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12073

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

December 13, 1995

MEMORANDAUM FOR FIRST LADY STAFF

FROM: LISA CAPUTO

RE: HRC COLUMN

Attached is HRC's column for the upcoming week. Enjoy!

TALKING IT OVER

BY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON

RELEASE: WEEKEND, DECEMBER 16-17, 1995

They call themselves sisters. That's how close they feel, having gone through their husbands' military service together and even waited together as their husbands went to war.

They are the wives of Army soldiers and officers now heading for Bosnia as part of the NATO peacekeeping effort. I met them at the Smith Barracks in Baumholder, Germany, earlier this month when I accompanied my husband on his visit to the First Armored Division.

I visited with many soldiers and their families after the President's speech and during the lunch we shared in the mess hall. Later, I spent nearly two hours over coffee with 20 women whose husbands will be leading American forces in Bosnia.

Often when our troops represent us around the world, we overlook the sacrifices made by their families. Some of these wives have spent years overseas, far from friends and relatives. They have raised their children in foreign lands, often on their own, while supporting their husbands' careers and our country.

The wives I met told me about the challenges young couples face finding adequate child care and making ends meet on military pay. These challenges only increase when a husband -- or wife -- is deployed.

Now, while their loved ones prepare for duty patrolling the frigid terrain in Bosnia, these veteran spouses are helping other Army "sisters" get ready for the family disruptions that every military operation inevitably brings.

The more experienced among them are busy teaching young wives -- some just teen-agers -- how to cope on their own. They help them interpret military jargon about the operations their spouses are involved in. They get together with other wives in support networks to talk about mutual concerns and experiences. They even show some of the younger wives how to balance the family checkbook.

Just knowing that others understand what they are going through can make a difference. "If you're having a bad day, somebody else has had that day before," one woman told me. "You know you've got that camaraderie and that sisterhood."

Our Armed Forces are also doing their part to help. As we learned in Desert Storm and other recent deployments, no operation can fully succeed without the "rear detachment," the military personnel who stay behind on the base to back up our troops and their families.

HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON 12/16-17/95

Page 2

During a ~~recently completed~~ peacekeeping mission in Macedonia, for example, the rear detachment held briefings on bases about Macedonia's culture, language and environment and the soldiers' duties in the field. (The spouses were so pleased with the support they received, they recommended that the rear detachment commander be presented with an award for his service.)

For the spouses of the service members going to Bosnia, the Armed Forces will relay information about everything from the weather in Tuzla and Sarajevo to what the soldiers are eating for dinner that night (beans 'n' franks, turkey a la king or dehydrated beef patties, for instance).

Whenever American troops are sent thousands of miles from home, particularly at this time of year, loneliness is bound to set in. The women I talked with expressed particular concern about single service members, many of them young, who don't have wives, husbands or children.

Letters with news and support from the United States can mean a lot to our troops. A sentence or two about a local sports team, a good book or a new movie will help keep spirits up during the holiday season.

The Defense Department will be setting up a special address where we can send letters to service members in Bosnia and their families. As soon as the address is available, I will pass it on to you in this column.

Please make an effort to support our military men and women deployed in Bosnia in the coming weeks. Write to them. Encourage them to write back. Most of all, tell them how proud we are of them and how grateful we are for the sacrifices they are making on behalf of American values by working to implement the peace agreed to in Bosnia.

I also want to ask Americans to think about and pray for the brave spouses and families that are left behind. They need our support as well.

Many of the officers and enlisted men and women the President and I met in Germany told us that there has never been a better-trained, better-educated, better-prepared military in the history of the world.

Their spouses have never been more prepared to help each other, either. As one woman said, "We are ready."

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draft #5

**FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
COLUMN FOR PUBLICATION DECEMBER 17, 1995
TALKING IT OVER/CREATORS SYNDICATE**

They call themselves sisters. That's how close they feel, having gone through their husbands' military service together and even ~~waited~~ ^{waited} together as their husbands went ~~off~~ ^{to} war.

They are the wives of Army soldiers and officers now heading for Bosnia as part of the NATO peacekeeping effort. I met them at the Smith Barracks in Baumholder, Germany earlier this month when I accompanied my husband on his visit to the First Armored Division.

I visited with many soldiers and their families after the President's speech and during the lunch we shared in the mess hall. Later I spent nearly two hours over coffee with twenty women whose husbands who will be leading American forces in Bosnia.

Often when our troops represent us around the world we overlook the sacrifices made by their families. Some of these wives have spent years overseas, far from friends and relatives. They have raised their children in a foreign land, often on their own, while supporting their husbands' careers and our country.

The wives I met told me about the challenges young couples face finding adequate child care and making ends meet on military pay. These challenges only increase when a husband -- or wife -- is deployed.

Now, while their loved ones prepare for duty patrolling ^{me} frigid terrain in Bosnia, these veteran spouses are helping other Army "sisters" get ready for the family disruptions that every military operation inevitably brings.

The more experienced among them are busy ~~helping~~ ^{ing} teach young wives -- some just teenagers -- how to cope on their own. They help them interpret military jargon about the operations their spouses are involved in. They get together with other wives in support networks to talk about mutual concerns and experiences. They even ~~help~~ ^{show} teach some of the younger wives how to balance the family checkbook.

Just knowing that others understand what they are going through can make a difference. "If you're having a bad day, somebody else has had that day before," one woman told me. "You know you've got that camaraderie and that sisterhood."

^{Our} The Armed Forces are also doing their part to help. As we learned in Desert Storm and other recent deployments, no operation can fully succeed without the "rear detachment," the

military personnel who stay behind on the base to back up our troops and their families.

During a recently completed peacekeeping mission in Macedonia, for example, the rear detachment held briefings on ~~the~~ base [✓] about Macedonia's culture, language and environment and the soldiers duties' in the field. (The spouses were so pleased with the support they received ~~that~~ ⁹ they recommended that the rear detachment commander be presented with an award for his service).

For the spouses of the service members going to Bosnia, the Armed forces will ~~hold briefings~~ ^{relay information} about everything from the weather in Tuzla and Sarajevo to what the soldiers are eating for dinner that night (beans 'n' franks, turkey a la king or dehydrated beef patties, for instance).

Whenever American troops are sent thousands of miles from home, particularly at this time of year, loneliness is bound to set in. The women I talked with expressed particular concern about single service members, many of them young, who don't have wives, husbands, or children.

Letters with news and support from the United States can mean a lot to our troops. A sentence or two about a local sports team, a good book, or a new movie will help keep spirits up during the holiday season.

The Defense Department will be setting up a special address where we can send letters to service members in Bosnia and their families. As soon as the address is available, I will pass it on to you in this column.

Please make an effort to support ^{our} the military men and women deployed in Bosnia in the coming weeks. Write to them. Encourage them to write back. Most of all, tell them how proud we are of them and how grateful we are for the sacrifices they are making on behalf of American values by working to implement the peace agreed to in Bosnia.

I also want to ask Americans to think about ^(and pray for) the brave spouses and families that are left behind. They need our support as well.

Many of the officers and enlisted men and women the President and I met in Germany told us that there has never been a better trained, better educated, better prepared military in the history of the world.

Their spouses have never been more prepared to help each other, either. As one woman said, "We are ready."

MEMORANDUM

TO: HRC
FROM: Lissa Muscatine 
RE: Military Spouses
DATE: Dec. 12

Here are two copies of the column: one with all of the edits (yours and Creators) incorporated, the other with the Creators edits marked in pen.

You'll see at the end that we changed the phrase encouraging readers to "writing to" the families of service men and women because we don't know if there will be a special address for them. Instead, it now encourages people to "think about" them because they need our support too.

I know you're swamped with parties, but it would be great if you could sign off on this tonight. Thanks.

draft #4

W/HRC
edits

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
COLUMN FOR PUBLICATION DECEMBER 17, 1995
TALKING IT OVER/CREATORS SYNDICATE

They call themselves sisters. That's how close they feel, having gone through their husbands' military service ^{together} and even ^{watched} ~~wars together~~ ^{as their husbands went to war.} ^{together}

They are the wives of Army soldiers and officers now heading for Bosnia as part of the NATO peacekeeping effort. I met them at the Smith Barracks in Baumholder, Germany earlier this month when I accompanied my husband on his visit to the First Armored Division.

I ~~had the chance to~~ ^{get} visit with many soldiers and their families after the President's speech and during the lunch we shared in the mess hall. Later I spent nearly two hours over coffee with twenty women whose husbands who will be leading American forces in Bosnia.

Often when our ~~service men and women~~ ^{troops} represent us around the world we overlook the sacrifices made by their families. Some of these ~~spouses~~ ^{women} have spent years overseas, far from ~~relatives~~ ^{friends and}. ^{ed their} ^{in a foreign land, often on their own} They have raising children ~~and supporting their husbands or wives'~~ careers and our country:

WIVED

The ~~spouses~~ I met told me about the challenges young couples face finding adequate child care and making ends meet on military pay. These challenges only increase when a husband -- or wife -- is deployed.

Now, while their loved ones prepare for duty patrolling frigid terrain and ~~delivering food and equipment to our troops~~ in Bosnia, these veteran spouses are helping other Army "sisters" get ready for the family disruptions that every military operation inevitably brings.

The more experienced among them are busy helping the Army ^① teach young wives, ^{now to cope on their own} some just teenagers, ^{they have} to balance the family checkbook, ^{learn help them understand the} understand military terminology, ¹ go back to school and participate with other spouses in support networks on their bases.

Just knowing that others understand what they are going through can make a difference. "If you're having a bad day, somebody else has had that day before," one woman told me. "You know you've got that camaraderie and that sisterhood."

~~Deliberately~~ Our Armed Forces are also doing their part to help these families. ^{about} The military personnel who ~~will~~ remain on the bases during Operation Joint Endeavor to back up our troops and help their families are called the "rear detachment." As we learned in Desert Storm and other recent deployments, no mission can fully

- ② They get together with other wives in support networks to talk about ^{mutual} problems and experiences. They even ~~can~~ help teach young wives how to family balance the family checkbook.

Then help them understand military jargon about their spouses and how they are involved in the operations.

succeed without them.

namtin

During the recent peacekeeping mission in Macedonia, there were briefings for spouses about Macedonia's culture, language and environment and the soldiers duties' in the field.

When that mission ended, the spouses were so pleased with the support they received that they requested the rear detachment commander be presented with an award for his service.

For the spouses of the service members going to Bosnia, the Armed forces will hold briefings about everything from the weather in Tuzla and Sarajevo to what the soldiers are eating for dinner that night. (Beans 'n' franks, turkey a la king or dehydrated beef patties, for instance.)

Whenever American troops are sent thousands of miles from home, particularly at this time of year, loneliness is bound to set in. The women I talked with expressed particular concern about single service members, many of them young, who don't have wives, ^{*children.*} husbands, or immediate families.

Letters with news and support from the United States can mean a lot to our troops. A sentence or two about a local sports team, a good book, or a new movie will help keep spirits up during the holiday season.

The Defense Department will be setting up a special address where we can send letters to service members in Bosnia and their families. As soon as the address is available, I will pass it on to you in this column.

Please

~~I hope each of you will~~ make an effort to support the military men and women deployed in Bosnia the coming weeks. Write to them. Encourage them to write back. Most of all, tell them how proud we are of them and how grateful we are for the sacrifices they are making on behalf of American values by working to implement the peace agreed to in Bosnia.

Think about

I also want to ask Americans to ~~write~~ to the brave spouses and families that are left behind. They need our support as well.

Many of the officers and enlisted men and women the President and I met in Germany told us that there has never been a better trained, better educated, better prepared military in the history of the world.

Their spouses have never been more prepared to help each *other, either.* through ~~Operation Joint Endeavor~~, either. As one woman said, "We are ready."

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get into stars & stripes
draft #2

✓ w/advance seen Col. in charge / also Gen. Abrams' wife
Rose left behind called "near detachment"
- Macedonia guy in charge (near detachment -
go* award -

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
COLUMN FOR PUBLICATION DECEMBER 17, 1995
TALKING IT OVER/CREATORS SYNDICATE

prob'l army -
makes a differ
drafters was
every man for
self.

They call themselves sisters. That's how close they feel, having gone through their husbands' military service and even wars together.

They are the wives of Army soldiers and officers now heading for Bosnia as part of the NATO peacekeeping effort. I met them at the Smith Barracks in Baumholder, Germany earlier this month when I accompanied my husband on his visit to the First Armored Division. [NOTE: checking on whether it is appropriate to say that they are part of Task Force Eagle]

I had the chance to visit with many family members after the President's speech and during the lunch we shared in the mess hall. Later I spent nearly two hours talking with twenty women whose husbands are American commanders in NATO [ck] and of our own forces.

Often when our soldiers are asked to represent our country around the world we overlook the sacrifices made by their families. Some of these wives have spent years overseas, far from relatives, raising children and supporting their husbands' careers and our country.

They told me about the challenges young couples face finding adequate child care and making ends meet on military pay. These challenges only increase when a husband -- or wife -- is deployed.

Then, even getting information about soldiers in training or on missions can be nerve-racking, with bits of news trickling in through an unofficial grapevine of friends and acquaintances. One woman told me about the efforts [NOTE: can we be more specific?] she and others undertook to support young wives while their husbands spent six months in Macedonia helping to prevent the conflict in the former Yugoslavia from spreading.

Now, while their husbands prepare for duty patrolling frigid terrain and delivering supplies to our troops in Bosnia, these veteran spouses are helping other Army "sisters" get ready for the family disruptions that every military operation inevitably brings.

Just as military operations require preparation to ensure their readiness, so do the support efforts needed to back up our troops and help their families.

Many lessons have been learned from Desert Storm and other recent deployments about how the military and volunteer spouses can help families.

These spouses are already helping the Army teach young wives -- some just teenagers -- how to balance the family checkbook, understand military terminology, go back to school and participate with other wives in support networks on their bases.

Just knowing that others understand what they are going through can make a difference. "If you're having a bad day, somebody else has had that day before," one woman said. "You know you've got that camaraderie and that sisterhood."

During Operation Joint Endeavor in Bosnia, the Army also will hold frequent briefings for spouses, telling them about everything from the weather in Tuzla and Sarajevo to what the soldiers are eating for dinner that night.

Whenever American troops are sent thousands of miles from home, particularly at this time of year, loneliness is bound to set in. The women I met in Germany were particularly concerned about single soldiers, many of them young, who don't have wives, husbands, or immediate families.

Messages with news and support from the United States can mean a lot to soldiers in the field. A sentence or two about a local sports team, a good book, or a new movie will help keep spirits up during the holiday season.

The Defense Department has set up an address [NOTE: we will have it by noon Tuesday, according to DOD/NSC -- also checking about whether it will work for wives]

I hope each of you will make an effort to support our soldiers in the coming weeks. Write to the American men and women over there. Send them news from home. Encourage them to write back. Most of all, tell them how proud we are of them and how grateful we are for the sacrifices they are making on behalf of American values by working to enforce the peace agreed to in Bosnia.

I also want to ask Americans to remember and write to the brave spouses and families that the soldiers are leaving behind. They need our support as well.

Many of the officers and soldiers the President and I met in Germany told us that there has never been a better trained, a better educated, better prepared military in the history of the world.

Their spouses have never been more prepared to help each through Operation Joint Endeavor, either. As one woman said, "We are ready."

###

Carolyn Bcraft

703 697 7220

fax 703 695 1977

— Lucille Abrams —

wife of James Abrams

Rear deck

draft #1

**FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
COLUMN FOR PUBLICATION DECEMBER 17, 1995
TALKING IT OVER/CREATORS SYNDICATE**

They call themselves sisters. That's how close they feel, ^{their husbands' military service and even} having gone through wars together.

They are the wives of Army soldiers and officers now heading ^{NATO} for Bosnia as part of the United Nations peacekeeping effort. I ^{in NATO and of our own forces.} met ~~some of~~ them at the Smith Barracks in Baumholder, Germany ^{talking with twenty women whose husbands are ~~also~~ the American commanders} earlier this month, ^{When I accompanied my husband on his visit to the} and I was moved by their courage and ^{I had the chance to visit with many former members after the President's} resilience in the face of such uncertainty. ^{Speech and during the lunch} We shared in the mess hall. Later I spent and heard a brief ^{when our professional soldiers are asked to represent our country in} ~~too~~ often we forget the sacrifices made by the families of ^{some region of the world,} our military personnel. Some of the wives I met have spent years ^{overlook} overseas, far from relatives, ^{raising children and} supporting their husbands careers ^{in our country.} and ^{SC} They told me about the isolation raising families in foreign ^{5. ~~founder~~ force} countries, the challenge of finding adequate child care, and the ^{making ends meet on military pay.} financial strains confronting some young military couples.

^{in many} These challenges become ~~more acute~~ when a husband - or wife -

Even getting information about soldiers in training or on ^{is deployed.} missions can be nerve-racking, with bits of news trickling in ^{Then}

through an unofficial grapevine of friends and acquaintances. ^{One woman told me about the effort she and others undertook to support young wives while their husbands spent six months in Macedonia helping to prevent}

Now, while their husbands prepare for duty patrolling frigid ^{the} terrain and delivering supplies to our troops in Bosnia, these ^{conflict in the}

^{former Yugoslavians from spreading.}

Many lessons have been learned from Desert Storm and other recent deployments about how the military can help families.

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and volunteers spouses

Just as military operations require preparation to ensure their readiness so do the support efforts needed both on the bases to back up our troops and to help their families.

Both

They are already helping the Army teach young spouses how to balance the family checkbook, understand military terminology, go back to school and participate with other wives in and develop support networks with other families on the base. Wives - some just teenagers -

Just knowing that others understand what they are going through can make a difference. "If you're having a bad day, somebody else has had that day before," one woman said. "You know you've got that camaraderie and that sisterhood."

During Operation Joint Endeavor in Bosnia, the Army also will hold frequent briefings for spouses, telling them about everything from the weather in Tuzla and Sarajevo to what the soldiers are eating for dinner that night.

Whenever American troops are sent to distant regions of the world, particularly at this time of year, loneliness is bound to set in. The women I met in Germany were particularly concerned about single soldiers, many of them young, who don't have wives, husbands, or immediate families.

Simple messages from the United States can mean a lot to soldiers in the field. A sentence or two about a local sports

often with news and support

team, a good book, or a new movie will help keep ~~their~~ spirits ^{up} high during the holiday season.

The Defense Department has set up an address [NOTE: we will have it by noon Tuesday, according to DOD/NSC] *[Will this also work for wives]*

Our soldiers and their families I hope each of you will make ^{an} the little effort ~~required~~ to *Support* adopt a single soldier in the coming weeks. Send them news from home. Encourage them to write back. Most of all, tell them how proud we are of them and how grateful we are for the sacrifices they are making ^{to maintain American leadership} ~~to keep our world safe, secure and free from~~ *tyranny.* *On behalf of American values and by working to enforce the peace agreed to in Bosnia.*

I also want to ask Americans to remember and write to the brave spouses and families that the soldiers are leaving behind. They need our support as well.

Many of the officers and soldiers the President and I met in Germany told us that "there has never been a better trained, a better educated, better prepared military in the history of the world."

Their spouses have never been more prepared to help each through Operation Joint Endeavor, either. As one woman said, "We are ready."

3

AMERICA'S GOAL IN BOSNIA: HELP END THE SUFFERING AND SECURE THE PEACE



AMERICAN VALUES: *We must secure the peace so the Bosnian people can rebuild.*

- Before the Dayton Peace Agreement, over 260,000 people were killed. The Bosnian people have suffered horrible atrocities: mass executions, ethnic cleansing, campaigns of rape and terror.
- More than two million people -- half the population of pre-war Bosnia -- have been driven from their homes.
- Hundreds of thousands suffer from acute shortages of food, medicine, and clothing. Families must be reunited, schools and hospitals must be restored, and roads must be repaired.
- All three sides -- Bosnians, Croats, Serbs -- have made a commitment to work for peace, and begin rebuilding.
- But peace will only succeed if NATO, led by the United States, provides a strong force to implement the Peace Agreement. If the United States is not there, NATO will not be there, and peace will collapse.

AMERICA'S MISSION: *We must help to secure the peace.*

- A small number of American troops have begun laying the groundwork for the full deployment: establishing headquarters and communications, opening ports, and setting-up liaisons with the parties to the Peace Agreement. Ultimately, America will provide about 20,000 troops (one-third) of the total Bosnia Peace Implementation Force (IFOR).
- American troops are not going to Bosnia to fight a war. They will help supervise the separation of forces and uphold the cease-fire.
- All American troops will be under the command of an American general. American troops are well-prepared, thoroughly trained, and will have the authority to respond with overwhelming force to any threat. Risks to Americans will be minimized.
- The entire mission will last about one year. America's mission is limited to helping to provide a secure environment for the Bosnians to begin rebuilding their nation. American troops will not be part of a police force or a nation-building force. European groups and international organizations will be responsible for economic and political reconstruction.

AMERICAN INTERESTS: *Peace and stability in Europe.*

- Stability in Europe is vital to American security and prosperity. Bosnia is in the heart of Europe. It borders key allies and fragile new democracies. If the fighting resumes, the war could easily spread.
- WWII shows the danger of turning our back on conflict in Europe. We delayed our involvement until it was too late to prevent war from spreading. By acting now to help secure the Peace Agreement in Bosnia, we are taking steps to prevent a much more devastating conflict.

AMERICAN LEADERSHIP: *Advancing our interests and keeping our commitments.*

- America brought the parties from the battlefields in Bosnia to the negotiating tables in Dayton. Now we must help secure the peace American leadership helped to create.
- If America abdicates its responsibility to peace in Bosnia, American leadership will be weakened throughout the world, particularly in places like the Middle East and Northern Ireland.

THE AMERICAN EFFORT IN BOSNIA WILL SAVE LIVES AND IS THE RIGHT THING TO DO.

Talking It Over Military spouses

They call themselves sisters. Earlier this month I had the chance to meet a group of them - the wives of the soldiers who will be taking part in the peacekeeping effort in Bosnia - at a base in Baumholder, Germany.

I was touched by their warmth and friendship as they talked about their preparations for their husbands' tours in Bosnia. Our scheduled half-hour visit turned into a nearly two-hour long conversation about everything from managing money to teenage marriages to child care to Christmas at the White House.

The women, some of whom were already veterans of Desert Storm and the recent peacekeeping effort in Macedonia, described the support networks they and the services have set up to help each other through Operation Joint Endeavor.

The more experienced spouses are volunteering to teach classes that will help the newer or younger "army sisters" adjust to life on the bases. The classes explain what exactly the soldiers do and help them decode all the various acronyms used in the military.

There are also courses that help spouses manage emotional stress and balance the family checkbook. Informal support groups give spouses the chance to share their worries and concerns.

The women I met said they are trying to encourage other spouses not to go home to America while their soldiers are away because it is much easier to get accurate information to and from their loved ones if they stay in Germany.

The military will hold frequent briefings for the spouses on base, providing them with such details as the weather in Bosnia, where the soldiers are stationed and what they're eating.

And it's much more comforting to be around people who know exactly what you're going through.

"If you get a letter, everyone is happy for you. You know you've got that camaraderie and that sisterhood," one woman explained. "And if you're having a bad day, somebody else has had that bad day before...whereas in the States, you don't have that, you know, that same understanding."

Many of the spouses will be taking on double duty as single parents for the first time during Operation Joint Endeavor. They told me that they were worried about finding help with childcare. While the army does provide child care on its bases, spaces are limited, they said. As one woman put it: "Too many children, not enough child care centers and not enough providers."

Finding English-speaking baby-sitters is also difficult.

Hopefully things will improve in the next year through the President and the Secretary of Defense's initiatives to increase quality of life for all military personnel. More funds will be available so that at least two-thirds of all eligible military children can be placed in child care.

The women asked me to encourage Americans to remember the single soldiers who don't have spouses and families to write letters or send care packages.

Simple, but frequent message about home can mean a lot to soldiers in the field. So I encourage each of you to adopt a single soldier, by sending him or her news from home, responding to their thoughts on their lives in Bosnia, and most of all telling them that we are proud of them, that we are always thinking of them and looking forward to their safe return.

The Defense Department has set up an address: xxx

I also want to ask Americans to remember and write to the brave spouses and families that the soldiers are leaving behind. They need our support as well.

Many of the soldiers I met in Germany told me that "there has never been a better trained, a better educated, better prepared, military in the history of the world."

Their spouses have never been more prepared to help each through Operation Joint Endeavor, either. As one woman said, "We are ready."

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**FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
TEA WITH SOLDIERS' SPOUSES
BAUMHOLDER, GERMANY
DECEMBER 2, 1995**

HRC: [Discussion in progress]...Many things in that respect [laughter]. One of the things I've been thinking about today, the Head Usher, who runs the White House, came to up me in May and said, well Mrs. Clinton, it's time to start planning for Christmas, I thoughtd...and he said, I know but...and so we started having meetings in May for planning for Christmas in 1992. Now I'm one of those people, I'm lucky if I have the tree up by Christmas Eve [laughter]. You know, I'm rushing around...but it's just, it's magic. If any of you have ever been there for a tour around Christmas time...I've never seen anything like it.

So the first year, we did Angels, because I'm really big on angels. So we sent invitations to people all over the country to make ornaments and to all the crafts artists all over. We got the most astonishing variety. We got [unintelligible]. Then last year, we picked the theme, "The Twelve Days of Christmas." We got [unintelligible] antlers, maids a milking and all kinds of stuff, so we got an incredible array of ornaments. Then this year, we picked "Twas the Night Before Christmas." We asked architects from all over the country, all the architect associations, to participate because when you think about "Twas the Night Before Christmas and all Through the House," you think of a house. And so they made these ornaments, we got these little houses that light up, and these little Santa Clauses going up and down the chimney, they're the most astonishing, they're like little works of art. I just love Christmas, I'm a Christmas fanatic...So it starts Sunday...that's tomorrow...[laughter] Then, every single day we have an event. We have about 150,000 guests between tomorrow and Christmas and...The only downside is because we have so many guests, and you guys know this too. You know we have all these people coming to your home, if you're going to see everybody, you have to do a receiving line. Otherwise you wade into the crowd and the next day, somebody will say, oh, did you see Karen? And we'll say, oh, was she here? You know, because you never move from the spot you're in. So we do these receiving lines, so I have to wear long skirts because I have to wear flat shoes. I don't know how anyone can do these receiving lines in high heels...

I'm just so glad we got this chance to visit. I want to thank all of you for your leadership and what you mean not only to your husbands and your country. And it's so nice to have a small taste of that [unintelligible].

XXX: Well, we're very fortunate because Donna and Cecile did this before and those two I know, and a lot of the rest of them went through Desert Storm also. And so there were, I mean that was a horrendous couple of months. It was nowhere near as long as this is going to be, but there were tremendous things going on during that period of time. And tremendous lessons were learned, which are being incorporated into what's happening now. And I think that's really important for all of us, especially the young men.

HRC: What are some of those lessons? One of the things that several of the soldiers said to me with great pride, is, you know, there's never been a better trained, a better educated, better prepared, military in the history of the world. And the American military is [unintelligible]. And I think that's absolutely true. And you could see it in even the international news that I have. I mean the level of awareness and just great capacity that exists is so impressive. But I don't know as much what's happening on the other side, the support and family side. Because we still have a lot of very, very young wives, and that's hard...So what are some of the lessons you took out of Desert Storm?

XXX: I think one of the big lessons was that XXX attachment matters. Not everyone was on the same sheet of music as they are now in leaving behind the best person for the position. Everybody wants to go, because they see that as the only mission, not just the primary mission, but the only mission. And so many of the families in the states and installations were left with those that were non-deployable, were classified as non-deployable. Those people were not happy about being there, their performance was not very good and the family support system suffered in many cases because of that. Some people did make the proper decisions and the best decisions. Sharon Pratt(?) was in Fort Hope, Louisiana at the time, and it takes a person whose kind of been through that to make a decision and say, we're going to select the best. And we'll make it clear to these people that this is your mission. They have a mission in the Gulf and then you have a mission here. And I think the other was to empower people and not to keep them dependent. That's the big one. Because nobody's ever going [unintelligible]. Everybody comes through resentful...I think that's probably the biggest.

Donna?: I'd say the two main things is the younger wives, we're trying to get them in to learn more about the army, what their husband does, what the army stands for. We're giving them, the army has team? building classes that are so important, teaching them about effective leadership or just about acronyms or the words their husbands use for their job, communications skills, how to get along with other people, stress management. I mean it's a whole list of things that young wives can come in, take these classes and feel more confident in themselves and say hey, I can do this.

XXX: Can I just say one thing? That program that Donna mentioned, is an all volunteer program. That is totally staffed by many of the ladies in this room and ladies who are out in all these communities. So it's not a great draw on the system financially.

HRC: Is there a curriculum that you all...?

XXX: Yes, there is a set curriculum...

XXX: [unintelligible]

Donna: ...the problem that we have is that, is basically child care. We can get this lady to class from 8:30 to 2:30, she's got kids coming home from school, she's got an 18-month-old child, so we're trying to find ways to [unintelligible].

XXX: Sandy, what things did you learn?

Sandy?: I've...identified with this so much. The first thing I was going to say was that xxx attachment is so important. We just went through a six-month deployment in Macedonia and one of the key reasons why everything was so successful was because of the xxx attachment that we had. We had a Major that was dedicated just solely to xxx attachment and he said that that was, he'd call us all his wives [laughter]. He was so good, that the ladies wanted to award him when the men came back.

HRC: You've got to think of some kind of a medal or something [laughter].

Sandy: We kind of got Michelle's husband to give him an army award.

HRC: Good

Sandy: The ladies wanted that, he was just wonderful.

XXX: Army Family Team Building, we ran that program at the level one stage. And one of the big benefits of that, that I really found was the ladies coming in that don't know each other, they start talking about war stories, and they start knowing each other and they found a friend, somebody that can...

HRC: Break down that ice, barrier.

XXX: That's one of the biggest problems here, because again people don't, all of our families don't live in military housing, and a lot of them are out in the, on the country. And a lot of the, not just the young wives, the old ones as well [laughter]. There's really a sense of isolation unless you can get to know the other people in the community and discover you've got

somebody just down the street or the block or whatever. And those kind of relationships are very very important. Especially here because they are away from their natural families. But, and that's where the army family steps in. And I think the other thing is, we didn't go through Desert Storm, we left as they were getting ready to gear up for this thing. But as I listen to people talk about it afterward, and one of the other things that, and they're going to need it this time, is the courage of the wives not to go home, not to go back to the United States.

XXX: Yes, yes...

XXX: Because what happened, if they were here in Europe, and they went back to the United States, and that sounded great because they went home to her mother or his mother and the extended family. But the truth is, they were out of the flow, and there was no way to find out anything, and telephone calls were very expensive and there's no no way for communication in either direction, and so you really encourage them to stay here. Go for a visit if you want, but do come back, because this is where your information is and this is where your real support is, it's not back in the United States.

HRC: Do you find that same thing?

XXX: We probably have about 35% of our wives that are back there, and that's just a guesstimate. And some went back for extended periods of time, the deployment was six months. Some of them went back for as much as five months. Some of them went back for a month at a time. It just varied. But they always found when they came back that they didn't know what was going on back in the U.S. Over here is where they found out what was going on with their husbands. And this time I think we've got a majority of the wives, they do want to stay here, they do want to know what's going on.

XXX: We also talked enough so a lot of them have changed their minds. The first reaction was that, oh no. But for the children [unintelligible] keep them with their friends. Also the schools here are gearing up for, the counselors and everybody's in touch with the situation and we have talked to a lot of our guys about that. And they have changed their minds and decided to stay. Spouses who were out of here say I'm going to give this another try. [unintelligible]

HRC: How did you communicate that? I mean did you have one on one...

XXX: Well, in a group setting, but also through sharing experiences. I had been through the Balfour? situation and we were at Fort XXX and we did have many families that went home to family that came back, came back to the military family because

their other sisters, their military sisters understood what was going on, they had some who really knew what they were talking about and when [unintelligible]. So we did have a number that came back, and we shared those experiences with other spouses [unintelligible].

XXX: The news you're getting, you know, from CNN, or the television and its so slanted, that it's nowhere near what's truly going on that you hear when your information comes through the tally? and through the proper channels. And here they can feel that they truly know what's going on with their husbands and back in the States, they're so removed from it.

XXX: That's right. And a lot of the ladies we've discussed will say my husband, contact with my husband, and they'll say, well Chip is going to be calling Carol and she'll be home at this time and he can call or something else is going on. So and so is all, Mary's husband, he says hello. So that's the part that everyone is latching onto, the fact that they know that we're all going to know who is, how everyone is doing, because we'll be at the same [unintelligible].

XXX: If you get a letter, everyone is happy for you, you know you've got that cameragerie and that sisterhood. And if you're having a bad day, somebody else has had that bad day before, but their not having a bad day and they can help you up and get you through that bad day, whereas in the States, you don't have that, you know, that same understanding. If you're having a bad day, people are like, well, get over it. [Laughter]

XXX: Something else I wanted to say, you know it's very unique, I'm very proud of this. It's very unique in the Army, is that you'd be surprised how close ladies are as a family. When I go home and visit, I get phone calls and my mom is like, some lady named Ginny called, and who's she, because my mother's thinking of all my friends from high school, and I say Mom, that's one of my Army friends. Because we form friendships that last us for years and years and something our real sister doesn't understand. Our Army sisters do understand what we all go through, the time spent alone, raising children, the schools out of the country, things like that. And it just, it's a great, you know, the people you jog with in the morning, or the woman [unintelligible], things like that, that stay with you for years and years.

XXX: I think the big difference now from the training, I've been watching the training, and I've been trying to see as much of what they're doing for Operation Ready. We just had a two day training session for this program called Operation Ready. And then we had xxx attachment, managed training. And the thing that I am so encouraged about this time is that we don't have to get ready. We are ready. Whereas before we play a lot of catch up

ball. I mean it is just a mad dash. So we are ready this time instead of in the process, we have gone through the process of getting ready. And it's solidified and I think we're going to see a lot of, we're going to reap a lot of benefits from that.

XXX: And one of the things that we did that was really beneficial was with keeping the gals informed. We started the week before Macedonia. And we started briefings about where is Macedonia, what language to they talk? What are the people like down there What's the environment like, what does the countryside look like? A month before Macedonia, we started having once a month briefings. We talked about what our men were actually doing down there, we would have them send a videotape from Macedonia to us; we would send one to them. We talked about rumors, we brought them up, we addressed them, firsthand. Ladies could ask questions of our xxx attachment people. We found out what going on, what the latest was and some of that. We also when had a lot of questions about the same thing, we would have people come in from those different agencies and brief us, or talk about whatever the situation was that they didn't know about. And we found that ladies were coming in, they were meeting each other, they were getting to know other ladies who wanted to know the same thing. Those briefings really helped us a lot.

HRC: As I mentioned too, I hope that you'll have, if you haven't had, a briefing about how successful that mission was, because not many people in America know how critical it was to containing what was going on in Bosnia, and preventing the spread of that conflict. You know, for a lot of obvious reasons, including the the hype and CNN, you know there wasn't a lot of talk about that because it was one of those missions that the less said the better, below the radar screen and get the job done. But it was really successful. And its the kind of thing that a lot of people who know about it point to as an example of what America is prepared and able to do now. So I hope that a lot of the the family members [unintelligible].

OK, I was wondering, what about money problems, and money management. Because you know, a lot of these particularly young wives don't really know a lot about how to handle household expenses. I've heard that not just in a situation like this but whenever I visit the family support programs like the one I visited in Hawaii last summer. That's one of the main things that I heard. How do you all handle that?

XXX: [unintelligible] you asked. We certainly have financial problems [unintelligible] now, than the last eight years.

HRC: So you think that you've eliminated a lot of the problems?

XXX: [laughter]

XXX: We just need to continue to educate and xxx the spouse what

is available, the resources, and the encourage them to seek out those resources. And know that, and feel comfortable with them.

XXX: Yes. One of the great things I think they bring out in this operation Ready is that there are always going to be problems and they're are always going to exist. But within the family assistance centers, there are people who a) they will, if the families have done their homework ahead of time, they've got certain things in place, and there are budgets in place and you've got the powers of attorney that are in place, and the joint check books are in place. And the family, the husband and wife have in fact talked about where the money, how you're going to manage it. Then if there are problems, there are people in the family assistance centers, who can in fact step and say, well Sally, you've got, you didn't add this quite right, or the funniest one used to be, if I had checks, that meant I had money [laughter]. People had all these checks...

XXX: But one of the statistics after, in the lessons learned, in the aftermath of Desert Storm was that in many of the cases, these young women went ahead and they received financial counselling and they got there families out of debt and their husbands come home, and the husband goes to the Power Zone, which is the stereo place. My husband loves those places, but he's not buying any more equipment because he doesn't know how to hook it up [laughter] So they go, the husbands came home and they jack those charge cards right back up again. And so here were the counsellors that were then dealing with women who were very angry with their husbands, which is the homecoming, which is another problem, saying, I worked all that time to whittle this thing down and he came home and bought this stereo machine and this [unintelligible] you know [laughter]. But women, I think that with xxx and the more women we can get through these programs, we'll have a better base, and I think we already have a good base. And people will handle the finances. Many times they've not been given that responsibility and they're aware that there is a responsibility and obligation -- until something like this comes up. But the more they work through programs like that, we're going to be in a better position as time goes on.

HRC: I had woman on the road once said something to me that I didn't understand. She said, can we be sure to be able to go to college, or take college courses while our husbands are gone?

XXX: Oh, they could. Sometimes getting an education [unintelligible].

XXX: Usually you have to have so many members for the course, but this is something certainly each community can work on because you can work as a group, with leadership and units and then all band together, we should be able to have enough to take a course.

XXX: Usually, the instructors, though, are military personnel and that might be a problem.

XXX: The University of Maryland cannot necessarily send professional staff here to teach some of the courses if, so some of that is probably going to [unintelligible]

XXX: Some of it also depends on child care needs.

XXX: Yes.

HRC: What can we do about child care?

XXX: Too many children, not enough child care centers and not enough providers. We have one in the basement at home. But they have to qualify and they have to want to do it. And then they have to qualify [unintelligible].

XXX: It is a serious problem.

XXX: There just aren't enough of them. Some try to get a babysitter, but here in Germany, if you try to get a German babysitter, there's a language barrier, or the schools are all in German, if you try to find a nursery school, and there aren't that many. So child care, year to year is one of our biggest problems.

HRC: Another thing, that cafeteria for the spouses, [unintelligible].

XXX: The dining facilities?

HRC: The dining facilities. And one of the women, they've really, they have lots of ideas, and I promised to pass them all on. One of the women said, maybe if we can keep them open at night, then one of the rooms or some of the rooms could be a place where we bring our children and we could take turns, we could sign up to do that. You know, if do it every Thursday night we come to play Bingo, but only if three of us volunteer to work in the children's center.

XXX: But we do have a facility in our [unintelligible]. The only thing missing in that facility is a big kitchen and obviously it would be great if we could have [unintelligible] and all those extra things, but I've been assured that we can work on that and we can have a kitchen. We're very blessed here in Baumholder with the things that we have -- and excellent xxx, a marvelous kitchen, and certainly as you said, the dining facilities today is only one of many and we are blessed in that respect. Mrs. Clinton, these are your dear friends and they have told...

HRC: They're my keepers...[laughter]

XXX: They are your keepers, and they have told me [unintelligible].

[Laughter, many voices]

HRC: They do that, they're terrible. The other one who was with me. She's not in the room right now, so I'll tell this story on her. The blonde who's traveled with me for years now. One of your husbands, I'm not sure which one now, she didn't tell me, she said, [unintelligible] master sergeant [laughter].

(X) Are there other things that I should know about, or that I could in some way try to help help or talk about? You know, I write this column now, and actually, one of the soldiers said, you know, my mother sends me your column from Colorado. I wish I could get it over here. I was so flattered. I had no idea that anybody had read it. But you know I want to write a column about this, and talk about the non-military side of it, you know, because that's where all the attention will be focused. But instead to talk about the wives and the children and Operation Ready for families as well. So any other things that you would want people at home to know that, I think for many people who are maybe older, this will come as a surprise, that so much attention is being paid to making sure that families are informed, and given opportunities. In fact, sometimes, I've actually gotten into discussions with people, you know when the President recommended increasing support facilities for families and providing more funding for some of these programs that are so important. You know, some people really question that because they don't understand what an all-volunteer military is today and they don't really appreciate some of the significant challenges that you face because of that. Are there other things?

XXX: Well, actually, I would like to take a moment to talk about child care. It is really a serious problem. We really need more money for child care. And when you think of those soldiers on the front lines or whatever [unintelligible] If their wives are home with their three little kids and she can't afford to find somebody to babysit or whatever and she starts hitting those children, or she's starts abusing herself, drinking. I mean, you know the really exasperating things that you can go through when you're up against the wall and your children are screaming. My feeling is that it's [unintelligible].

ck Mrs / HRC: I think there's more money in this defense appropriations the President just signed. I think that was one of the big fights that he had with some of the members of Congress who didn't want to fund any of this. I believe, I'll double check on that, I'll let you know on that, but I don't think we got everything that we had been asking for, you know what the military leadership had been asking for, but I think we got some more. I don't think it's nearly enough. But I'll check on that and I'll see whether maybe some of it in defense appropriations bill, I'll see whether

some of it couldn't be directed towards this.

XXX: We have so many volunteers, so many wives, in FSG. And in the support group in AFTV who are dedicating their time to make all of us spouses much more adaptable. I think the old Army, in the new Army, we've become so much more adaptable going, being able to go to other countries, and to making the best of the environment we're in. And I think it's really important that this funding does go toward child care then it will help these women help others.

HRC: And that would be your number one...

Let me ask you something that was really controversial that was raised two years ago by General XXX in the Marines. You know what I'm going to say -- about the very young soldiers getting married and he told me, actually I didn't have, I mean, everybody had this negative reaction that you know, that young enlistees should not be able to get married for...

XXX: A first termmer...

HRC: I wasn't as upset about it because I learned, you know that there are some barracks where I was told, places like XXX, where the average age was like 16. See that is just astonishing to me. Maybe that's more of a Marines problem.

XXX: No. It's not.

XXX: XXX was what, 15? Exactly, and what happens, young soldiers, air force, marines, or sailors, who marry even younger women, and they have babies, almost -- it's truly babies having babies -- but they're also wives. And then, the husband's deployed and it is a serious problem, I think it is a serious problem and I think...

HRC: Well I told XXX that I agreed with him at the time, you know, then I felt bad, because somebody leaked it [Unintelligible] Nobody had a chance to really consider it carefully, figure out how it could be presented in a reasonable way. You know there would obviously be exceptions, but in general you've got a 18,19,20 year old soldier married to a 15,16 year old wife, with a one year old baby.

XXX: Because that's the other side of it. It's also, you know, a postscript from Korea, you had Korean wives come to the United States who don't speak English. We had it in Panama. We had a lot of it in Desert Storm, we had a lot of wives, Panamanians, come back to Panama only to discover that they had no access to any of the military facilities, none of them because down there it's just like Korea you must be from that xxx. So we had all of these young Panamanian wives come back and they couldn't get the mail because they couldn't get on the installation.

XXX: I think what drives that is the fear of loneliness.

XXX, XXX: loneliness...

XXX: This young man, I had a brother-in-law, who said the same thing. He received orders for Germany. He was about to graduate from West Point. He said this is it, I'm getting married. I said, why? He said, I am not going to Germany -- and he's an Army brat. He grew up in the Army -- he said I'm not going to Germany alone. I won't go over there by myself. I want someone to come home to at night and I'm not interested in going downtown and carousing, and so I want someone there. So that marriage lasted six years until Desert Storm. And Desert Storm brought the end of the marriage. The marriage was dysfunctional, but I think it's the loneliness and sometimes these first termers, when they are first termers, they are somewhat isolated from, they are not adapting. They are not assimilated well. And it's going to take an effort on everyone's part, and the part of that fraternity, and the sergeant who's dealing with first termers to find psychological methods to include him. To pull him in, to identify the dysfunctional, that attitude, before that happens, before they do something drastic.

XXX: We were talking about the column. I would ask that you help educate all of those in the United States, and not just in the States, but whether it be Jersey or XXX, or wherever we have bases, but talk a little bit more about servicemen and the family and the fact that they too are serving. As I sit here, looking at all these dear ladies, they care very much, not only for that soldier they're married to, but also for making things happen. And they do it. And it's brilliant. And I would like you to help educate all the Americans who sleep very well at night, not remembering that we have have a military service of air force, marines, army, all of it and that has been an unconditional service from the time they grew up, and they sleep very well every night. And maybe that is why we've chosen to go to Bosnia, to give those people. It may take one or two years or greater, but they too deserve to sleep, and you can help educate...

HRC: That's a wonderful way to put it because I always feel, every time I come home after going on trips, so blessed. You know, we have so many blessings that we frankly take for granted. And you know, I remember feeling that most strongly when I came home from South Asia, when Chelsea and I went to India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka. Every one of those countries has had political problems, has had violence. Most of the leaders have lost mothers and fathers and husbands and brothers and sons to assassination and they were struggling against odds that are just overwhelming. And then you know you come home and we have so much to be grateful for. Mostly because we've had solid, stable, democratic government for all these years. And, you know I think it's understandable that we go through like a roller coaster from

time to time in our own history, particularly at time like this, when there is so much change happening, that it's difficult to grasp. The Cold War, as terrible and dangerous as it was imposed a certain order on the world, it was us against them, you knew where you stood, you knew kind of what was expected and now it's much different. And we have to understand our responsibilities don't end, they change. And that's what all of you are going through in this very new military, you're taking on the challenges of leadership, in your behalf, as well as for your husbands. That is what I hope I can try to explain. Because its -- I wish every one of you could have been with us in Northern Ireland. A country that for twenty-five years, not to the extent of Bosnia, but nevertheless in the same way has been terrorized. I sat around a table talking with nine women, all of whom lost someone, both Catholic and Protestant, you know, just the most outrageous, terrible violence. I mean, you open your door when a knock comes and they shoot your son, for no reason at all, he'd never done anything and there he was dead in his living room. You know, the kind of experience they lived through. And then to see the children I saw, who wrote these thousands of letters to the President talking about what it meant for the first time ever to be able to go Christmas shopping without being afraid that the store might be bombed. To meet policemen who were hated by both sides, who now for the first time could bring their families back into the city. They used to never be able to shop, they had to travel thirty, forty miles because they chose to be police officers to try to stop the violence. You know, just on and on. And then, you know, you sat there and you thought. You know, person after person said, none of this could have happened without American leadership. And if the leadership isn't there and backed up, it doesn't exist. And Helmut Kohl said to me, because we were sitting there waiting for the President to come to make his speech, I don't understand what's happening with some Americans, they don't understand what's happening in the world. It's not 1919, it's 1995. The United States left Europe in 1919, and look what we did to ourselves, and he's a very practical, down-to-earth man, and he said, you know, we have to have America and that's what I hope we can convey.

XXX: You can also to remind them not to forget us over here. It's so easy to become detached when something is happening so far away and just to keep that xxx in the forefront over this next year. To remember the families, the soldiers...

HRC: What would be a good thing for people to -- what would make a difference in the lives of the soldiers?

XXX: Adopting a single soldier...

HRC: Adopt a single soldier? How about adopting of these families that are left behind.

XXX: That would be an interesting idea...

XXX: My mom's already done that -- some churches have started that.

XXX: Just reach out...

HRC: I could ask that in the column, we could set up a system of some kind...

XXX: My mom has already started that. She plays bridge on Monday and Friday, and she brought slips of paper that had any soldier, and it started with xxx town, and she didn't know who else to write to, so it started with ours, and people in the Bridge area heard about it and my mom had so many slips of paper that she had to go to the copy machine, make up more and then she when went Friday with some more slips, she was mobbed at the door because people were so excited that they wanted to write the soldiers.

HRC: So you just write any soldier, or can you get specific names for people to write to, how will you do that?

XXX: I think if people...[people talking simultaneously]

HRC: Can you help me to, you know I, I think it should be the next column. I won't write it for a couple of days, but, you know if I can get some information about where people could write, and...

XXX: Where does it come out?

HRC: Well, it comes out in a lot of papers in the United States and it actually comes out in the Frankfurt paper here in Germany and it comes out in about, I guess 30 or 40 papers around the world, but not every one of them. It's kind of hit or miss, like it's in the Chicago Sun Times and the New York Daily News, the San Francisco Examiner, papers around the country...

XXX: Unintelligible...

XXX: ...to any soldier, and I think they ran the XXX numbers, and literally people simply wrote to any soldier, care of XXX And I think they're in the process of setting up the XXX numbers. I don't know, do we have them already?

XXX: No. They're working on it.

XXX: So an easy way, that is a really good way to do it, but also you can do things, you know, with churches or communities and you know what might be interesting, does Baumholder have a sister city in the US?

XXX: Yes.

XXX: The German city of Baumholder. Because sometimes there are relationships between cities in the United States and cities here, so, if Baumholder has one in the United States, you know, there's a tie there between that American city and the American community here kind of thing and even some of your small towns that you all come from, just for support and good will and information kind of thing. That sort of tie.

XXX: I'd like to talk about, I haven't had a chance to talk about sending care packages to our husbands in Bosnia to be forwarded to local orphanages or Red Cross offices and I talked to my husband about it and they are going to have a restriction on the size of the package that you can mail to your husbands -- but my husband said that they can find a way around that so that we can send boxes to our husbands and my husband said that they would have a point of contact there that would then put them [unintelligible]. But that they would be able to get some of the stuff because one of the things [unintelligible] was how sad it was to see the children with no clothes and no food and yet all of our children always had every toy, every stuffed animal, and things that we don't even think about.

XXX: XXX comes down to the Frankfurt, the Heidelberg gift shop, I'm not sure how often she comes down, but that's what she does...

XXX: To Bosnia or Latvia?

XXX: No no no, I believe it's to Bosnia, and the donations go to her and then she makes sure that they, and I don't, I have no idea how she's getting them in. But I'll get her name and then get her name to you...

XXX: OK

XXX: She's getting stuff in there somehow, so...

XXX: I have one other other suggestion. There are so many soldier programs, what about a spouse program?

HRC: I like that idea...

XXX: There are many organizations that do have these soldier programs, what about letter writing to spouses?

XXX: [people talking simultaneously]

[End of tape]

[Side B]

XXX: There's a lot of publicity throughout the military, you know, what a military spouse is and what she can do, but I don't think the American public has a whole lot of idea sometimes just what kind of woman a military spouse really is.

XXX: I think XXX, was it last year, published a column on what is a military spouse [people talking simultaneously]...

XXX: Well, we get the bad press, we get the paperback novels that talk about...[people talking simultaneously]and I keep wondering, I just want to know where the...is...I want...and I want pina coladas.

XXX: I really think that a lot of women's groups could learn a lot from our groups because we've done a lot to help ourselves. I don't think any other, there just isn't any other group that you can belong to that your husband, the profession that your husband choose...so many opportunities are open to you and the chance for personal growth and that's encourage family members as they face...but this is a good time for personal growth, too. There's going to be some problems, we know that. Knew that, we are kind of overshadowed by the romanticism that...the army wife...has been the silent partner for 200-plus years in our history and she's more than silent...[laughter]...Walking around with a glazed look.

XXX: I'd like to just share a little experience with the Gulf War situation. We had a wonderful young gal who was from Puerto Rico and her husband went off to the Gulf War and she [unintelligible]. And he came back after six months to a very independent, very strong woman. And they had to renegotiate, because she wanted power [laughter] He ended up having to buy XXX for her. you know, she developed tremendously...and ended up having classes for her. And she was a very Catholic girl, about ninety pounds, and her husband left this very cute little, cuddly little person and he came back he was really shocked. And it was a real adjustment for him...you know, those who have been through a deployment before, if they're gone a year, it's going to take at least half that time for things to get back to their normal...so if you have to...negotiations of roles and all that sort of thing, and the fact that...problems and adjustments and negotiations...

XXX: UNINTELLIGIBLE

XXX: We did that training also, we started it before the men...also did it...here, we also did it after our men came back...we found that so beneficial. It's amazing how many women will come together...what the adjustments we...go through and...when the man comes back...[people talking simultaneously]. And they really really...[people talking simultaneously]

XXX: set up so it's a little easier for them to do it, so when the ships are coming back...they set the...out, or...it's a little harder for us to...aircraft, but they do realize that just as the wives need to understand the changes in their husbands, the wives need to understand the changes in their wives. They may have left, young women...and they've come back to...[laughter]

XXX: I'm listening to her and I'm thinking, you mean I don't have to use that cattle prod? Sometimes, you know John would go into the field for about two weeks or so and he would come home and he has this voice, you know, and I'm like, excuse me, is it Mister Commando Man? [laughter]...They get into this mentality...

XXX: All that testosterone...

XXX: Yes! Testosterone. Excuse me...sleep with one eye open tonight...

XXX: That was one thing that really amazed me, was how many...I'm going to try this, or let me see if I can do this...and they've got some confidence in themselves and they really want...to go back over...

HRC: This has been so great for me. I really, I feel like I've learned a lot. I'll try to convey that. If there are any issues that come up that I can talk about, or that I can talk about in the column, let me know. That's the reason I started writing the column. I got so tired of people saying, here's what she...[laughter] So it's hard to get a straight...but at least there's a way to circumvent all the media...creates an image of everything that's a little off kilter from what we personally know and experience.

XXX: Could you or someone...the Stars and Stripes?

HRC: Well, maybe if you all asked for it...[laughter] there she goes again, trying to take over the military with a coup of wives...[laughter, applause]...One general's wife was heard in this...cattle prod [laughter, applause].

[Simultaneous voices]

HRC: Well, thank you so much. This has been wonderful. And I really am so grateful for the sacrifices you...it's not...and more responsibility and greater burden...greatly appreciative. As a matter of fact, I think that's one of the things...at a conference to talking about how, the next step is for women to make, not only on our own behalf, but on behalf of all of us...is to create an atmosphere that respects the choices of all women. You know, like you were talking about...stereotype...well, we end up stereotyping all different kinds of women...partly because roles

have expanded, and people have all these opportunities, so folks haven't...pigeon-holed...or ...so I think part of what I hope we can do...is to create an atmosphere of mutual respect of all women's choices...generations...we have so many more opportunities and responsibilities...but we have to quit pointing fingers at each other instead of creating an atmosphere where everybody...and go on from there and create an independent woman and she can make decisions for herself, whatever those decisions might be. And give her the support that she needs. Responsible and careful thought. So, that's one of my hopes...

XXX:

HRC: Oh, it's been quite an experience. I mean, you know if somebody had said four or five years ago, President...and then here's what you will go through for five years, I would have said, oh Raoul, where are you? [Laughter, applause]

[End of discussion]

Talking It Over
Hillary Rodham Clinton

Operation Joint Endeavor

Since returning from Europe earlier this month, my thoughts and prayers have been with our troops who will soon be arriving in Bosnia to help bring peace to its people. We are all concerned for the safety of these men and women, the success of their mission and their speedy return home.

My thoughts have also been with the military spouses and families who are as much a part of Operation Joint Endeavor as the soldiers.

While in Baumholder, Germany with the President a few weeks ago, I had the chance to meet with a group of Army spouses - wives of both officers and enlisted men - to talk about their feelings and preparations for the upcoming separation from their husbands. Our scheduled half-hour visit turned into a nearly two hour-long conversation about everything from managing money to teenage marriages to child care to Christmas at the White House.

The women, some of whom were already veterans of Desert Storm and the recent peacekeeping operation in Macedonia, described the support networks, both informal and formal, they have set up to help each other through the separation. "We are ready. Whereas before we played a lot of catch up ball. ...So we are ready this time instead of in the process of getting ready...I think we're going to reap a lot of benefits from that."

Many experienced military spouses are volunteering to teach classes that will help the younger wives adjust to life alone on the bases and in Germany. The classes help the wives understand better what their husbands do, what all the acronyms mean. There are also classes that help spouses manage emotional stress and balance the family checkbook.

I was impressed with the genuine warmth and the strong friendships between the military wives.

Throughout our conversation, they often called each other "army sisters." The women I met said they are encouraging other wives not to go home to America while their husbands are away because it is much easier to get information about their husbands if they stay in Germany. Postage to Bosnia from the German military bases will be free, for instance.

And it's very helpful to be around women who know exactly what you're going through, they said. "If you get a letter, everyone is happy for you. You know you've got that camaraderie and that sisterhood," one

FAX**DATE:** Sunday, December 10, 1995**TO:** Lissa Muscatine**FAX:** 202-337-0589**FROM:** June Shih**PAGES:** 3**MEMO**

It's a litte goofy. Hopefully the NSC people will get us more details tommorrow. I'll be home all evening...

woman explained. " And if you're having a bad day, somebody else has had that bad day before, but they're not having a bad day, whereas in the States, you don't have that, you know, that same understanding,"

Like most American women, one of the primary concerns facing military wives is access to child care. The issue came up more than once during our conversation. Now that they were all going to become single parents for a while during the peacekeeping mission, many said they were worried about finding adequate care for their children. They described the difficulty they already had finding good care centers and baby-sitters in a foreign country.

Hopefully things will improve in the next year through the President and the Secretary of Defense's initiatives to increase quality of life for all military personnel. More funds will be available so that two thirds of all military children can be placed in child care. (Still that number should be 100 percent!)

The women also agreed that the separation would make them stronger and in many cases change the terms of their relationships with their husbands. (DO we want to pursue this?

The women also asked me to remind Americans about the soldiers who are going to Bosnia alone, those without spouses and families to write them letters or send care packages.

They suggested that we in America begin "adopting" single soldiers by becoming penpals with them, sending them news from home, responding to their thoughts on their lives in Bosnia, and most of all, telling them that we are proud of them, that we are always thinking of them and looking forward to their safe return..

To help in this effort.....

"You can also remind them not to forget us over here. It's so easy to become detached when something is so far away."

The Defense Department has set up an address [NOTE: we will have it by noon Tuesday, according to DOD/NSC -- also checking about whether it will work for wives]

I hope each of you will make an effort to support our soldiers in the coming weeks. Write to the American men and women over there. Send them news from home. Encourage them to write back. Most of all, tell them how proud we are of them and how grateful we are for the sacrifices they are making on behalf of American values by working to enforce the peace agreed to in Bosnia.

I also want to ask Americans to remember and write to the brave spouses and families that the soldiers are leaving behind. They need our support as well.

Many of the officers and soldiers the President and I met in Germany told us that there has never been a better trained, a better educated, better prepared military in the history of the world.

Their spouses have never been more prepared to help each through Operation Joint Endeavor, either. As one woman said, "We are ready."

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