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SPEECH BY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON AT FORUM 2000

Spanish Hall, Prague Castle

Prague, Czech Republic

October 13, 1998

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,

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

Speech Writing

Laura Schiller meetings, Speeches, Events 10/19/12 - 12/11/12

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