are passed to promote democracy, and distill it into practical everyday advice and lessons about what that actually means in the everyday lives of people.

We also have to make it possible for us to learn how to treat our diversity as a source of strength. We have seen in too many places around the world that even with people elected as leaders in a democracy, old attitudes die hard. And old hatreds in the guise of democratically-elected leaders are no better for the citizens of a country and their neighbors than before democracy occurred. If people don't feel that they have a stake in their own futures and if the economy is working for them, if they don't have the space that civil society provides to give them meaning, then they often turn (as you know so well) against one another. They often begin to blame the other for

whatever it is that they find lacking in their own lives. Whether that other is a minority group, religious, racial, or ethnic, we have seen the results of too much blaming of the other.

And yet, when people defy history they can begin to rewrite it. Recently, I spoke at a conference for women in Belfast. We brought together both Protestant and Catholic women who were doubly burdened by the sectarian hatred that had stalked their land for so long and by their status as women. They came together to talk about how they could assume responsibility to help make the peace and reconciliation they voted for real and lasting. They put aside old hatred because new and better leadership had encouraged them to do so, and began to learn the tools of citizenship that will permit them to make their voices heard.

We also have to ensure that we do all we can to protect our natural and cultural treasures and we require citizens to do that. It often cannot be done from a distance or again by passing a resolution in a faraway place, but citizens living in our rainforests, on the edges of our savannas and our wetlands have to feel that they too have a stake in protecting what is best about our earth. And when it comes to cultural treasures we have to do more to be sure that we respect and preserve our religions; our languages, our heritage, which do give us our individual identity and which require us to learn to respect one another.

There is much to be done, but I am an optimist. I believe that we have great opportunities ahead of us if only we will seize them. If only we will be prepared to do what is necessary at the global level to deal with our economic and governance issues, as hard as that may be. And then to do at the local level what it takes to build civil society and citizens. Each of us in this room and so many countless beyond this hall have the obligation to do what we can to promote positive political and economic change and to nurture civil society wherever we are. There is much that each of us can do individually. We know today that we have global neighbors, but we haven't yet decided we want to build a global neighborhood. When we care about a toxic spill or a terrorist attack, or an economic downturn, or a civil war in another nation, it is not just because it may affect us down the road, but because we recognize that in a very fundamental way, we are now more interdependent than at any point in human history.

So that brings me back to where I started. When we imagine the future over the next years and over the next century and millennium, what is it we will see? In one of those popular movies I referred to that swept my country and apparently made a lot of money around the world, called Independence Day—these movies always seem to start with an attack on Washington D.C., which I don't really know how to take, the blowing up of the White House and Capitol to begin with—the ending of it required all of us to cooperate to fend off an alien attack. And certainly in the theater in which I saw it, there were great cheers as people of all different races and backgrounds and societies around the globe came together as human beings to save ourselves.

We certainly don't expect it to come to that, but in a real way, unless we do come together, we will not have the opportunities we deserve at the end of this very difficult and troubled century. We have done a lot in the last fifty years to create opportunity, to build democracy, to reach deep and to give more people a chance to fulfill their God-given potential. But when it is all said and done, globalization, however one defines it, can never be a substitute for humanization. We have a lot of work to do if we are to make sure that the global economy does not drive us apart from

one another, drive some down and lift others up, but instead is an engine that we harness to create a strong global society in which all people are given a chance to imagine a future better than their past.

Thank you very much.

OFFICIAL STATEMENT



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HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON:

Thank you very much. I am honored to be here, and I want to thank President Havel for convening another extraordinary gathering of Forum 2000. I am told that during the Velvet Revolution, there were posters all over Prague with the message: "Havel to the Castle." Well, here we are, at the Castle, with President Havel, thinking about the future that awaits all of us.

With poetry and prose, no one has done more to spread the message of freedom and democracy throughout the world than President Havel. No one has worked harder to nurture civil society and keep us focused on the real questions confronting us as we end this century. He has reminded us that we live our lives not just as consumers but as citizens, as diverse and spiritual beings. And no one has done more to make this Castle a place for gatherings such as this, where ideas can be discussed and where all of us can do more to ask ourselves the hard questions about what kind of societies and world we expect to help build.

If we are gathered here today to talk about globalization, then I know there are many different reactions to that rather long word. It is hard sometimes even to define what one means by it. Certainly the increases in technology, the changes in the economy help us to define what we think we mean by globalization. We see the effects of rapid transportation and communication on our everyday lives. We are more interconnected and I would argue more interdependent than perhaps we have ever been. And as with any great sweeping change at any point in history, there are those who are the great proponents of globalization, whether

they can define it or not, and those who are its great opponents, whether they can define it or not. So conversations such as the ones that are provoked by this Forum are extraordinarily important. We have to do more talking with one another across the lines that too often divide us, so that we not only can define what is occurring in our world today, but can summon up the will to take the forces that are at work and try to move them in a direction that will better our common humanity.

It is particularly appropriate that we would do this on the brink of the millennium and again I commend President Havel, and the organizers of Forum 2000, for choosing this theme this year. My husband and I have also done a lot of thinking about the millennium. We know it will come whether we think about it or not. Whether we do anything about it or not. We know that it will be accompanied by great parties on New Year's Eve, either 1999 or 2000 depending upon how it is defined. We know that there will be entrepreneurs who will produce products like "millennium toothpaste" or "millennium candy," so we understand that this event in history, which none of us will ever experience again, has a significance in and of itself. But then, what we give to that event and how we further define it can perhaps help us tackle some of the issues that you are dealing with at the Forum.

We have adopted in the United States a theme for our discussions about the millennium: honor the past, imagine the future. And if one thinks about those two aspects of this theme, clearly, by honoring the past, one cannot shut ones eyes to it. There were many references yesterday night in the cathedral to the century that is just closing. We do ourselves no honor if we are not realistic enough to acknowledge all of the great violence and disappointment that came with this century as well as the great progress. So honoring the past requires us to be honest about our past. To take a hard look about where we have been and who we are in order better to live in the present and imagine a better future. It gives us this opportunity now to think through what we would do if given the chance to imagine a future where we could summon the political will, create the institutions, and provide an opportunity for all individuals, in whatever society, to feel that they were participating, and not only imagining, but creating their own futures.

Now, there are pessimists among us as we end this century and the millennium and there always have been at any point in history but particularly at ends of points of time. I went back and read a little bit about the first millennium's end and about the myth of panic terror where people supposedly gave away their possessions and hid in churches here in Europe waiting for the end of the world. There was a rather controversial monk named Raoul Glauger who lived in the tenth century. He consistently warned his local citizenry of impending doom. He had quite a checkered past -- he was expelled from a number of monasteries, but he always had an audience. There were always people who were ready to believe the worst about themselves and about their futures. The earth did not implode as he had predicted, but there were great pockets of fear as there always are during times of transition.

So it is today, where the media is filled with doom and gloom and those who are more concerned about painting a pessimistic future than determining how together we can be realistic and optimistic. Even in that time so long ago, there were changes occurring that, coming out of the so-called Dark Ages, set the tone for what was to come later. There was a

spread of literacy, there was the emergence of craftsmen's guilds, and new universities were begun and new religious orders started. Not only in Europe but in other parts of the world, there was the beginning of ferment about what would be the future and how it would be created.

Today, as we stand at the end of a very different time, we face some of the same issues that go to the root of who we are as human beings and how we define ourselves, our relations with one another and whether or not we do summon the will required to create a better future. There is much to be optimistic about around the world and there is much to be pessimistic about. But clearly, whether one is able to define globalization or not, it is here to stay. There is no going back. There is no turning back the clock, doing away with computers, cutting off the Internet, stopping jet travel, preventing the mass media from bringing messages of different cultural ideas to remote parts of the world where they have never been heard of or seen before.

So our challenge, given the reality of what we face, is to ask ourselves some hard questions about how we will harness these forces of globalization, to deal with the important issues that have always confronted humanity. Will the global economy lead to growth and stability for nations? Will it lift up the lives and opportunities for all citizens in the world or only those of us lucky enough to be in this fabulous hall, who have the skills to deal with information and the ability to navigate our way through this new world? Will it help us to humanize ourselves and each other? Learn from one another? Or will it drive us further apart into our own particular self-proclaimed identity as a way of protecting ourselves from the challenges of the outside? Will it inspire a race to the bottom of the economic ladder? Will we deplete our resources? Will we see our unique cultures uprooted by a one-dimensional consumer culture? Our spirituality replaced by an obsessive materialism? Will we retreat inward? Will the fear of the unknown, which is always there when we think about the future, be transformed into a plague of racism, nativism, and xenophobia?

If you stop for a minute and think about how popular culture imagines the future, it is not a pretty sight. Most of the recent movies demonstrate our innate fear about what is to come. Apocalyptic visions with only a few people left. Whole cities that can only survive under domes because we have depleted our natural resources. We don't even yet have a popular image of this new world that we hope we can create.

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I often think of society with a very simple metaphor: as a three-legged stool. One leg is the government, another is the economy and the third is civil society. Obviously we cannot sit on that stool if there is only one leg or two and we cannot sit on it if one leg is longer or shorter than the other two. Rather, we need three strong legs and a balance among them. They have to support each other. And so if we think about the challenges that confront us, it is simple for me to think about what needs to be done to make sure each of those three institutions and structures are strong enough to support society in the years to come.

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Governments alone cannot create citizens either. Only civil society can do that important job. As I have traveled throughout the world, I have seen how critical this component is, for us to imagine a kind of future that all of us hope for. I have seen what happens to people whose

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Whenever I see, as I saw just a few days ago in Bulgaria and as I have seen in so many parts of the world, great effort being made to make the transition to full democratic, functioning government and strong economies, I see also how there is also a great understanding growing up on the part of individuals and non-governmental organizations, that they have to play their role as well. Much of the work that was done successfully in the recent elections in Slovakia owes its roots to the recognition by so many people there that non-governmental organizations and citizen activity were a necessary precondition for true democratic values.

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We also have to do more to ensure that people learn about their rights and responsibilities as citizens and then be encouraged to exercise them. There is good work going on around the world to help people understand how democracies operate, but there is not yet enough of that. I commend the European Union for its work in trying to create conditions in which

people begin to learn, after so many years of being shut out of their political systems, what it takes to be a participant.

I have seen the effects of that in a very personal way. In Senegal, for example, several years ago I visited a village where they were learning about democracy by performing skits for one another. Where people would stand up make speeches and others in the village would listen and then critique their speeches. Where they would act out going to vote. Now that may sound very basic, but it gave those people their first understanding of what it meant to be citizens of a democracy. We have to take the abstract discussion of democracy, take the resolutions that are passed to promote democracy, take our applause that we give when people make the transition to democracy, and distill it into practical everyday advice and lessons about what that actually means in the everyday lives of people.

We also have to make it possible for us to learn how to treat our diversity as a source of strength. We have seen in too many places around the world that even with people elected as leaders in a democracy, old attitudes die hard. And old hatreds in the guise of democratically-elected leaders are no better for the citizens of a country and their neighbors than before democracy occurred. If people don't feel that they have a stake in their own futures and if the economy is working for them, if they don't have the space that civil society provides to give them meaning, then they often turn (as you know so well) against one another. They often begin to blame the other for whatever it is that they find lacking in their own lives. Whether that other is a minority group, religious, racial or ethnic, we have seen the results of too much blaming of the other.

And yet when people defy history they can begin to rewrite it. Recently I spoke at a conference for women in Belfast. We brought together both Protestant and Catholic women who were doubly burdened by the sectarian hatred that had stalked their land for so long and by their status as women. They came together to talk about how they could assume responsibility to help make the peace and reconciliation they voted for real and lasting. They put aside old hatreds because new and better leadership had encouraged them to do so, and began to learn the tools of citizenship that will permit them to make their voices heard.

We also have to ensure that we do all we can to protect our natural and cultural treasures and we require citizens to do that. It often cannot be done from a distance or again by passing a resolution in a faraway place, but citizens living in our rain forests, on the edges of our savannahs and our wetlands have to feel that they too have a stake in protecting what is best about our earth. And when it comes to cultural treasures we have to do more to be sure that we respect and preserve our religions, our languages, our heritage, which do give us our individual identity and which require us to learn to respect one another.

There is much to be done, but I am an optimist. I believe that we have great opportunities ahead of us if only we will seize them. If only we will be prepared to do what is necessary at the global level to deal with our economic and governance issues, as hard as that may be. And then to do at the local level what it takes to build civil society and citizens. Each of us in this room and so many countless beyond this hall have the obligation to do what we can to promote positive political and economic change and to nurture civil society wherever we are. There is much that each of can do individually. We know today that have global neighbors

but we haven't yet decided we want to build a global neighborhood. When we care about a toxic spill or a terrorist attack, or an economic downturn, or a civil war in another nation, it is not just because it may affect us down the road, but because we recognize that in a very fundamental way, we are now more interdependent than at any point in human history.

So that brings me back to where I started. When we imagine the future over the next years and over the next century and millennium, what is it we will see? In one of those popular movies I referred to that swept my country and apparently made a lot of money around the world, called Independence Day -- these movies always seem to start with an attack on Washington D.C., which I don't really know how to take, the blowing up of the White House and Capitol to begin with -- the ending of it required all of us to cooperate to fend off an alien attack. And certainly in the theater in which I saw it, there were great cheers as people of all different races and backgrounds and societies around the globe came together as human beings to save ourselves.

We certainly don't expect it to come to that, but in a real way, unless we do come together, we will not have the opportunities we deserve at the end of this very difficult and troubled century. We have done a lot in the last fifty years to create opportunity, to build democracy, to reach deep and to give more people a chance to fulfill their God-given potential. But when it is all said and done, globalization, however one defines it, can never be a substitute for humanization. We have a lot of work to do if we are to make sure that the global economy does not drive us apart from one another, drive some down and lift others up, but instead is an engine that we harness to create a strong global society in which all people are given a chance to imagine a future better than their past.

Thank you very much.

Q&A Following Hillary Rodham Clinton's Speech
at Forum 2000, Prague Castle,
October 13, 1998

Prague, Czech Republic

Questions and comments by four Forum 2000 participants are paraphrased below, followed by the First Lady's responses transcribed in full.

We know much about the U.S. as a teaching society, but I would like to hear about the U.S. as a learning society as well. An example is the U.S. media coverage of Copenhagen: the U.S. press gave almost no coverage to this event, but covered instead "the trial of the century." There was also little coverage of the Kyoto Conference. (Weiming Tu, Chinese historian and writer)

The media often covers only the ugly and negative. They should introduce beauty; otherwise, people cannot be expected to think anything or do anything good or beautiful. (Karan Singh, Indian political figure and philosopher)

What about U.S. isolationism/unilateralism? The U.S. can't think beyond its own borders. For example, there is no support for the U.N. or IMF when we need U.S. leadership. The "parochial preoccupations" of a key institution in the U.S. such as the Congress -- this is a matter of concern. The U.S. position on the International Criminal Court is also an example of this troubling attitude. (Unidentified speaker)

There is a need to work on global, not only national, rule of law. How can business help to bring this about? (Tomas Bata, Czech-Canadian entrepreneur)

HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON: Let me first respond to Mr. Tu, because I think you have very well expressed one of the principal challenges the United States faces, and certainly it has an impact not only in our country but around the world.

It is the case that the civil society in the United States was recognized as being a critical component of our entire social structure as early as the first decades of the nineteenth century by de Tocqueville, and he talked about the habits of the heart which really nurtured democratic citizenship and involvement. And there's always been a tremendous tension among the three legs of the stool in the United States. One of our continuing challenges is to create a balance among the various power centers in the United States, whether it is within our government, among our three branches of government, or among the economy, the government, and civil society.

I don't think that de Tocqueville -- or anyone -- until relatively recently could have even imagined, let alone predicted, the extraordinary role that the mass media would play in shaping public opinion and impacting on civil society in particular. It is, I believe, a very serious issue for any society, but particularly for the United States at this time. Mr. Tu is absolutely right that the coverage of difficult problems that require patience and fortitude is practically nonexistent in the United States. The coverage of international affairs and our mass

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media is very limited. There is such an obsession with the immediate and with the kind of event or personality that will satisfy people in the short run, that I think we're doing a great disservice to ourselves by not providing more information in a continuing way so that the citizens can have at least the opportunity of knowing more about what is going on and making decisions for themselves based on that more detailed information.

I didn't mention it in my remarks, but I do think that the role of the mass media is something that we have to give more serious thought to in my country and, increasingly, around the world. It is extremely difficult for government or for civil society to function effectively either if there is not enough information about difficult decisions confronting citizens, or if the information that is being given actually undermines civil society and governmental effectiveness.

I don't have any solution in mind at all for any of this, but certainly America needs to become, in your words, a "learning civilization," in order to see better ourselves and understand what we must do to maintain our strong civil society and our cohesive nation state going into the future. It is something I spend a lot of time about thinking, because I do believe if we don't come to grips with the impact of the mass media on civil society and on effective governance in democracy, it will be increasingly difficult to deal with any of the problems of globalization that Professor Sunkel so eloquently described to us. So, I share your concerns. I certainly know that my husband and others are attempting to sort of break through the wall of the mass media to be able to communicate directly with people with information that is pertinent to their daily lives and also helpful in helping them make decisions.

And just let me add one other example. Several of you last night mentioned to me your hope and your concern that the United States will take effective action with respect to environmental challenges coming out of Kyoto. That is a perfect example of how difficult it is in our country to obtain a consensus about action that should be taken. It is not a subject that gets a lot of coverage in our country, and it is a subject about which special interests have very strong feelings and use the mass media to manipulate public opinion. So we have a great challenge in our democracy to navigate among the mass media and the very powerful special interests to create a space for the citizenry to get adequate information to make good decisions. Winston Churchill once said about America that it's a land where people do take a very long time and do nearly everything wrong before they make the right decision. And it is a kind of historical characteristic of ours that we do kind of stumble along until we get it right.

Finally with Mr. Singh, I thought that your remarks were beautifully eloquent. I don't know how we get those countervailing healing images through the mass media. We have to create alternatives, and perhaps the explosion of the media will give us a chance to have more channels of information conveying images to people. But certainly if the mass media is still largely determined out of America, we have a big challenge ahead of us to transform those negative dramatic images into something that can help people envision a more positive future. It is also an issue that that I am very concerned about, and since people are affected by and are determined to some extent in their images of themselves and others by what is occurring in the mass media, it is another issue that we must pay very close attention to. If in your metaphor the person sitting on the stool is to be someone who is a positive person, it is difficult to imagine how to be positive if you are the subject of constant consumer-oriented

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driven messages and negative messages. That's very difficult for people to overcome, so we have a big job ahead of us in that. But I thank for your beautiful language in describing that challenge.

Thank you.....

[After second two questions]

HRC: Well, these are two very specific questions about American public and political opinion. And given my concern about these issues, let me just address them in a larger context and then specifically.

The United States goes through periods of isolationism as anyone who has ever studied our history could clearly see. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the *raison d'etre* for much of foreign policy in America seemed to have disappeared in the minds of many political leaders, particularly those who had both spent time on the front lines of leading the charge against communism and those who believed that the United States had to have a very strong presence in the world in order to be effective in dealing with the threat caused by the Soviet Union.

We are still finding our way to redefine our position in the world and our assumption of leadership in so many areas that are critical for the United States to take a leading role. I think Gareth Evans is right that in every poll that I've ever seen, and in my own personal experience, American citizens are much more supportive of international institutions such as the United Nations and more willing for the United States to be engaged internationally than many of those in Congress who adopt a much more negative view.

The problem is, however, that there is an intense minority against such involvement that is at the heart of much of the Republican Party's support and to a much lesser extent some Democratic support. But focusing for a minute on the Republican party, they have in their constituency those people who believe the United Nations is invading America with black helicopters, who believe any kind of international involvement multilaterally by the United States is a sign of weakness, not of partnership and strength. And those people within their constituency who hold those views and less extreme versions of those views are much more intense than the general public which favors international involvement.

The general public does not vote on those issues, by and large: they would not turn out a member of Congress who did not vote for the United Nations dues as they might if he did not vote for funding education, for example. Whereas the intense minority that so often determines a politician's fate will vote against a member of Congress in many districts around our country. So the trick is to create the intensity and increase the awareness among the American public that their intuitive response about American engagement is something that they need to take to another level and be much more committed to and put into the political process as one of the factors by which they judge those who they elect.

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The second issue that relates to this is that there has been, in my view again, a collapse in elite opinion supporting international engagement in the United States. You know, the end of the Second World War when President Truman and General Marshall and others were summoning support for the Marshall Plan, it was not popular in the country, it was unpopular. But it was understood as being very important among the American business and academic and political elite in sufficient numbers that they were able to harness public opinion to their point of view.

It has been a great disappointment to me, and I mentioned this at Davos, that American business -- which benefits greatly from American involvement in the world -- has been so silent on so many of these issues that directly affect American leadership around the world. There was not a great outcry, for example, when the Congress first turned down IMF funding. The American business communities got more organized on that. But again, I don't know that they are telling members of Congress that they will not support them over that particular issue. So that the collapse of elite opinion in America has also played a negative role in creating a circumstance in which passionate and intense extreme opinion gets much more credibility that it deserves to have.

Thirdly, there is among many members of Congress a sense of unilateralism, that there is not anything for the United States to gain in being part of international and multilateral efforts, but rather to just be acting unilaterally, and that is something that the President is working very hard to try to change and to rein in. But it is a very strongly held opinion among certain members of Congress, in particular. And it has to be worked on again from two different perspectives. We have to increase public support and we have to not only change but harness elite opinion in order to have an impact on members of Congress who hold these views.

And then finally, it is just politics. You know, it's just good old-fashioned politics in a democracy, where if you've got in our system a president of one party and a congress of another, no matter what the President's for, the members of Congress and the majority on the other side want to be against. And right now, at this moment, they're asleep right now, but shortly they'll be back trying to get a budget for the United States, which we don't now have because the Republican majority in Congress has been opposed to the President's program. Parliamentary systems are much easier, believe me, in terms of getting something through, and even there you have a lot of problems in trying to reach consensus. But in our system, which is deliberately designed to be difficult, it is particularly difficult when there is a President of one party and a Congress of another and I think many people even in Europe who are used to parliamentary systems have a difficult time understanding why this is so hard to maneuver through. And so, it is something we're concerned about, that the President is very well aware of and that he's working very hard on.

Then just with respect to the international criminal court, that's another example of the difficulty of persuading Americans to be supportive of something that they believe might in any way impact their sovereignty. I must say, just very briefly, that there is a legitimate concern on the part of American leadership, including the administration, that because we do have so many interests around the world, we do have so many military interests around the world, that without appropriate safeguards that would enable the United States to feel that any kind of action by such a court would be justified with respect to American citizens, you are not going to get American support for that kind of international effort. Which is regrettable,

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and the American government will continue to support all of the war crimes efforts, whether they will be in The Hague or Rwanda, and we will continue to look for a way that we can be part of an international court of criminal justice. But it is difficult, particularly in the climate of the United States today, for political and military leadership to feel comfortable with ceding jurisdiction and sovereignty when so many more of our people around the world are at risk than the citizens of any other country. We don't think there is parity in the description of the court's authority with respect to the United States. So, there are some legitimate concerns about that issue, which take nothing away from the more general concerns we have about creating more of an American understanding and support for our engagement and leadership and our international cooperation.

(End of q&a transcript)