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PROGRAM: TALK TO AMERICA

GUEST: First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton

HOST: Carol Pearson

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NARRATOR: Today on a special Worldnet edition of Talk to America, U.S. First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton talks about her travels around the world and women's issues.

At the U.N. Women's Conference in Beijing, China, Mrs. Clinton spoke about women's rights in the next century.

MRS. CLINTON: (From videotape.) If there is one message that echoes forth from this conference, let it be that human rights are women's rights and women's rights are human rights once and for all. (Applause.)

And among those rights are the right to speak freely and the right to be heard. Women must enjoy the rights to participate fully in the social and political lives of their countries if we want freedom and democracy to thrive and endure.

NARRATOR: In India last year, Hillary Clinton spoke to women about their role in the millennium.

MRS. CLINTON: (From videotape.) Our meeting today occurs at an historic moment. As we approach a new century, we are also on the frontier of a new world. It is different from the one we have known for the past 50 years. It is a world in which many old divisions have diminished or disappeared.

NARRATOR: Mrs. Clinton has brought that message to women in many countries over the past three years.

MRS. CLINTON: I have met new mothers in Indonesia who come together regularly in their village to discuss nutrition, family planning and baby care. I have met working parents in Denmark who talk about the comfort they feel in knowing that their children can be cared for in safe and nurturing after-school centers. I have met women in South Africa who helped lead the struggle to end apartheid and are now helping to build a new democracy. I have met women in India and Bangladesh who are taking out small loans to buy milk cows or rickshaws or thread in order to create a livelihood for themselves and their families. I have met the doctors and nurses in Belarus and Ukraine who are trying to keep children alive in the aftermath of Chernobyl.

NARRATOR: Most recently, in Estonia, Mrs. Clinton visited women's health centers and spoke to specialists in women's primary health care.

MRS. CLINTON: This is a very cheerful hospital, and that's something that makes me feel good.

NARRATOR: After watching Estonian folk dancers for a while, Mrs. Clinton got up and tried some dancing herself.

Mrs. Clinton was in Nicaragua last year to attend the fifth conference of wives of heads of state of the Americas to discuss the health and education of women and children. The first lady also visited Chile and Brazil.

On a goodwill trip to South Asia in April, Mrs. Clinton visited schools to promote children's welfare. And everywhere, she met with women to hear their stories and learn about their lives.

Mrs. Clinton was accompanied by her daughter Chelsea while visiting many of the noted sites of Southeast Asia, as well as Turkey, where she and Chelsea took in historic sites in Istanbul, including the Blue Mosque and the Eye of Sophia.

Mrs. Clinton and her daughter were also in Greece. They gazed at the ruins of the Acropolis overlooking Athens, where ancient Greeks forged the idea of democratic government. Mrs. Clinton was on Mount Olympus in western Greece for the lighting of the Olympic torch. The Olympic Games originated in Greece 2,700 years ago.

This summer, Mrs. Clinton was on a goodwill tour of Central and Eastern Europe to show U.S. support for the new democracies in the region. Walking through Krakow, Poland, with the Polish first lady, she was greeted by a crowd of well-wishers in the city's old marketplace.

In Bucharest, Romania, Mrs. Clinton visited a school, which was later named after her.

In the Czech Republic, America's first lady praised the Czech people for building a strong democracy and market economy and said the road to reform is sometimes a rocky one.

MRS. CLINTON: I also carry a message of encouragement from America to people who might question the pace of progress or the pain of change. Perfecting democracy is a never-ending challenge.

NARRATOR: The first lady and Chelsea were also with the American peacekeeping troops in Bosnia. She walked among the soldiers, talked with them, and -- most importantly -- she listened and shared the troops' dinner in the dining hall. Meeting with Bosnians, she announced an initiative to provide relief to Bosnian families and the most helpless victims, saying Americans are uniquely equipped to bring this sort of support.

Mrs. Clinton is the best-traveled first lady since the days of Eleanor Roosevelt.

TRANSITION TO VOA STUDIO - LIVE PROGRAM BEGINS

ANNOUNCER: Live from Washington, this is Talk to America.

Mrs. Pearson: Hi. I'm Carol Pearson. And our guest today really needs no special introduction. She is Hillary Rodham Clinton, America's first lady.

Today our program is being simulcast on both the Voice of America and on Worldnet Television. It is also simultaneously translated and broadcast in several languages.

If you have a question on any topic for Mrs. Clinton, give us a call. Our telephone number is 202-619-3111. Ask your international operator to connect you with the United States and reverse the charges.

Mrs. Clinton, welcome to Talk to America.

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you, Carol. I'm very pleased to be here at VOA as we refer to it.

I think I want to start by saying, though, that many of us want to extend condolences to the families of the victims of the TWA crash. The president referred to that earlier this morning. Words are hardly adequate to the extent of loss that people have suffered in a number of countries, but I hope that people all over the world will be praying and thinking about the victims and their families and loved ones.

That's one of the great opportunities that the Voice of America provides, is by linking people up in good times and bad and getting information out to citizens of nearly every country since 1942. And although this is my first opportunity to appear here, I am delighted. I have followed the work of the Voice of America for many years and think it has been a very important part of America's mission in providing information throughout the world. And so I thank you for inviting me here today.

MS. PEARSON: Mrs. Clinton, you generate press coverage no matter where you go or no matter what you do -- in fact, even coming here to the Voice of America. There's a front page story on The Wall Street Journal, a paper that's read by about two million people daily. And it's not so much about your visit here, but about the fact that it was reported that some questions are off limits. Is there any topic that you're unwilling to discuss?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I haven't in my own history in the last several years known of any topics that are off limits. And certainly neither I nor anyone who works for me said anything about any question being off limits for Voice or America or anything else. We were laughing about that article this morning, because I think if we stopped and added up all of the questions I've been asked over the last five years, I can't imagine that there's any topic I haven't been asked about. So I welcome questions from any listener about anything anywhere in the world.

MS. PEARSON: Our international audience, I think, would want to know about the role of the first lady and, in particular, your visits abroad and your focus on these visits. I think you are about the most widely traveled first lady, one who has gone without her husband and has a special agenda.

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I doubt if I've yet come anywhere near Mrs. Roosevelt's touring, because she was the not only eyes and ears, but often the legs of her husband, and made many, many trips on her own throughout the world and reported back to her

husband, as I do with mine. I feel very privileged to be able to travel as I have in the last several years, to visit countries both with my husband on official trips, but then also on my own to try, perhaps in a more informal way than the president is able to when he visits other countries, to actually meet people and hear their concerns and talk to them about their futures and what they're contending with in terms of the challenges of modern life.

So whether I've been in South America or in South Asia, from Beijing to any of the cities and countries I just visited in Central Europe, I feel very privileged to go there and listen and try to convey some of what is going on in America to people elsewhere as well.

MS. PEARSON: But you also seem to have a particular, oh, I guess -- I don't want to say fondness, but you talk frequently about women's rights.

MRS. CLINTON: Right, I do. I talk a lot about women's and children's needs and rights and families and the pressures they face today. Those are issues I've worked on for more than 25 years here at home. And certainly as anyone who attended the United Nations conference in Beijing can remember, there are many similarities in the issues facing women throughout the world, regardless of the society in which they live and its stage of development. So that, for me, being able to meet women particularly as I travel and talk with them has been one of the personal pleasures.

And I've had many conversations in practically every country with women from various walks of life and experiences, and I find that we have so much more in common than what divides us, that the racial and religious and ethnic and political divisions are often not so important as, you know, what it means to be a woman today, to try to contend with the stresses of raising children, often contributing to the income of the family, exercising political and legal rights and responsibilities. So, for me, it's been very gratifying to have these opportunities.

MS. PEARSON: Is there anything in particular that you would like to accomplish as first lady?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I have worked in the last three and a half years on issues that I brought with me to the White House. I want to be a voice for children and for women and families. As I have tried, whether it's on health care or education or the needs of children in foster care or the limits on women getting access to credit or many of the other issues that I have talked about and worked on.

I'm also very concerned about what is called civil society, whether it's here or abroad, how countries and societies create democratic, functioning nations, especially when so many new countries are struggling with these issues. So that was the focus of my trip in Central Europe as I spoke about those issues with non-governmental organizations as well as governmental officials and business people.

So focusing on what I consider the bread-and-butter issues about, you know, how people are able to have a job and make an income and support their families and make a contribution to their society -- those are issues that are not just women's issues. They're people's issues; men and women today are facing them.

MS. PEARSON: Does it ever frustrate you that you cannot get more involved in either domestic policy or law?

MRS. CLINTON: No. I worked very hard the first two years of the president's administration on health care reform. I'm still working on that. I meet regularly with people around our own country, as well as abroad, who are concerned about how we will finance health care for an aging population or how we will cover children whose parents ineligible for private or public insurance. So I'm continuing to work on matters that are of interest to me and of concern to the president.

There are many, many issues that I work on because I'm asked to address them by either people I meet around the country or even the world or by my husband and people on his staff or in the Cabinet. So I try to be as involved as I can, given the limits on my own time and schedule.

MS. PEARSON: You're listening to Talk to America, coming to you from the Voice of America and from Worldnet Television in Washington. I'm Carol Pearson.

Mrs. Clinton, I think we're going to go to the phones right now, because we have a number of callers.

I'd like to first go with Srikan (sp) in Madras. Srikan, you're on Talk to America.

Q Thank you. Good afternoon, Mrs. Clinton, and my heartfelt condolences to America as well as to the families and friends and relations of all those who were involved in the crash. And my question to Mrs. Clinton is: She was in India sometime back, and what does she think of India? What are the things that America can learn from India? And what are the things that India can learn from America? Thank you.

MRS. CLINTON: That's a wonderful question, and I couldn't possibly do it justice in just a few sentences, but let me say that I was very impressed by my trip to India. My daughter and I were overwhelmed by the history and the richness of the culture and the way in which the Indian people have maintained a democracy, bringing together citizens of different religious and ethnic and cultural backgrounds. It's the largest democracy in the entire world. So, for me, visiting the largest democracy with such a rich and deep history was a personal pleasure.

I also saw signs of the efforts being taken in India politically and economically to better prepare the Indian people for the challenges of the future and the global economy. And I was impressed by many of the educational and economic changes that I was told about.

I think that certainly India, like the United States, will face challenges in the future in making sure that all of the people are not left behind as the economy becomes more technological or automated, and both of our governments will have to work and find ways that will enable people to continue living peacefully together despite diversity. So I think that India and the United States have many opportunities for partnership and friendship going into the future, and I look forward to working to strengthen our ties.

MS. PEARSON: Thank you, Srikan, for your call.

We'll go next to Ashkan (sp) in Iran. Ashkan, you're on Talk to America.

Q Hi. It's my great honor to talk to you, Mrs. Clinton.

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you.

Q My name is Ashkan. I'm 18 years. And I'm calling from Iran. As far as I know, you have never been to Iran. What's your idea about Iranian people, and especially Iranian teen-agers' lives and the way they are treated?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I don't have any firsthand knowledge. I never been to your country. I do have friends who are Iranian-Americans who have talked of the beauty of Iran, the history of Iran. I must say, though, as an American, I am often quite confused by some of what I hear goes on in Iran by the government that is currently power and the attitudes that are

engendered against my country, which I think is very regrettable. So I would hope that at some future date perhaps the government of Iran would become more open to the rest of the world, more willing to share information and ideas and be more open to a better relationship with not only my country but the entire world.

So, until that time, I'm afraid I will not have the opportunity for any firsthand knowledge, but I am hopeful that conditions and circumstances will improve and change in the future.

MS. PEARSON: Mrs. Clinton, we mentioned at the top of the show that this program is being simultaneously translated and broadcast in a number of languages. One of our callers would like to know -- it says, "The America media says Mrs. Clinton may become the first U.S. female president." And this caller wants to know what you think about this.

MRS. CLINTON: Well, the American media says many things about me, and I think that it's always interesting to see what the latest comment might be. I don't believe that very many people in America would think that's a very accurate statement. But certainly I'm interested in seeing more citizens, like myself, who are not in elected office or who have ever run for elected office be involved in the politics of our country -- not just voting, but being active in politics. And that's what I see my role as, and that's what it will continue to be.

MS. PEARSON: Thank you.

Chung Lao (sp) in China, you are on Talk to America.

Chung Lao is not there, but I do have a follow-up question to that, in that who do you handle the press or how do you react to it? It's always wonderful to see good things about you in the paper. But you've seen a lot of things that you probably would prefer not to see written about you.

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I've gotten to the point where I just it as part of what life in Washington in these times consists of, and there are as many different approaches and attitudes in the press as there are in America. And some people are favorable and some people aren't, and you just have to accept it for what it is.

MS. PEARSON: Jose from Panama wants to know what your view of development in the struggles of Latin American -- he has a question about your view in the struggles of Latin American women.

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I had a very interesting trip to Latin America. I visited Nicaragua and Chile and Brazil and Paraguay, and I felt that there was a lot of movement going on, because now all but one country in the Western Hemisphere is democratic. So that the opportunities for women and men to be full participants in their society is greater than I think it's ever been in the history of Latin America.

And I met an extraordinary number of women who are blazing trails. They're doing things that had never been done by women before, whether it's starting their own micro-bank in Managua or being part of a very exciting effort to engage in social reform in Santiago or the first ladies of the hemisphere whom I met with in Paraguay or talking with many of the concerned women I met in Brazil about the social problems that country faces.

So I was privileged to meet a lot of women at all levels of society who are committed to improving not only their own lives, but the lives of their families and communities.

MS. PEARSON: Iran (sp) in Nepal, you are on Talk to America.

We seem to be having some difficulty with the lines. I'd like to let our callers know that the number to call is 202-619-3111. If you talk to your international operator, ask the operator to connect you with the United States and reverse the charges.

Iran in Nepal, you are on Talk to America. Go ahead with your question. Well, I think he's on.

Q Hello?

MS. PEARSON: Yes, hello?

Q Hello? Is this the question?

MS. PEARSON: Yes, you're on Talk to America. You're talking to Mrs. Clinton.

Q Madame, I am thankful to talk to you.

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you very much.

Q And I have one question that -- after the democracy came in Nepal and South Asia, it seems that the democracy is "buying" the people, going for the people, and "off" the people -- o-f-f -- "off" the people. What America is thinking in the future doing in this democracy development in South Asia, and as the first lady, not only the America, but also the world, what you are thinking of all these things?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I saw firsthand the democratic changes in South Asia. I was in Nepal and visited with the democratically elected government there. As you may know, I've also been in India and Bangladesh and Pakistan and Sri Lanka, and I'm encouraged by what I see with the good outcomes of free and fair elections and the orderly transfer of power between governments. I think that is a very good sign for South Asia.

Now, democracy, as I said in a recent speech in Prague in the Czech Republic, is a process. It is never completed. Even in our country we have to continue to try to work to improve and perfect our democracy. And so I do not see that in any country in the world that is a democracy have all the problems been solved. And so people must be patient. They must work, and they must understand that democracy takes a lot of effort over generations. But I am very encouraged by what I have seen in your country and in the other countries of South Asia.

MS. PEARSON: Thank you, Iran, for your call.

Our next caller is in Saudi Arabia. Kairee (sp), you're on Talk to America.

Q Yes, good afternoon to everyone there. It is Kairee Sinz (sp) from Maden, Turkey, but I am calling from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Mrs. Clinton, do you have any plans and activity in the future for Bosnian women and children? Because they are suffering from war and short of medicine. Thank you very much, Mrs. Clinton.

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you for your concern about the Bosnian women and children. I saw that firsthand when I visited Bosnia, and I spoke with a number of representatives of organizations attempting to help rebuild Bosnia and particularly to help with the health and education needs of Bosnian women and children.

We are working quite hard here in the United States to bring more attention to these problems and more resources. Our ambassador to Austria, Ambassador Swannee Hunt (sp), has been spearheading an effort on behalf of many of us in the United States to try to bring more attention and to collect more resources. My friend, Queen Noor of Jordan, was recently with Ambassador Hunt in Bosnia to try to not only talk about what needs to be done, but to actually deliver some help.

So this is a concern that I hope people around the world share. And certainly the United States will stay involved. We know that a lasting peace for Bosnia requires that women and children be taken care of, and that is a particular concern of mine.

MS. PEARSON: Our next caller is Vashant (sp) in India. Vashant, you're on Talk to America.

Q Yes, good evening to you.

MS. PEARSON: Good evening, Vashant.

Q The first lady writes a column in one of our Sunday newspapers.

MRS. CLINTON: That's right.

Q She is a lady who is always on the move. When does she actually get time to sit and write a column for all of us?

MRS. CLINTON: (Laughs.) That's a very good question. I ask myself that some weeks when the column is due. I have some people who help me with ideas and suggestions about the column, and it has to be done -- the way I work it is it has to be done by late on Tuesday in my country. And somehow over the weekend and on Monday and on Tuesday I have the time to figure out what it is we're going to say and how I'm going to say it and to write and edit the column. And, luckily, I have some very good assistants who provide me with the kind of help I need on a weekly basis.

But, you know, it's been a great eye-opener for me, because I now realize more than I ever did how difficult it is to write every day, let alone every week. But I thank you for at least reading my column in your paper in India.

MS. PEARSON: Our next caller is Fatima in Iran. Fatima, you're on Talk to America.

Q Hello.

MS. PEARSON: Hello.

Q I just want to know -- hi.

MRS. CLINTON: Hi, how are you?

Q Why did you -- thank you. Why did go to China for that conference last year? Because everything you want is in America. Thank you. I can hear it from radio.

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you for calling. I was very honored to be one of the people representing the United States at the conference in Beijing, and I was very pleased that I believe nearly every country in the world sent representatives to this fourth international conference on women.

I believe that many of the issues that women face in my country are also faced by women throughout the world and that women have much in common, that there are ways we can work together and support each other in common efforts on behalf of educating young girls, for example, and ensuring access to higher education; in making sure health care is available throughout a women's life whenever the women needs health care; in making sure that women's political and legal rights are protected; and in ensuring that, when women work, that they are given the same opportunities as men in the workplace.

There are many issues that I think we have in common, and as I have worked on such issues in my own country for many years, I was very privileged to be among women and men who have similarly worked on such issues and to try to find common ground so that we could help each other.

MS. PEARSON: We're going to continue with our broadcast. If you have a call for -- or have a question for Mrs. Clinton, our telephone number is 202-619-3111.

We do have a caller from Poland. This program is being translated into Polish. Was Wudj (sp), the city of Wudj, ever on your itinerary when you to Poland? And he wanted to know why you didn't visit Wudj.

MRS. CLINTON: Oh, I wish I'd had more in Poland. I was able to visit Krakow and Warsaw. It was my second visit to Warsaw. One of the great difficulties in traveling in an

official capacity as I do today is that, unlike when I was a student or a private citizen, I'm unable to go everywhere I would like to go. But I'm looking forward to returning to Poland at some time in the future.

MS. PEARSON: I'd like to tell our listeners that, beginning tomorrow, I will be in Atlanta, Georgia. Talk to America will originate from Atlanta from the site of the 1996 Olympics. We'll be talking to Andrew Young, who's one of our guests. He is the special representative of UNICEF to the Olympics. Mr. Young is a former U.S. ambassador to the U.N. He's also a former mayor of Atlanta. I am sure that we welcome all of your questions. It's 1730 Universal Time.

Today's program is being simulcast on the Voice of America and Worldnet Television. It's also being translated and broadcast into several languages. I'd like to mention that Talk to America is now available on the Internet. If your Internet computer -- connected computer is equipped to play digital audio, you can hear Talk to America by connecting to VOA's public Internet server. Our address to the World Wide Web is www.voa.gov. That's www.voa.gov. Each day's program is available shortly after its conclusion at 18 hours Universal Time.

I'm Carol Pearson. And for those of you who are joining us, today's guest is Hillary Rodham Clinton, the first lady of the United States of America. If you have questions for Mrs. Clinton, give us a call. Our telephone number is 202-619-3111. Make the call collect. We will pay for the charges.

Let's go now to Maiyuden (sp) in Malaysia. Maiyuden, you are on Talk to America.

Q Yes. Hello, madame?

MRS. CLINTON: Yes, hello.

Q I am speaking from Malaysia. My name is Maiyuden Ahmed (sp). I'm a citizen of Bangladesh. I want to know from you -- last year when you are visiting our Bangladesh how you are feeling about our people.

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I had a marvelous time in your country, and both my daughter and I were very impressed by the hospitality and warmth of the people of Bangladesh. Everyone received us so

graciously. We were able to visit a village that I was very honored to visit, to see in action the results of the work of the Gramine (sp) Bank, which started in Bangladesh and is now a model for similar efforts throughout the world to help people increase their incomes and create jobs for them.

The countryside as I flew over it was very lush and green, and I came away with a very favorable impression of what the people of Bangladesh were attempting to do to make a better future for themselves. And I hope I will have a chance to return for another visit sometime in the future.

MS. PEARSON: Maiyuden, thank you very much for your call.

If you have any questions for Mrs. Clinton, it looks like we have a line or two open, so give us a call.

Our next caller is Layla in Albania. Layla, you're on Talk to America.

Q Yes, hello?

MRS. CLINTON: Hello.

Q Hello, Mrs. Clinton.

MRS. CLINTON: Hello.

Q It's our honor to speak to you. I'm calling from Tirane in Albania, and my name is Layla Turnanska (sp). I am the representative of the Foundation of Protection of Women and Children.

As far as you know, Albania came out from the most severe dictator communist system in east of Europe, and the Albanian woman began to feel really free with implementation of the democratic system in our country. We have a lot of problems to resolve, and even with our foundation. We have a rich program in process of women and children in our country. I am glad to say to you that our president of honor of this foundation is the first Albanian lady, Mrs. Lydia Berisha (sp), which is helping us so much.

But our first question for the first American lady that we really admire and appreciate for her intelligence and her activity is the following: Have you any project for the Albanian woman? It will be very important to us if we will see you one day between us.

And the second question --

MS. PEARSON: Okay, Layla, let's take your first question at this time, okay? And then --

Q Okay, okay, thank you.

MS. PEARSON: -- just hold on. We'll get to the second one.

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I hope I will have a chance to visit Albania sometime. It is a country that has been fascinating to many people because it was so closed and, as you said, under such tight control for so many years. And now it has rejoined the community of democratic nations and working for a better future, and I'm delighted that there is a foundation such as you describe that is dedicated to women and children and that your first lady is involved in these issues.

I hope that you've had a chance, as I'm sure you have, to read some of the documents that came out of the Beijing conference which have very practical advice for improving conditions for women and that your work will be very successful, so that by the time I do have an opportunity to visit Albania, you and others will be able to show me the results of what democracy has meant for not only women but men as well in your country.

MS. PEARSON: Okay, Layla, what is your second question?

Q Okay, I thank you very much. And this is very important to us. I am leaving you -- hoping you to have a day between us -- hoping for you to have a day between us. It will be really a great day for Albanian women, I assure you. And I thank you again.

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you for calling.

MS. PEARSON: Okay, thank you very much, Layla.

Steve in Jerusalem, you're on Talk to America.

Q Hi, Mrs. Clinton. It's a privilege to speak with you. I'm an admirer of both you and your husband, and I'm simply interested in your feeling about the Middle East peace process.

MRS. CLINTON: Well, Steve, as the president has said, we are hopeful here in the United States that the peace process will continue, that both the security issues and other issues will be the subject of continuing discussions. The president was pleased by the recent visit from the new prime minister. And as you may

have already heard on an earlier broadcast of Voice of America, Dennis Ross, the president's emissary on Middle East peace process matters, will be making some additional trips into the region.

So, clearly, the United States stands as a friend and supporter of Israel and hopeful that the peace process will be able to continue.

MS. PEARSON: Steve, thank you for your call.

We'd like to remind our listeners that we have a line or two that are -- we have a couple of lines open. The number to call is 202-619-3111. Ask the operator to connect you with the United States and reverse the charges.

Steve was talking about the Middle East peace process. How politically involved does a first lady get?

MRS. CLINTON: Oh, I don't have any idea, because every woman who's been in this position has been involved to whatever extent she thought was best for her and her husband and what contribution she wanted to make. I have yet to read about one that wasn't involved to some extent in some activity that could be construed as political. But there isn't any formula for it. And certainly if you look at some of the women who've been in this position in the past, they were deeply involved with very strong opinions about matters that they thought were of importance either to their husband or to the country.

MS. PEARSON: But speaking from a personal standpoint, how much political influence do you see yourself as having?

MRS. CLINTON: I don't think I can really answer that with any definitive answer, because my husband, for anyone who knows him, seeks advice from a wide range of people. In fact, I think that's one of his great strengths, is that he solicits information and advice and then makes up his mind based on the best advice he can receive, and sometimes he asks me and sometimes I volunteer. We've been married for more than 20 years. We talk about all kinds of matters. But my advice, like anyone's advice, is carefully weighed by him and he makes the decision.

MS. PEARSON: What would you like to accomplish as first lady? The polls now indicate that you may have four more years as first lady.

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I would like to be able to have made a contribution to improving the lives of Americans, particularly American children, and perhaps expanding to the world some of the ideas that we hold dear here at home, what I call the alliance of values that I think needs to be developed between people of democratic countries and those who share democratic values.

I don't know that there's any way to think about a legacy. I don't think like that. So I'm not going to even speculate on it. That will be for others. But I intend to continue doing every day what I've done for more than 25 years, which is to work on behalf of issues and concerns that I care about, also to do what my husband asks me to do, whether it's take a trip or take on a project like looking into the illnesses of Gulf War veterans, which I did last year -- whatever it might be. And at the end of the day it'll be for historians to decide what that all adds up.

MS. PEARSON: And would your activism continue even after you leave the White House? Is that what your intent is?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I've always been active. It would have been unusual for me to have stopped being as involved in issues when I came to the White House as I had been before. Whether my husband were president or not, I would still be involved in these issues. Those are the issues that I care about. I've worked on women's issues and education and health issues and children's issues ever since I was in college. So for me it's just part of who I am, and it is not going to either stop or start depending upon where I happen to live.

MS. PEARSON: Has your role as first lady -- it's changed over the past few years, but how has it changed from the perception you had before you got into the White House? And then starting in the White House, how have you had to change the role and change the views of what you can accomplish or else modify it in some way?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I don't think there should be any one definition of the role, because the people who have been in this position have been so different. And I would not want anyone to say that people have to do what I did, because that may not be someone's experience or their interest. And so I think we ought to get to the point not only in America, but throughout the world, where we respect people for what the choices are that they make, men and women, and not try to put people into stereotypes about what they should or should not be doing. And I think that's as true not only for a woman in my position today, but when my husband wasn't president, when, you know, I was a working mother, when I worried about, you know, car pooling and baby-sitting and all the other things that millions and millions of women are concerned about.

I would like to see women, regardless of their choices in life, be given respect, so that, if they are full-time mothers and homemakers, that is a respected choice; if they are in the world of work and maybe don't even marry or, if they do, choose not to have children, that that would be a respected choice; and if for most of us in the world the choice is to try to have both family and outside the home, that that, too, would be respected. So that, even though I'm now in this position with very high public visibility, I don't feel any differently than I did before I was in the position, that I am an individual, every woman is an individual, every man is an individual, and we all make what we think of as the best choices we can for our life.

And I would hope that whoever comes after me, whenever that is -- and maybe some day even a man if we have a woman president -- that that person will be allowed to make the choices that are right for her or for him.

MS. PEARSON: Let's go back to the telephones. Jim in Turkey, you're on Talk to America.

Q (Off microphone.)

MS. PEARSON: Jim, please turn your radio down and talk to the first lady.

Q Hello?

MRS. CLINTON: Hello.

Q Hello?

MRS. CLINTON: Hello.

Q Hi, Mrs. Clinton.

MRS. CLINTON: Hello. How are you?

Q Fine. How are you.

MRS. CLINTON: Fine, thank you.

MS. PEARSON: Go ahead with your question.

Q Thank you. Yes, I would like to -- I'm calling from Turkey -- Istanbul.

MRS. CLINTON: Yes.

Q And I would like to ask you -- you know, you were in Istanbul last month.

MRS. CLINTON: Yes.

Q And I want to ask you what do you -- I want to ask your opinions about Istanbul, Turkey.

MRS. CLINTON: I fell in love with Istanbul, Turkey. I thought it was one of the most beautiful cities and one that had so much history that I was very sorry I did not have more time to spend there. I enjoyed the sites that I saw, the people whom I met. I felt very fortunate that I had a chance to see as much of Istanbul that I did. And I hope to return. I hope some day that, just as my daughter was able to be there with me, I would love to see my husband as well visit your country and visit Istanbul.

MS. PEARSON: Jim, thank you for your call.

Our next caller is in Paraguay. Gabriel in Paraguay, you're on talk to America.

Q Hello?

MRS. CLINTON: Hello.

Q Hello, Mrs. Clinton. This is a pleasure to be with you.

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you.

Q I would like to ask you something. You were here in the last conference of women here in Latin America. You were part of it. And what do you think about the conference?

MRS. CLINTON: I was very impressed at the seriousness of the conference and the goals of the conference. It was a very dedicated effort aimed at improving health care by trying to work together throughout the hemisphere, to stamp out measles among our children, to try to improve education throughout the hemisphere for our children, to address the issues that are often considered women's issues but which I would argue are essential to the well-being of any society. I thought Mrs. Wasmosi (sp) did an excellent job in chairing the meeting, and all of the women who attended participated and talked about the projects from their own countries. So I learned quite a bit and felt very fortunate that I had a chance to participate.

MS. PEARSON: Gabriel, thank you for your call. We have a Worldnet television viewer, Sylvia from Argentina, who wants to know when you plan to visit Argentina and about the possibility of a women's rights conference in Latin America.

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I was very sorry that my schedule on my Latin American trip did not include Argentina, but I was unable to add a visit there. So I hope to visit Argentina sometime in the near future. It's a country I've long been interested in and I would like to see it for myself. And just as I have in every country that I have visited, I would like to visit with the women in Argentina, to hear from them about their lives and what is happening in your country. So I will look forward to that.

MS. PEARSON: Francesca in Italy, you're on Talk To America.

Q Hello, Mrs. Clinton. It's a pleasure to have the privilege to speak to you. My question is the following. I'm sure you're aware of the prejudice against women throughout the world. And although mine is a particularly privileged position because I don't struggle for life or for the life of my children, but I am simply struggling through a corporate ladder. I was wondering whether you have any specific suggestion to give to women throughout the world to work in an effective way against the prejudice that makes their voice less heard?

MRS. CLINTON: You know, Francesca, I like the way you asked the question, because you recognize two things that are very important. One is that women all over the world face many of the same problems, but certainly there are women like you and like me who are privileged, and we are not struggling to feed our children. We're not struggling to make sure they have education and health care, so that although there are similar problems that we face, there are some women who are in much more difficult situations. And so I think you have to look at these problems from the various perspectives.

For example, I believe strongly that we need to do more to promote education and health care for girls who are very poor and in poor countries so that we give those girls and women a better chance to have a life where they are able to make responsible decisions for themselves. We need to be sure that the kinds of systems in various countries are not prejudiced against women, so that women are able to exercise their political and civil and legal rights.

And yet, at the same time, you say that you're in the corporate world. And I know, both from personal experience and from observing such a world for many years, that even women in privileged positions continue to face discrimination or

harassment. I recently had a conversation that was fascinating in Helsinki with Finnish women. And in Finland, women hold some of the top positions in the government. A woman is the minister of defense and the foreign minister, the head of the central bank, the speaker of the parliament. Yet they also were talking about some of the leftover stereotypes and prejudice that they continue to face.

Women have to support each other. Women need to get to working with each other, both politically and civilly through associations, so that women's voices are heard. So I would urge that all of us try to do more of that for each other.

MS. PEARSON: We have a caller from Iran, Mrs. Clinton. He wants to know what your definition of women's rights is.

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I believe that women's rights are human rights, as I said in Beijing. I believe that women have the same God-given potential as men and that women should be given the tools of opportunity -- education and health care, for example -- so that young girls are able to have some authority over their own lives, because women have as much diversity in their feelings, their hearts, their minds, as men do, and that women should be given opportunities in every society to fulfill their potential and should have a role in determining what that potential is. So for me, it is summed up by saying that women's rights are human rights. If you think of the rights of men, consider those also to be the rights of women. And that is how I see that.

MS. PEARSON: Our next caller is from Bangalor (sp), India. Gitay (sp), you're on Talk To America.

Q Yes, thank you. Mrs. Clinton, you're a fiercely independent woman and therefore are a role model to women around the world. I wonder who inspired you. Who were your role models when you were growing up, and why?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I would have to answer that question by starting with my parents. My parents had me -- I was the first child -- and two younger brothers. And they had the same expectations for us. I never in my house heard my father say that I shouldn't try to do well in school because I was only a girl or that I should think less of myself because I was a girl. My father really expected me, as well as my brothers, to do what we could to live as full a life as possible and to be responsible for ourselves. And my mother was similarly supportive of me.

And as I grew up, I was very impressed by teachers whom I had who expected girls to do as well and who urged us to think of college, think of ways that we could expand our minds. I was very encouraged by people in my church who believed that young girls and young boys had obligations that they had to learn to fulfill. And then there were people who I would look to such as Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, the woman who was the wife of our President Franklin Roosevelt, women who had not only made great public contributions but who struggled with many of the issues that every woman whom I know struggles with about how to be true to yourself and how to fulfill the many obligations that women have, without losing yourself.

When I was in India, in your country, I was given a poem by a young woman which talked about how women needed to break the silence, not only in India but around the world, so that the various voices of women could be heard and that women were given more freedom to make the choices that were right for their lives. And I was very fortunate in having family and others around me when I was growing up, as well as role models, who gave me that message.

MS. PEARSON: Our next caller is Sara (sp) in Iran. Sara, you're on Talk To America.

Q Okay. Hello.

MRS. CLINTON: Hello.

Q Hello. Thank you for your opportunity. I think I want to ask you if you have ever (think about?) Palestinian women, their way of life, their problems. And I want to know your ideas.

MRS. CLINTON: Oh, I certainly have, and I have met with some Palestinian women. I've had conversations with Mrs. Arafat. And I'm well aware of the many issues that Palestinian women face, as women face in many, many settings around the world.

MS. PEARSON: Just for your information, we have received more than 30 calls of condolences regarding the TWA crash.

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you very much.

MS. PEARSON: And that might explain why our screen was blank for a little while. Our next caller is Kaiten (sp) in India. Kaiten, you're on Talk To America.

Q Good evening, Mrs. Clinton.

MRS. CLINTON: Good evening.

Q I am a blind listener, and I'd like to know what is your role specifically with the charities relating to blind. Have you ever visited any institutions for the blind in States or in any other country of the world? Thank you.

MRS. CLINTON: Yes, I have. And I have visited some of the institutions in our country, and particularly in the state of Arkansas. There is quite a famous institution for the blind. In fact, I believe that in years past even some people from India have come to that institution for education and training.

MS. PEARSON: Thank you, Kaiten, for your call. This program is being simulcast and broadcast in Spanish. Dr. Sylvia (sp) from Costa Rica wants to know what your achievements and goals for health reform in other countries might be.

MRS. CLINTON: Oh, my goodness. I don't have any goals or achievements in other countries, although I've had some fascinating conversations with people around the world about health care issues in their countries and I have learned that some of the problems we were trying to deal with here in the United States when my husband proposed health care reform are problems in other countries as well. So I'm going to continue to work on this issue and try to learn more, and perhaps learn from some other countries about what they're doing to address their health care problems.

MS. PEARSON: A lot of our calls have dealt with women's issues, women's rights, which I find remarkable. We've had a lot of calls from women. We very frequently don't, even on women's health issues. We frequently get calls from men. So I think that we've kind of broken new ground here. (Laughs.)

MRS. CLINTON: I'm delighted.

MS. PEARSON: I'd like to talk a little bit about your book, "It Takes A Village," and what your goals are and what your purpose was in writing it, and also in raising -- you say it takes a village. You're raising a daughter in a village that's brightly lit. You're under constant scrutiny. How do you -- what kind of parameters have you set?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I wrote the book, "It Takes A Village," because after spending about 25 years working on behalf of children's issues and more than 16 raising my daughter, I felt that in our country there needed to be an effort to think about how we could do better by our children. And it's an issue that many, many people are talking about trying to figure out how to

support families better, to give children the kind of education and training that they need as they go through life. And I have seen many important programs and met very many impressive people who have devoted their lives to this.

So I wanted to write a book that talked about my own upbringing and what Bill and I have tried to do in raising our own daughter, as well as maybe introducing people in our country and around the world to some of the ideas that I know are helping children. There's nothing like first-hand experience, though, and trying to be a good mother and working with my husband to be good parents for our daughter has probably been the best preparation I could have had for writing a book or for anything else having to do with children. And we have tried very hard, as I talk about in the book, to give her as normal a life as possible. I think every child deserves that, especially if their parents are in the public eye. So that's what we've worked on. And, you know, she's a wonderful young woman and we're very proud of her.

MS. PEARSON: You've taken her on a number of your trips abroad. What do you think were her impressions, and what did you want her to learn from those trips?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, it was such a marvelous opportunity for her to be able to see other countries and visit with people. And I wish every teenager in America could have been with me in South Asia or in Bosnia or Greece or Turkey, as my daughter was, because I would like American teenagers to know what is going on in other parts of the world. Sometimes, as your callers suggest, people around the world, thanks to Voice of America and the mass media, know much more about what's happening in our country than people in our country know about what's going on elsewhere. And I think there's no doubt that the world seems to be getting smaller. We're more in touch with each other. And I want my daughter to know as much about what's happening in other parts of the world as she can.

MS. PEARSON: Mrs. Clinton, thank you very much. We're out of time. I'd like to express our appreciation for your joining us.

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you.

MS. PEARSON: Tomorrow we'll talk to Andrew Young, the special representative of UNICEF to the Olympics, so be sure to join us then on Talk To America. I'm Carol Pearson.

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