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HEADLINE: FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON BRIEFING
RE: MILLENNIUM PROJECT
THE WHITE HOUSE,
MAP ROOM

BODY:

MRS. CLINTON: Please be seated, and welcome to the Map Room. Some of you have been here before for these briefings, and I welcome you back. And to those of you who have not, I'm delighted you could join us.

I started doing this I don't remember when, a few years ago, because I thought that there were some issues and activities at the White House or out in the country that could use some additional information and opportunity for the press to learn about. And I've really enjoyed them and have been very pleased at the interest and continuing follow-up that they have produced.

But I don't think I've ever been more excited about any event -- or briefing, certainly -- than the one we're about to have today, because this is the beginning of a multipronged effort on behalf of the priorities that the President has set for the commemoration and celebration of the millennium, under the theme of "honor the past and imagine the future." We've been working very hard in the last month, ever since the announcement was made at the Archives, to put some real substance on our goals and to provide ways for many Americans to participate.

So today we have with us a number of people who will not be speaking, but are here because of the role they played in helping to prepare us for the kickoff of all of these activities. And I just want quickly to introduce them. First let me introduce Ellen Lovell, who is the Director of the White House Millennium Council. Some of you may know Ellen from a previous incarnation as Senator Leahy's Chief of Staff and then as the Director of the President's Committee on Arts and Humanities, which she supervised the writing of a fabulous report about where we needed to be going culturally in our country and, in it, had some excellent suggestions about how we could use the millennium to advance American culture and history and arts. So I immediately stole her and put her to work on this, first on my staff and then in the newly created office about the millennium.

Dr. Sanjay Gupta is her assistant, and he is a White House Fellow, a neurosurgeon. I figured we needed a lot of help. (Laughter.) And we are delighted to have had him assigned to this effort for his commitment and his knowledge.

You will be meeting and hearing from, in a minute, Richard Moe, the President of the National Trust for Historic Preservation; and Rebecca Rimel, who is the

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President of Pew Charitable Trust. But they have with them some of the people who have actually made this happen. I just want to acknowledge them: Elizabeth Wainger, is the Director of Communications for the National Trust; Ed Norton, the Vice President for Public Policy of the National Trust; David Morris, the Director of Public Affairs for Pew; Tracey Ziemer, who's a Special Assistant to the President at Pew.

And then one of the most exciting aspects of what we're going to be doing tonight at the White House is that there have been a lot of firsts in the White House for the last 200 years. I was interested in learning that, for example, all of us remember the extraordinary concert that Pablo Casals gave when the Kennedys were here. One of the reasons we remember that is it was the first concert ever broadcast live from the White House. So it wasn't just something that happened that people then later reported on. It was something that Americans could be part of themselves.

Well, tonight, we're going to have, thanks to the sponsorship of Sun Microsystems, Inc., a cybercast of the first White House lecture. And we'll hear more about that in a minute. But it is an historic, an extraordinary first. There's never been, obviously, anything like this done from the White House East Room before. But I'm very excited because, as you'll hear, we already have an enormous amount of interest. People are going to be not only watching it on downlinks at locations all over the country, but will also be actually following it on their computers. And with us are Greg Papadopoulos and John Leahy from Sun Microsystems, Inc., and Rhonda Lee Thomas from the Exortium Group, who has worked with them in order to do all of the technical pieces that are necessary for something like this.

Now, ever since -- I guess for the last several years, people have known that we were going to be celebrating something called the millennium. They weren't quite sure whether that meant 2000 or 2001. I think that decision has been made for easy reasons and commercial implications. It just seems like a better idea to do it in 2000. Some of the experts might argue and say that's not really when it happens. But what we decided to do in sort of typical fashion, is we decided to start celebrating in '98 and go all the way through 2000, until New Year's Eve 2001, to try to make it clear that this is a turn of a century, it's a turn of a millennium. But more than that, it's an opportunity for us to take stock of who we are as Americans, what we believe in, what we want to carry into the next century -- not only individually or through our families, but in our local communities and certainly as a nation.

When the overall theme of the White House Millennium Program was chosen -- honor the past, imagine the future -- the President wanted people to think about what gifts we would give to the future, to leave a legacy for future generations. So we're inviting states and communities and nonprofit organizations and federal agencies and individuals to do just that. And there's already been a significant outpouring from around the country of people who were planning not only their own celebrations, but what they might do that will have lasting value.

The significance of the year 2000, though, is not only that it marks the century and the millennium. It is the 200th anniversary of the White House, the 200th anniversary of the first meeting of Congress in the new Capitol building, and the 200th anniversary of the Library of Congress. So we have these three major institutions of our government, of our history, all celebrating bicentennials at the same time. So it gives us a chance to really think about and highlight our democracy by using the White House, by using the Capitol, by using the Library of Congress.

This is also an international event. We spent some time talking with the Blairs

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about the plans that Great Britain has. You know, they're investing in their infrastructure, they're renovating cultural institutions, they're creating new town greens and they are building the largest dome in the world in Greenwich. But it's not only Great Britain, it's other countries, as well. And I think this is going to be kind of interesting and maybe even fun for Americans to follow. And I know that many of the networks are going to be covering a lot of these events.

Iceland, for example, is celebrating the 1000th anniversary of Leif Erikson's voyage to the new world. I know they're gathering in some large plane at midnight on some day -- (laughter) -- I don't know. I may get to go. France will have a series of symposia all over the country and then ending, of course, as you might expect, with a grand celebration in Paris. Germany will host the World's Fair Expo 2000 in Hanover.

So there are many of these kinds of activities -- and there's a very serious effort underway to have an inter-faith event in Jerusalem, which I think many of the people I know -- Christians, Jews and Muslims -- are spending an enormous amount of time and effort trying to plan and pull off. So we here in the United States have been thinking hard about what we will do.

Now, we know that there will be many people who are going to be celebrating the millennium in many different ways and there will be many millennial products, I would assume. You'll be able to brush your teeth, I suspect, with millennial toothpaste -- (laughter) -- or chew millennial chewing gum. But we wanted to try to do something that would involve as many Americans as possible and, by doing so, to honor the past and imagine the future.

So tonight we'll launch one of our White House programs, Millennium Evenings at the White House. These are lectures and cultural events that will showcase our founders -- as we will do tonight -- some of our great thinkers and visionaries, some of the ideas that have really made not only America, but the world, what it is today at the end of this millennium.

We begin the Millennium Evenings tonight with a great American historian. We surveyed American historians and one name kept coming back, that if we were going to start with a historian -- which is what we wanted to do -- we should choose Professor Emeritus at Harvard University, Bernard Bailyn. He's viewed as a creative force, an original researcher, an elegant writer. He's won Pulitzer Prizes, Bancroft Prizes. His book, "Ideological Origins of the American Revolution," probably did more to make it clear what was going on, what was the atmosphere that created these ideas that these extraordinary people were able to draw on. And he went back and read the pamphlets and other writings that Americans were reading, starting in the 1740s.

He also became convinced that it wasn't just the great men of history, but it was the average American who made a difference. And he conducted a very long study of who the Americans were, where they came from, by studying the patterns of immigration of the 18th century. Those of you who are able to attend the lecture tonight I think will find him very provocative and I hope give us all something to think about, about who we are. The second Millennium Evening will be March 6th, when Professor Stephen Hawking, the world renowned physicist from Cambridge University, will lecture in the East Room on Creativity and Science in the 21st Century. I don't know if any of you have ever actually seen Stephen Hawking lecture -- or if you read his book, "The History of Time," which is the best selling science book of all time -- but you might remember, if you have seen him, that he is completely paralyzed. He speaks through a computer generated voice, and he gives the most amazing lectures and answers questions in ways that are just beyond imagination.

Now, tonight's lecture will be heard and discussed at 110 colleges in 40 states via satellite. It is cosponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities, with support from the Howard Gilman Foundation and Sun Microsystems. Tonight features the first cybercast from the White House, so that Internet users all over the United States and the world will see and hear the lecture, and they will be sending us questions. So some of the questions that will be asked of Professor Bailyn will not just come from the audience that's in the East Room, but will come via the Internet from anyone who wishes to ask one.

I hope that in the next three years we'll have an extraordinary series of these Millennium Evenings. One will be New Masters for the New Millennium, which we are producing in cooperation with the Kennedy Center, which will showcase existing well-known masters with young up and coming talent and give us an idea of where we're going.

Now, in addition to the Millennium Evenings, which we kick off tonight, I wanted to unveil in greater detail what the President referred to in the State of the Union. And that's our effort to save America's treasures. The President's fiscal '99 budget includes funds for the National Archives to re-encase the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, all of which are endangered.

I had not realized how much at risk so many of our most important documents, monuments and other historical patrimony happen to be. But I started looking into it last spring and I was shocked at what I found. We are, I think as the President mentioned, at risk of losing the Star-Spangled Banner. But we have -- we're on the way, I hope, to salvaging that. You know, the flag that flew over Fort McHenry and inspired Francis Scott Key's poem that became our national anthem. That's the highest priority millennium project at the Smithsonian.

But it's not just in Washington, not just at our Archives or at the Smithsonian that we are faced with pending losses. Large numbers of artifacts at Gettysburg Battlefield are undocumented and disintegrating for lack of proper storage.

Thomas Edison's laboratory and house in New Jersey -- the father of modern science -- are in dire condition. Our prehistoric sites, particularly places like Mesa Verde, are disintegrating because they are not properly preserved. Many of the films, photographs and historic recordings that document the 20th century are deteriorating and have to be transferred to more stable condition. We have 80 million brittle books in libraries and other collections that are at risk of not making it into the next century.

We can't save everything, we know that. So we're going to have to prioritize. And that's why the President proposed a millennium fund -- \$50 million in each of the next two fiscal years to stimulate a national effort we're calling, Save America's Treasures. The fund would be administered through the Department of the Interior; half would be allocated for the most urgent preservation projects of regional and national significance; half would go to the states through the divisions of historic preservation.

But there will also be a parallel private effort, which we actually believe will raise more money than the federal share. And that will be administered and run by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. There will be a high level advisory committee that I've already begun to speaking people. And Dick Moe, who you'll hear from in a minute, has also reached out to people who are very excited about being part of this.

So we think the public-private partnership will enable us to involve literally millions and millions of Americans, from school children to corporate executives.

Now I'd like to ask Richard Moe, who's the President of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, to explain to us why we are undertaking this effort, and

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to talk about the trust's role in the partnership with the federal government. MR. MOE: Thank you very much. First of all, I want to commend the First Lady and the President for making our heritage the focus of this millennium program. It's very appropriate that on the eve of a new century that we recognize our heritage and try to find ways to preserve it and use it for the future.

We in the preservation movement are enormously excited about this. I was telling the First Lady before we came in, we had a board meeting in Savannah last week and people are already eager to participate in this, and there are literally thousands of preservationists all over the country who are trying to find ways, who want to find ways to participate in this.

In my view, I think this program has the potential to be the single most significant public/private effort to preserve America's heritage in the nation's history. As it's been designed and scoped out by the First Lady and others, this is designed to reach out and involve all kinds of people in all kinds of ways.

Let me just say a word about what the National Trust is and how we hope to participate. The National Trust was chartered by the Congress nearly 50 years ago to be the nation's leading private historic preservation organization. While we have received federal funds from time to time, we are essentially a private organization. And we hold historic sites all over the country, like Decatur House across the street, the Woodrow Wilson House, James Madison's Montpelier in Virginia and others all over the country. But we're also very programmatic, and through our loan funds and our grants and regional offices and a myriad of programs, we try to help and work with state and local organizations, and individuals, to save America's heritage. That's the business that we're in. And one of the tools that we use most effectively is every year we issue a list of the 11 most endangered historic sites in America.

And there is so much competition to get on this list, because America's heritage really is at risk.

The National Trust is very pleased to have been asked by the First Lady to help translate the vision of the millennium program into reality. And our role will really be twofold: to coordinate a public education campaign; and to coordinate the private committee that she mentioned, that will direct funds to the most urgent preservation needs identified at both the national level and in the states.

The millennium program aims to keep our history alive -- and it's not just the landmark buildings and documents that tell the stories of the famous, but also the streets in the older neighborhoods that are a part of every community in America. We owe it to our children and our grandchildren to pass on this legacy -- because, unfortunately, too much of our legacy ends up at the landfill.

There is really an urgent need here. So much of our heritage is at risk -- whether it's buildings or battlefields or landmarks, as well as documents and artifacts and other objects that are also a significant part of our history and that express who we are as a people. These places and objects are being lost every single day.

So the millennium program comes at just exactly the right time. There are simply not enough public funds to address all of these needs. The millennium program can help to mobilize the resources and the public attention that are necessary to make America's past a living part of its present, and to leave a meaningful legacy for the future.

The strength of the millennium program, and I think the genius of it, is that it reaches out to all Americans -- from all walks of life, all backgrounds, all parts of the country -- to join together in creative and really energetic ways

to save our heritage. And we all have a stake in that heritage. The public and private sector simply must join together to ensure that it is passed on to the next generation.

The millennium program reminds us not to take our heritage for granted. We have so much as a nation to be proud of and, yet, so much of our heritage is at risk. Some of these places and artifacts are in our national parks, some are in state parks, some are in private hands; but many of them are in serious trouble. These include the places that tell the story of the very earliest Americans, such as the First Lady mentioned at Mesa Verde, Chaco Canyon and other prehistoric sites; the places where Americans fought and died, the Civil War battlefields, the USS Constellation in Baltimore; the places that celebrate American inventiveness, such as the Thomas Edison Factory in New Jersey, where more than half of Edison's inventions were developed; the places where the struggle for civil rights and equality were waged, like Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas; and the places that tell the story of the diverse people and cultures that really are America.

I just can't emphasize enough how important it is to have the direct involvement of the First Lady in this effort. I've discussed this program with her. I know how deeply she feels about it, how committed she is to it. And all of us who care about preserving our heritage are deeply in your debt for your leadership and your commitment to this millennium program.

The First Lady has challenged Americans to honor our past as we imagine the future. We are confident that Americans are going to accept this challenge as an opportunity to build a better nation for the next century, and we're very honored to be a part of this effort. Thank you.

MRS. CLINTON: Well, we couldn't do it without the extraordinary work that you and the trust have done. Rebecca Rimel, who is president and CEO of the Pew Charitable Trust, which is headquartered in Philadelphia, will be telling us today about a great gift that Pew is making, and we hope will spur other foundations, other corporations, other philanthropists, every American to follow suit.

Rebecca.

MS. RIMEL: Thank you. And I echo our appreciation on behalf of all Americans for your leadership. Life is about milestones and all of us have those. One that immediately comes to mind is turning 50, not that any of us would know what that's like. (Laughter.) We all experience it in different ways. For some of us, it brings a sense of celebration; we celebrate it. For others, we might dread it. But one thing is for certain, when that little letter comes from the AARP -- (laughter) -- you know it's a sure thing.

As with the millennium and as with 50th anniversaries, it provides a time to look back. It provides a time for reflection. It provides a time for us to count all of our blessings. And it also provides a time for us to reassess our accomplishments and our priorities and our values. But anniversary celebrations are also about looking forward. It's a chance to reaffirm our commitments, our private commitments and our public ones. It's a chance to reassess how we're going to use our talent, our time and our treasures to try and achieve our individual goals and our collective goals for a brighter and better tomorrow.

Well, that's exactly what we've been about at the Pew Trust over the last two years, because this year is our 50th birthday. And we, like all Americans, have a lot of blessings to count. We live in a strong and healthy and vibrant and free democracy. We live in a society that supports innovation, entrepreneurship, aspiration, creativity. And we also live in a place that values freedom of speech as well as freedom of action, and protects it. In

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fact, we also live in a country that values volunteerism, philanthropy, civic virtue, the habits of a democratic court, and also an active independent sector without which organizations like mine wouldn't exist.

Our trust founders, the women and men that gave us our resources, had very strong convictions and very strong values. First and foremost, they believed that every American, including themselves, had a strong moral obligation to give back. We also had a strong obligation to protect the freedoms and the foundations on which this great experiment in democracy is built. They, like many people of their generation, reminded us often through their word and their deed that the privilege of citizenship does carry with it certain rights, but it carries a very long list of responsibilities -- individual and collective responsibilities for the social good.

So it's in celebration and with enormous pride in America's past, and also great faith in its promise, that the Pew Charitable Trust has launched a series of projects to really protect our most important national icons. We're doing this as part of renewing our Pledge of Allegiance, if you will, and showing our love and affection for all that makes this great country so special.

Our commitments began with the rebuilding of a new Liberty Bell Pavilion in Philadelphia and the restoration of arguably America's most important and historic square mile, Independence Park. We're doing this in collaboration with the city, the state of Pennsylvania, private donors, the National Park Service and others. And as we prepare for the millennium, we're delighted today to announce partnerships beyond that for the restoration and protection of our most important touchstones as Americans -- the Charters of Freedom, as the First Lady said: the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and the Declaration of Independence and the Star-Spangled Banner.

In collaboration with the National Archives, our federal partner will be providing the remaining \$800,000 to the Archives for prototyping and research for new encasements for our founding documents. We're doing this to make sure that they're protected for public viewing for generations to come. And I'm delighted today to announce for the Star-Spangled Banner, arguably the most important symbol of American freedom here and around the globe, that the Trust will be providing \$5 million for the restoration of the flag. We do this with great pride and as a way of giving back to a country that's given each of us so much.

But the work is not over. For the flag project an additional \$13 million is needed. Five additional million will go for endowment, another \$5 for interpretation and education and a new appropriate home within the Smithsonian. So we need a lot of partners. We need public sector partners. We need private partners. We need individuals and institutions to step up to the plate, to dig deep in their pockets, because this challenge is ours. We've never been in a better position as a country to take on this mandate.

But then partnership is what it's all about, isn't it? Caring and sharing is what being American is all about -- joining hands to help one another; holding firm in our commitments and our beliefs; standing tall and strong under adversity; and, most of all, I believe, exercising wise stewardship, strong but compassionate leadership and grace as we face the future.

Thank you very much.

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you so much, Rebecca. And I'm just thrilled with these major commitments, and particularly the commitments to the Archives and to the Smithsonian for the Star-Spangled Banner. And I think that that in and of itself --

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Q Why does that take \$5 million?

MRS. CLINTON: It takes -- as Rebecca said, it's going to take \$13 million altogether, Helen; but the \$5 million is for the restoration itself. Do you want to explain that?

MS. RIMEL: First of all, it's huge, as you know. It can't be moved out of the building for a whole range of reasons -- security and the like. It has to be taken down very carefully, kept flat, and then a whole restoration laboratory has to be built around the flag. And in fact the people that donated the flag had only one criterion -- that the flag could never be out of view from the public.

So you're going to be able to see the flag as it is painstakingly restored. People are going to have to lie on their stomachs on large, if you will, scaffolding, as they painstakingly clean each fiber and restore it. So you'll be able to sit and watch, and hear interpretation, and you'll be able to understand the history of the flag. Children will love it. Probably adults will be mesmerized. (Laughter.)

Then it goes back up and the largest piece of glass that has ever been made is going to be made for this to go over the flag to protect it. It will have a lot of educational materials, obviously interpretative materials for school children and adults, and clearly for those on the Internet as well. And then \$5 million, as I mentioned, is for endowment, to make sure that it is preserved for the next millennium.

Q When will that start and how long will that take?

MS. RIMEL: They're estimating three years for the project, and it will start, I assume, once they know about this announcement, which they do today, right away -- though I want to reemphasize that \$5 additional million before they can actually get underway is required. And we are very hopeful, and actually have structured our pledge as a challenge to the American people, to say, this is the first \$5 million we need. We need \$5 million more. And wouldn't it be fabulous if we got that right away.

MRS. CLINTON: And one of the things we're going to try to work out is where people can make their contributions. I think that that could come to the Trust.

MR. MOE: Yes, indeed. (Laughter.)

MRS. CLINTON: So part of what we're hoping -- if you've ever tried to give the federal government money, you know it's very difficult. They will take it, but you can't -- they'll take it if it goes to the IRS, but if you're trying to give it to the flag you have to find the foundation that the Park Service has or the Smithsonian has, whatever. But anyone who reads what you say or hears what you say, they can make a contribution to the Trust. You know, Bill and I are going to make a contribution, and we hope every American will make a contribution, so that we can certainly take care of what needs to be taken care of with the Star-Spangled Banner.

But that gives you an idea of how complicated and expensive and time consuming a lot of this preservation work is. The person-hours required to do that is just overwhelming.

Before we get to other questions, which I want to in a minute, I want to be sure to call on Greg Papadopoulos, representing Sun, because, as some of you may know, I'm not very computer literate, sort of putting it mildly. But I've been sort of picking up some of the language, trying to sound a little more knowledgeable than I actually am. So I know about surfing. (Laughter.)

But now there is a new word that I've had to learn because of what Sun has done, and that's "streaming," which I have no idea what it means. (Laughter.) So would you tell us what it is you're doing in the East Room tonight.

MR. PAPADOPOULOS: Okay, all right, I'll try to keep this intelligible. That is

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so cool. (Laughter.) This is not going to sound nearly as neat as -- (laughter). But what I'd like to do is really things: give you an overview, kind of reiterate what is going to happen at a high level; try to get into a little bit about how we're pulling this all off; and then, if I can sort of extrapolate to the future, because I think there is something really very exciting that this all represents.

So first, what's happening, as you know, Sun Microsystems will broadcast the lecture live from the East Room. And there really are their two ways that people will experience it. It will be through satellite downlink, as you've heard, through universities and junior colleges. And that's all around the country. But the second way will be where really individuals or small groups can get together and listen directly via the Internet. And for this experience, really people can be anywhere, and that's just not here; it can be anywhere around the globe. You can be at home. You can be at school, at libraries. If you're in my hometown of Palo Alto, you can go into City Hall and get onto a free public Internet terminal and do it that way.

But the thing that is really cool about that is not just that this is the way that you can experience it, but then you can -- there are two things about it. You can interact with it, and we'll also be archiving it. And I think it's actually the second part that is the most interesting, because it really gets archived instantly and you can view it at any time.

For the interactive part, people will be able to send in e-mail questions. And then as this lecture series progresses, we'll have more advanced sort of interactive chat that can go on, and really get sort of discussion that goes on at the same time. And those sessions are open to everyone. I mean, it's really grass-roots participation in these kinds of events.

As far as the archiving side is concerned, the lectures in their entirety will be immediately available on the Web, but they also become part of this sort of universally accessible cultural history. We're publishing, and that's -- you have to really understand that it's not just the event, but the event is happening and being published at the same time. You can appreciate that; that's sort of publishing history as it happens. And I'll get more on that in a second.

Let me give you some of the technical details. And if you want to follow up with questions, that's fine. The live video feed will come from standard four-camera setup in the East Room, and then these will be satellite uplinked, and then downlinked in the traditional satellite way that you all are familiar with. But two of downlink sites will be very special sites. There will be a site in Dallas, Texas, and another site in Cupertino, California. And what these sites will do is take the live video feed from the satellite downlinks, and they will broadcast them, publish them to the Web.

And this is where the streaming technology comes in, because what you need to do is to convert the video from the professional broadcast video you get from satellite into a format that people can view on the Web, which is a lot -- you know, in variable bit rates. We'll actually be running it at several quality levels. And remember, we'll be recording it at the same time.

So basically, these two sites -- the Dallas site is provided by Audionet, and they will publish in what's called the Real Networks video format. And the Cupertino site is provided by GTS, and they'll publish in a Java-implemented format.

But between the two, we'll be able to support for this first lecture about 10,000 viewers. And I'll just note that all of this is being served off of Sun computers at these sites, and, just as a footnote, that Sun really was responsible for building the backbone of the Internet, and most of the Internet

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minute. But it is an historic, an extraordinary first. There's never been, obviously, anything like this done from the White House East Room before. But I'm very excited because, as you'll hear, we already have an enormous amount of interest. People are going to be not only watching it on downlinks at locations all over the country, but will also be actually following it on their computers. And with us are Greg Papadopoulos and John Leahy from Sun Microsystems, Inc., and Rhonda Lee Thomas from the Exortium Group, who has worked with them in order to do all of the technical pieces that are necessary for something like this. Now, ever since -- I guess for the last several years, people have known that we were going to be celebrating something called the millennium. They weren't quite sure whether that meant 2000 or 2001. I think that decision has been made for easy reasons and commercial implications. It just seems like a better idea to do it in 2000. Some of the experts might argue and say that's not really when it happens. But what we decided to do in sort of typical fashion, is we decided to start celebrating in '98 and go all the way through 2000, until New Year's Eve 2001, to try to make it clear that this is a turn of a century, it's a turn of a millennium. But more than that, it's an opportunity for us to take stock of who we are as Americans, what we believe in, what we want to carry into the next century -- not only individually or through our families, but in our local communities and certainly as a nation.

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But all of this technology really isn't important to people accessing it,

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because you don't want to have to know any of this to make this work, believe me. It's hard for us; it's really, really simple for people who want to get to it. You just point your Web browser at either the White House home page, the Millennium Project home page, or Sun's home page. And I can give you those URLs if you want them.

There is absolutely no software you need to install. It will come up. You'll see the Millennium banner. You'll see Professor Bailyn and the transcripts, or you can hear the audio as it goes on. And you'll also be able to send e-mail from any of these home pages. So if you can use the Web at all, you can participate in this event.

How many does that include here? Okay.

So much for the details. I'd like to close with a little bit of speculation, and pardon me if I get a little passionate about this. I think this is really very cool. (Laughter.) I learned the distinction between pre-history and history -- in high school, I think is where I learned this -- is what's recorded. And until very recently, what we recorded was really very highly selective and it had really precious little to do with the context of the individuals at the time that we did that. And recordings as artifacts -- whether you write them down, right -- were really difficult to replicate and would fade and deteriorate over time, as we know. And so, really, historically recording has been very expensive. It's been selective. And it's been fragile. And where we are now, I think technologically enabled now -- this is our -- you know, the information era is something very profound. That both reporting and publishing about anything has become really cheap to do. It's durable. It's pervasive. And I think it's fundamentally democratic. Anybody can do it. So we can not only record what we like, but anybody anywhere can publish their comments. And I think that's a very rich context for the individual to capture history.

And then really it's this foundation of digital computing and the communication revolution; it's fundamentally that as everything comes digital -- from text, video pictures, audio -- as recorded it really has an indefinite life, because you can copy digital. Once it's out on the Net, too, you can't take it back. So it's there.

I would say that it's hard to know you're in the middle of a revolution when you're experiencing it, but I think this is a watershed. And my bet is that historians in the next millennium will really look back at sort of our moment in time as the beginning of, if you will, digital history; that really where a generation's legacy doesn't fog or diffuse over time.

I'd just like to thank the millennium project and Mrs. Clinton for -- this is really very progressive. I'm very excited about it. (Laughter.) But I really think we are contributing a legacy here, and it will be one that a thousand years from now people are going to be able to look at.

MRS. CLINTON: Well, thank you, Gregg. And I don't understand half, if three-quarters of what you're saying, but I am thrilled -- (laughter) -- because my daughter understands it and many people in the White House understand it. But more importantly, it is the signature of what we're going to be doing as we move into the next century.

So I would just conclude and then ask you for questions, that part of the real impetus for us to do this -- and I think you got a flavor of it from everything that has been said -- is that here we are at a time in our history where our economy is strong, we're the undisputed leader of the world by nearly any measurement you can imagine, we seem to be moving out of the kind of divisiveness and pessimism that marked previous years that really you could say that if it was not begun by, it certainly was accelerated by President Kennedy's

assassination, by Bobby Kennedy's and Dr. King's assassinations, by our involvement in Vietnam, by Watergate, by the kind of intense shocks to the system that our country experienced. We are regaining our confidence. We are looking to the future. And it is an extraordinarily rich time to take stock of who we are as Americans.

Because during the last 30 years, certainly, there's been a tendency for people to withdraw, to become more connected by identity in ways that might not be directly related to being part of the American experience, but more connected to a more separatist kind of view of who they were and how they define themselves. And I've sensed as I travel around the country, as I talk with people, that there's a great yearning to be Americans again -- not hyphenated Americans, but Americans.

But what does that mean? We have to respect the diversity that makes us who we are. We have to be willing, as the President has urged us, to be honest about racial issues and the unfinished business of race in this country. But I sense that we are really making progress together on that as a nation. So how do we define ourselves as Americans for the next century? We've always defined ourselves based on shared ideas, common values, and our history, our common experience. But that is often in danger of being forgotten with the kind of instantaneous pressure of the Information Age. And as I travel around to university campuses, as I talk to professors, one of their biggest concerns is that so many of our young people have such a limited understanding of how we got to where we are and what our history is. So we're hoping to really contribute to what I think is a national conversation about the meaning of being an American. And I'm very excited by it. I think it has extraordinary potential for knitting us together as a nation as we move forward. And that is probably our biggest remaining challenge -- to bring everybody into the American experience, to give everybody a chance to feel that they are part of this great adventure, and move with confidence into this future that Gregg described while honoring and taking care of the past, which Dick and Rebecca have so eloquently spoken to.

So I'd be glad to answer any questions, as would any of the other participants. Q Mrs. Clinton, this may seem like an obvious question, but why do all of these good things to celebrate the millennium? In a secular nation isn't the year 2000 a little like the car odometer turning over?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I think that that is a fair question, but I think that it's an event in history that is going to be marked. I mean, it's not something that we made up; that there has been an increasing interest in it and it will be marked by big parties in Times Square and people flying to try to be on the dateline when the millennium changes. But it also gives us a framework in which to think about these larger issues. And certainly some may attribute religious meaning and significance to it, but I think others see it as a way of looking back and saying, where were we as human beings a thousand years ago? Where were we as Americans 200 years ago? What have we learned in this human journey we've been on? What have we learned as Americans?

So I think there will be, whether we did anything here at the White House or not, an extraordinary amount of attention paid to this passage, so I think it gives us a good reason to try to seize this opportunity to talk in more American terms about where we've been and where we're going as a nation.

Q Have you looked back at all to what happened a hundred years ago and made any judgments if you have?

MRS. CLINTON: I'd like Dick to talk about that, too, and Rebecca as well. Yes, we have. We've looked back 100 years, we've looked back 200 years, we've looked back 1,000 years. In fact, I think -- I'm hoping that one of our Millennium Evenings will be a discussion by scholars about what was going on 1,000 years

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ago. We weren't around as a nation, but many interesting actions, including Leif Erikson, who I do think got here -- (laughter) -- spoken like a true Scandinavian. (Laughter.) So we do want to look at that.

But I think you've heard the President speak a number of times about how he's ruminated over the comparisons with the turn of the last century, and there are striking comparisons. And I'm not an historian or scholar in this, but certainly, based on my own reading and conversations, you have this rather significant move from the agricultural to the Industrial Age. I mean, it has been gaining steam and it had been affecting people's lives, but certainly straddling that century change between the 1800s to the 1900s made it very clear that we were moving into a different age. And people were dislocated, they were confused, they were caught in transitions that were bigger than themselves. Transportation began changing.

You had the move from the very solid, regulated train to the beginning of the automobile age, where people could do anything they wanted. I mean, think of the difference that that made in how people saw themselves.

So you had economic changes, you had political changes. Many people point to Teddy Roosevelt as straddling that time, and I think that's a very fair description because he understood that we couldn't continue to do business as we had, that we had to be worried about the concentration of power, we had to be worried about the environment. You had these immense social changes -- the immigrant movements were the most obvious of that, but the rise of progressive movements against child labor, against other kinds of misuses of power. So there was a lot of very good, rich happenings there that I think we should look back and consider.

But let me ask Dick if he wants to comment on that.

MR. MOE: Well, no, I think that's right. I'm not an expert in this area, but I think it's clear that we have celebrated different milestones in the history of this country in different ways, whether through expositions or different kinds of celebrations. But think it's important to keep in mind that we're still a relatively young country and we're still making this up as we go along. And I can't agree enough with what you said about the opportunity that the millennium presents because this really is a moment and a time when change (End of side one of tape) (Begin side two, same speaker in progress) -- -- try to preserve those things that reflect the best of our past so that they can serve us in the future.

David McCullough, the historian and a trustee of ours, is fond of saying that America is in danger of becoming an historically illiterate country. And unfortunately, that's true. There are a lot of things contributing to it. This millennium project is an opportunity to bring history alive to Americans all over the country in ways that have great significance and that will serve future generations as well. So that's really the brilliance I think of this millennium project, is that it takes advantage of a coincidence on the calendar to really cause us to reflect, to preserve and to look forward at the same time.

MS. RIMEL: -- to say that we share a David McCullough comment on the board of Monticello, Mr. Jefferson's home, and once a year we have the privilege of dining where he did. And that really does provide the context of how young a nation we are. And I remember David saying that it's times like this, when we're blessed with so much, that other countries and other men and women have built cathedrals. And it will be interesting to ask ourselves what cathedral did we build when we were so blessed. Was it a quality education for every child, access to health care, to deal with some of our toughest problems be they conversations and resolutions about race or other matters.

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But it does seem to me that we use these events both to look back and to look forward. I'm often reminded also of conversations with my own board -- the members of family. And they sit for lifeterms, and many of them, several of them have been there for now 50 years. And when we're dealing with a contemporary issue and they'll look sort of at the portraits of the founders and say, gee, what would they have done in these circumstances. The longest-standing member of our board says, they wouldn't have asked us this question, they would say, we have good minds, we have good intentions and we ought to do the best with the resources we have so that we really can be wise stewards for the future.

So I think in looking back it does prepare us. I think we do use, to your question, dates and times and events to make us stop and pause and think about how we want to be better than we might be had we not --

Q Mrs. Clinton, how do you think the President is bearing up under the present current history and headlines?

MRS. CLINTON: I think he's doing very well, Helen.

Q Is it hard?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, he's working on a lot of very important things and it's no secret that he's spending a lot of time talking with leaders around the world and consulting with his political and diplomatic and military advisors about the situation in Iraq. And that's the primary thing on his mind right now. That's what I see him spending his time on and worrying about.

Q Are you surprised, gratified perhaps, at the public response to this situation?

MRS. CLINTON: No, Bill, I think, for some of the reasons that we've just been talking about, Americans are very satisfied about what has been happening in the country in the last five years. And there's good reason, there's evidence for them to be satisfied, which I think is what you're referring to.

If we just sort of scroll back and think about the circumstances when the President took office and the way we were viewed around the world, with our huge deficit, we were being criticized and made fun of by many of our friends and allies because we seemed not to be able to get our financial house in order. We'd seen many people make loud speeches about doing something to decrease the crime rate, but it kept going up. The welfare system was everybody's favorite whipping boy, but we didn't get any progress in helping people get off dependency or getting them the child care and the health care they needed. Our education system was under a lot of challenge. I think that you can certainly go back and look at how many, many Americans felt about their prospects individually and about our prospects as a country.

And I think that for a number of reasons, but principal among them, not only what my husband has accomplished as President, but the way in which he has done it -- his constant optimism, his good humor in the face of extraordinary challenges and obstacles, his willingness to continue to reach out and work with people who had very strong opposition -- had made very strong opposition to him has sent a signal to the American people about what is important. And I think that it's an inspiration to me, personally, to see my husband get up every day and do the work he was elected to do, and be focused on trying to continue the work he has begun on the budget. And we now have for the first time in years an opportunity to address issues that we couldn't put on the national agenda because of all the other difficulties we had -- principally, budgetarily. I think that it's been my experience just growing up in America and being privileged to travel to every part of the country that Americans are smart, fair-minded, savvy people, and I think that they see things for what they are and they draw their own conclusions, and they know the evidence of their own

experience, and they are satisfied that life is better, our country is stronger, and we're in a good position to go into the next century. And those are some of the reasons why I think you're seeing the responses that you referred to.

Q Since you made the remark last week about the vast right-wing conspiracy have you seen further evidence that this is what's happening in this particular case?

MRS. CLINTON: I've seen some articles that some of your publications have written and some news programs that some of your networks have run, and I have found them to be quite interesting.

Q Do you want to retract that --

Q Has any information come to you about anything new?

MRS. CLINTON: I think there's a lot of information out there that I commend all of you for the work you've been doing to bring to public light.

Q What did you say to Dick Scaife when he came to visit --

Q What did he say to you?

MRS. CLINTON: I was pleased to invite everybody to the White House who had contributed to the endowment fund, and that included all the people who had contributed when President Bush was here.

Q Mrs. Clinton, you've thought a lot about the Gulf War syndrome and the medical problems our veterans have faced.

With the situation heating up in Iraq do you think the American people can rest comfortably that there won't be a repeat of some of the health problems the veterans faced if, in fact, we do wind up having troops there?

MRS. CLINTON: Matt, I think that's a really important question and I don't know that I'm qualified to answer that. But I really hope that you will follow up and talk with some of the people here in the White House, the Pentagon, the VA and other places who have studied this. Although we have not reached any definitive conclusions about what happened to literally thousands of our troops in the Gulf, and not only American troops, but troops from our allies who were there, who seem to have some health difficulties that go beyond what has historically been reported as a result of exposure to combat or high stress, I'm convinced that something happened.

And whether it was the blowing up of oil wells or exposure to chemical or biological agents, or whatever it might be -- and we're going to have to continue to investigate that -- I think what's driving the President and our allies and everyone who is reluctantly but firmly taking this stand against Saddam Hussein is that we know, based on the U.N. inspections, that he has continued his research and development of biological and chemical weapons. We know he is without conscience and has used such weapons against his own people. And for whatever perverse psychological reasons, he seems intent upon this standoff with the larger world community over our efforts to try to protect not only existing human beings, but future generations from this kind of warfare. Now, anytime you go after biological and chemical agents it is very difficult.

I mean, you could go through an airport security device today holding a vial of anthrax and nobody would stop you if you said, oh, it's something I use for -- I'm a painter and I use it to mix my paint, or it's part of my medication that I mix. It wouldn't probably even set off the alarms.

And so we are facing an extraordinary threat from this man. And I can't stress too much how deeply concerned the President is. And how you try to reason with someone who defies reason, and then how you strategically try to prevent him from having the capacity to do such damage to people are very difficult challenges. And, of course, implicit in your question is how do you strike against places that may hold such agents that if they are released into the air

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or the water system could cause extraordinary damage, at least to the population in Iraq, if not further.

So those are some of the issues that I hear my husband talking to people on the phone about, he's having meetings about, he's trying to educate himself about biological and chemical warfare and agents so that he can be a full participant in the decisions that are made militarily if that is necessary. But I just cannot stress enough what a serious matter this is for the world.

And, of course, we all hope that diplomatic efforts will be successful. We hope that our friends and allies in the Gulf and around the world who have entered into Iraq might possibly be able to persuade Saddam Hussein of the seriousness of this if he will not listen to the United Nations Security Council or certainly to the United States. But something will have to be done. It cannot be permitted to continue.

Q I just wanted to ask you about something that Gregg said. He's obviously an Internet enthusiast. But when he talked about some of the aspects of the system -- the fact that you could say something and you can't take it back, how it's so available to everyone and instantaneous, he's raised some issues that have been issues for us in the last few weeks in our business. And I wonder if you think that this new media is necessarily an entirely good thing. And also, as somebody who has been through this crucible, in the next millennium how would you like to see this new and ever more interesting -- (laughter) -- handled of things like the issues like the personal lives of public figures.

MRS. CLINTON: Well, Kathy, I think that's one of these issues that Dick was referring to, that we're going to have to really think hard about. And I think that every time technology makes an advance -- when you move to the railroad, or you move to the cotton gin, or you move to the automobile, or the airplane, and now certainly as you move to the computer and increasing accessibility and instantaneous information on the computer, we are all going to have to rethink how we deal with this, because there are always competing values. There's no free decision that I'm aware of anywhere in life, and certainly with technology that's the case.

As exciting as these new developments are -- and I think Gregg's enthusiasm is shared broadly by Americans and people around the world -- there are a number of serious issues without any kind of editing function or gate-keeping function. What does it mean to have the right to defend your reputation, or to respond to what someone says?

There used to be this old saying that the lie can be halfway around the world before the truth gets its boots on. Well, today, the lie can be twice around the world before the truth gets out of bed to find its boots. I mean, it is just beyond imagination what can be disseminated. So I think we're going to have to really worry about this, because it won't be just public elected officials. We've seen some cases where somebody who had a grudge against a girl's mother because the family wouldn't let him date her put out on the Internet that the family were child abusers. Totally private people, never stuck their toe in public life. It can be done to anybody, and it can get an audience, and it can create a falsehood about somebody. And certainly it's multiplied many times over if you happen to be in public life.

I don't have any clue about what we're going to do legally, regulatorily, technologically -- I don't have a clue. But I do think we always have to keep competing interests in balance. I'm a big pro-balance person. That's why I love the founders -- checks and balances; accountable power. Anytime an individual or an institution or an invention leaps so far out ahead of that balance and throws a system, whatever it might be -- political, economic, technological -- out of balance, you've got a problem, because then it can lead

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to the oppression people's rights, it can lead to the manipulation of information, it can lead to all kinds of bad outcomes which we have seen historically. So we're going to have to deal with that. And I hope a lot of smart people are going to --

Q Sounds like you favor regulation.

MRS. CLINTON: Bill, I don't know what -- that's why I said I don't know what I'm in favor of. And I don't know enough to know what to be in favor of, because I think it's one of those new issues we've got to address. We've got to see whether our existing laws protect people's right of privacy, protect them against defamation. And if they can, how do you do that when you can press a button and you can't take it back. So I think we have to tread carefully.

Q -- one of the balances, though, in this new digital age is that you can have direct communication. You're celebrating that tonight -- people can log on from anywhere. In that spirit, have you thought any more about a direct and frank conversation by the President with the country about these allegations?

MRS. CLINTON: I'm not going to add anything to what the President has already said. And I think that any of you who think hard about this issue would have to agree that he's taken the right position. So I'm not going to add to that.

Q Do you think this will be indefinite, Mrs. Clinton? I mean, is there any sense that at some point he might --

MRS. CLINTON: As I said when I was on television a few weeks ago, I just wish everybody would take a deep breath. We've already seen how so much of this charge and countercharge does not withstand the scrutiny of much attention at all. And I don't anticipate that this will evaporate, but I anticipate that it will slowly dissipate over time by the weight of its own insubstantiality.

So I just advise everybody to just take a deep breath and watch this develop. And I think some of the developments of the last week or two should certainly give anybody pause about what is really going on here.

Thank you very much, folks.

Q -- you just talked about, the story getting around the world twice -- several of the people who work around the President have gone into -- been called in to testify. And there's the prospect that people, particularly security or those who were institutional White House people -- has that changed your relationship with the people around you? Does it make it more difficult to be around White House stewards, Secret Service agents?

MRS. CLINTON: No. And I just regret deeply that this kind of activity is going on. But I have seen it for five years, certainly for the last four years. I've seen a lot of people dragged into this matter, having to hire lawyers, running up legal fees for no good reason. And I regret that deeply. But it certainly doesn't affect our relationship.

Q Well, do you think the special prosecutor is outside of the checks and bounds --

MRS. CLINTON: Interesting question, Helen. (Laughter.)

Q For the next millennium lecture. (Laughter.)

MRS. CLINTON: Any ideas you have for millennium lectures let me know. I would be glad to hear them.

Thank you all very much. Thanks.

END

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HEADLINE: Mrs. Clinton Discusses Child-Care

BYLINE: SANDRA SOBIERAJ

DATELINE: WASHINGTON

BODY:

Hillary Rodham Clinton, herself a working mother, said Wednesday that any program for improving child care should include help for stay-at-home moms.

But as the first lady sat down with reporters on the eve of her White House conference on child care, she offered no policy prescriptions and appeared to abandon ideas mentioned in appearances outside Washington just last month including her proposal for a national registry of caregivers with criminal histories.

She also made clear that the conference, which President Clinton plans to attend in part, would not yield major new federal initiatives but instead identify model care programs and encourage their replication.

"The federal government can take certain actions, but most of the efforts in child care happen at the state level and in the private sector," Mrs. Clinton said.

Making the conference her project, the first lady has traveled to child-care centers and made several recent speeches to stir interest in the issue, which she said is too often ignored by policy-makers. She deferred to her husband Wednesday when asked what proposals the conference might yield. "Can't do that. ... The president will make recommendations," she said.

As for her personal experience with child care, Mrs. Clinton acknowledged her family was exceptional. For all but two years of daughter Chelsea's childhood, the Clintons lived in the fully staffed Arkansas governor's mansion or in the White House where "there were always people around in an emergency to help out," she said.

Still, the former practicing attorney recalled kibitzing with fellow working moms. "Probably our biggest topic was all the problems we were having trying to balance all these responsibilities. I don't think the conversation has changed much," she said.

Of parents who choose to stay home, Mrs. Clinton said, "We don't do a very good job in this country, despite our rhetoric about family values, to create

work and family situations that permit more families to make the choice that they think is right for them.'

Even the Family and Medical Leave Act, which Republicans fought for nine years before President Clinton signed it, does not go far enough, she said. The legislation guarantees workers unpaid leave in order to tend to family caregiving duties. But, Mrs. Clinton said, 'It's hard to argue it's a realistic choice when it's unpaid.'

Pressed by reporters for policy specifics, the first lady refused to resurrect ideas she raised during recent trips to Florida and Virginia liability protection for child-care centers and a registry of criminal child-care workers.

Aides said the administration would not propose creating a registry.

The first lady, singled by criticism for her lead role in the administration's early efforts to overhaul health care, also would not elaborate on what hand she would have in writing child-care initiatives to be wrapped into the administration's budget request next year.

'I'm just going to keep working on ... (child-care issues) the same way I've been doing for the last 20 years,' she said, with a shake of her head. 'Same old story.'

Outside the White House, several dozen parents, children and teachers protested the state of child care in the District of Columbia.

The children, most of whom were 5 years old or younger, wrote letters or drew pictures for the Clintons. Organizer Bobbi Blok of the Washington Child Development Council said, 'I agree with the first lady about this being a village. D.C. is a village and we need federal intervention.'

Hillary Rodham Clinton will travel to England, Ireland and Northern Ireland from Oct. 30 to Nov. 2, the White House announced Wednesday.

Almost two years after President Clinton's trip to the region, Mrs. Clinton will focus her attention on roles for women and youth in democracy and the peace process.

In Dublin, she will attend an official Irish government function at Dublin Castle.

Mrs. Clinton will deliver the first Joyce McCartan Memorial Lecture at the University of Ulster in Belfast. During her trip with the president two years ago, Mrs. Clinton met McCartan at the center McCartan established to help unite Catholic and Protestant women. McCartan died last year, and the University of Ulster established a lecture series devoted to women's leadership in her name.

Mrs. Clinton also will speak at a gathering of Catholic and Protestant children.

In London, the first lady will participate in a seminar led by Prime Minister Tony Blair.

Mrs. Clinton intensified her travel schedule after her daughter, Chelsea,

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left for college in September. She visited Panama and Latin America this month and plans to visit the breakaway republics around Russia before the end of the year.

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HEADLINE: Hillary Clinton recrafts image without surrendering voice in policy

BYLINE: John M. Broder, New York Times News Service

DATELINE: WASHINGTON

BODY:

WASHINGTON - Sitting Thursday in the White House Map Room, Hillary Rodham Clinton opened a thick black briefing book and dived into what she called "a frontier issue:" child-care policy.

This is the "reborn" Hillary Clinton, famously turning 50 on Sunday, a policy diva in a baby-blue tailored suit and a frosted-blond pageboy. She is very much the same Hillary Clinton who has been the object of public affection, fascination and fury over the past five years: enigmatic, clever, frustrating and remarkably composed.

But her return to the spotlight marks a carefully plotted repositioning, after a period of low visibility that began with the unprecedented appearance of a first lady before a federal criminal grand jury.

The White House years have left her a bit chastened, perhaps, and her tactics have changed: She will no longer direct a gigantic policy-making enterprise such as the failed health care task force of the first term. But her starring role in the child-care conference last week demonstrated that she will continue to be a central policy voice in the Clinton administration.

It is no coincidence that the child-care symposium came the same week as Mrs. Clinton's birthday, which is being treated as an unofficial coming-out party for the second-term first lady.

And it is no accident that the birthday is being celebrated with a policy-making forum. This was how Mrs. Clinton wanted it, despite her friends' efforts to mark the occasion with a nostalgic trip down Hillary Lane. Friends and staff members have been presenting her a gift a day for the 50 days leading to her birthday. More than a hundred pals are preparing a commemorative book of letters and reminiscences that will be presented to her Sunday.

Monday, the city of Chicago will put on a day and night of festivities that will include visits to many of her childhood haunts, an occasion one friend

described as "all the stations of the cross." And Tuesday, she does Oprah.

Although reaching the half-century mark is a traumatic passage for many people, Mrs. Clinton is little given to introspection or self-doubt, her friends say. She is obsessed not with her identity, but with her calling. Her mission, as she sees it, is to advance the status of the world's women and the fortunes of her husband.

"This is a person, as long as I've known her, that has this strong sense of responsibility, a very moral sense that you should do whatever you can do," said Ann Lewis, a longtime friend of Mrs. Clinton's and now the White House director of communications. "She has always felt that way and she thinks of that as her role in the White House, too."

Global stage

Mrs. Clinton is struck by how little time she has remaining on the global stage as first lady and has begun to think about how she can carry on her good works after leaving the White House 39 months from now, said close friends who have spoken with her recently.

Her thoughts have turned to the best platform from which to address her lifelong concerns, whether a political office, a foundation or a university chair, friends say. But she is also consumed by such mundane matters as finding and furnishing a home, after having spent almost all of her married life in public housing.

"The really fun thing about thinking about her future is that nobody knows," said Mary Steenburgen, an actress and longtime Arkansas friend of the Clintons'. "This is a time when both of them have literally the world open to them at a relatively young age.

It's exciting to them, and scary, too."

For now, however, Mrs. Clinton seems energized by her husband's re-election, freed for now of the crippling scrutiny that preoccupied her during much of the first term and liberated by her daughter's departure for college. Mrs. Clinton has assumed again an ambitious and visible role in promoting her husband's agenda and her own.

She is enjoying record approval ratings and hopes to translate her current public esteem into concrete accomplishments across a canvas of policy interests, from improving the state of the nation's child care to fostering women-run business ventures around the world.

In just the past 10 days, Mrs. Clinton has given a major speech on domestic violence and family planning in Argentina, appeared in a public service television spot urging women to get mammograms, presided over the child-care conference and unveiled a painting by Georgia O'Keeffe that will hang at the White House.

Later this month she will travel to England and Ireland; November will take her for 10 days to Siberia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.

Triumphant return

Her busy schedule and narrowed agenda represent a public reanimation of Mrs. Clinton. They come after 18 months of near-invisibility that began at one of the lowest points of the first Clinton term - her appearance before a federal criminal grand jury in January 1996, when she strode into a federal courthouse in a military-style greatcoat to answer questions about the mysterious loss and rediscovery of her law firm billing records.

Since then, Mrs. Clinton's tight-knit circle of aides has painstakingly plotted her return to the spotlight.

"This has been a disciplined and focused comeback, the result of a series of very careful choices," said a senior White House aide who spoke on the condition of anonymity. "Instead of doing 50 things, she's chosen a few high-profile projects and foreign trips with children and women's issues as the central theme. They have picked their spots carefully. And it's worked. They have done a really good job of repositioning her."

This official said the public persona of the second-term Mrs. Clinton is very different from that of the first. "No longer is she the co-president and the co-vice president of 1993," this official said. "But she's not Barbara Bush, tea and cookies, either."

Mrs. Clinton has traveled widely in her years in the post-health care wilderness, visiting Africa, China, the Indian subcontinent and Latin America. On all her trips, she concentrates on promoting the health, welfare and economic advancement of women and children.

She took on the Chinese Communist government in Beijing over child labor and women's rights and the Roman Catholic Church in Argentina over birth control and violence against women.

She is more outspoken, it seems, abroad than at home. But the rapturous reception she has received around the globe appears to have emboldened her to take a more visible role at home.

"She has taken more interest in international policy since Beijing, the agenda of educating girls, small-business loans for women," Ms. Lewis said. "She will be doing more foreign travel. She can really make a difference when she goes into a country; she puts those issues higher on the agenda."

Although Mrs. Clinton has been subjected to some ridicule over her advocacy of a "politics of meaning" and her consultation with personal-growth gurus, she continues to believe that public and private life must be grounded in spiritual principles. She has broadened her thinking to embrace the concept of a "civil society" based on shared faith and mutual respect.

The Czech poet and president, Vaclav Havel, has been an inspiration and an adviser for that concept, Mrs. Clinton's associates say, and his influence can begin to be seen in her speeches. Mrs. Clinton and a small circle of aides are beginning to plan a yearlong global celebration of the arrival of the millennium, one that will center on more closely knitting together the human family.

THE DALLAS MORNING NEWS, October 26, 1997

"We cannot leave the raising of our children, the inculcating of values to the mass media and the consumer culture," Mrs. Clinton said in a recent speech in Buenos Aires. "We have to do a better job through our churches, our families, our civic associations. We have to build up civil society to reach out to all young people to help them understand why so many of you have fought so long and so hard for the values, the rights and the privileges that now in my country can be too easily taken for granted."

GRAPHIC: PHOTO(S): (Associated Press) Hillary Rodham Clinton, who turns 50 Sunday, is not given to introspection or self-doubt, friends say.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

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The Associated Press

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April 15, 1997, Tuesday, PM cycle

SECTION: Business News

LENGTH: 275 words

HEADLINE: First lady says government-required maternity leave not feasible

DATELINE: WASHINGTON

BODY:

Hillary Rodham Clinton says she likes the idea of government-required maternity leave for employees of private companies, but acknowledges it is not politically or economically feasible.

The first lady met with reporters Monday in the White House Map Room to preview Thursday's presidential conference on early childhood development designed to educate parents and others about the importance of intimacy with newborns.

Singing to them, reading to them, playing with them and talking to them are scientifically proven ways to increase the development of children's brains, she said.

Mrs. Clinton said parents who realize the importance of nurturing in the first three years "will be more likely to demand the kind of policy changes" needed to improve the lives of children.

Asked why she does not advocate a European-style paid maternity leave requirement, Mrs. Clinton said, "I think it's because people believe that in our current political climate ... that it's not realistic." She said it took eight years to pass family medical leave legislation.

"I think that it was a huge step forward for our country to adopt family leave legislation at all," the first lady said. "And what I'm hoping is that over time more and more enlightened business and political leaders will understand how it is in our long-term ... interests to support family leave and eventually paid family leave for as many workers as economically feasible."

Saying she was speaking personally - and not for the administration - Mrs. Clinton said of maternity leave: "Of course, I'd be for it if it were feasible - if it were economically and politically feasible."

The Associated Press, April 15, 1997

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

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March 12, 1997 11:24 Eastern Time

SECTION: NATIONAL DESK

LENGTH: 2903 words

HEADLINE: Remarks by Hillary Clinton and Secretary Riley on Education Part 1 of 7)

DATELINE: WASHINGTON, March 12

BODY:

Following is a transcript of remarks by Hil lary Clinton and Education Secretary Richard Riley in a roundtable discussion on education (Part 1 of 7):

The Map Room

4:25 P.M. EST

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you all very much. Some of you --I guess none of you, maybe -- were at the last of these briefings that we did on microcredit about, I guess a little over a month ago. And I found it very helpful, and the reporters who were part of it also told me then and later that they found it helpful, too. So it's something that we want to continue doing on issues that are of importance, and ones in which I'm involved in some way or another.

And today we're going to talk about education, which those of you who cover the President regularly know is one of his primary concerns for this second term. But it's really a concern that goes back to his time as governor. And I know Ron -- I don't think anybody else ever covered the President when he was g overnor -- knows it's been something that I've been involved in and worked on even back then, with Dick Riley, when he was a governor in South Carolina.

And what I'd hoped we'd do is to have a chance to talk with you. We've got Mi ke Smith, from the Department; Mike Cohen from the White House staff -- because sometimes those of you who cover the White House generally don't get a chance to really talk with the people who are helping to not only make the policy, but answer the questions about it. Because this is going to be a major effort and it's a very challenging one to try to follow up on the President's call for action for American education. And there are a number of issues, and we can talk about any of those. And as I'm sure Marsha told you, we can talk about other things as well. But I hope that we will be able to talk to a great extent about any questions or concerns you've got about what the President's proposing, how people are responding to it, what it means, will it work, what the point of it all is.

And I wanted to start by saying that we see this whole education agenda as a continuum of actions and concerns that the President's policy is attempting to

address. It really starts with the very beginning of a child's life, which is why you've heard the President -- and those of you might have covered me -- talking a lot in the last several months about the first three years of life and the importance of preparing a child to be able to compete academically.

And we're going to be having a conference on early childhood development and learning to look at what the new research on the brain tells us about our youngest children in about a month or so from now -- the date will be announced, I hope, on Wednesday, so we can get it locked down. But it's going to be a look at what the latest neuroscientific research has really opened up to us a s a better understanding of what happens to a brain in those first days, weeks, months of life -- and then what does that mean for parents.

You know, some people are already concerned that they haven't done enough to raise their children's serotonin level or to create a lot of synapses in the brain. And this is not supposed to be a discussion about research that makes parents feel inadequate but, instead, to make it clear that good parenting without knowing about serotonin levels has always done what works. If you read to your child, if you talk with your child, if you -- now we know -- play music for your child, you are doing what is necessary to feed that child's brain.

It used to be, perhaps, a little softer. And for those of us who have talked about early childhood for more than 25 years, I sometimes felt that I didn't get maybe a lot of people's awareness raised as high as I would like, because the people who worry about these issues are very often the ones that don't need to worry about them. And for many other people whom we would like to help with their parenting, this information never gets to them. So talking about the brain, we think, gives us a tremendous opportunity to reach people who have not been reached before and to, perhaps, put into scientific terms what most of us have tried to do just because we thought it would be a nice thing to do and might help our children .

Then we're going to talk about what all sectors of society can do to enhance early development and support families. It won't be any surprise to you that I think it takes a village. And I think that when we talk about what we should do to help parents -- particularly young parents, single parents, parents in stressful situations -- to get the support, the example that they may need to find the time to read 20 minutes to their child, that there's a role for a lot of people to play in putting into effect this new research which is very exciting.

But that's how we really think of where we begin with the call for action, because if we do a better job in helping parents talk with, relate to, stimulate their children positively, then everything else that we're going to be doing will have a much better chance of succeeding. We're going to be focusing on the pre-school years. We're going to be trying to determine how we can do a better job of reaching child care providers, Head Start programs, others who care for children with this information, as well; and to try to help them, too, understand what their opportunities are when they do care for children.

And then we see all the way through this call to action what happens once a child enters school, how to keep the partnership with the family going, and then what does a school have to do and how do we begin to define what it is that we

expect from our education system.

If you have followed education -- I know there are some in here today who are very involved in reporting on education -- you know that there has been a movement for a number of years to try to set rigorous national standards, which is what the President has called for. And you'll hear in a minute that that has been proceeding, that practically all the states are in the process of setting standards. And that is exactly what the President foresees.

But in order to help bring some focus to the setting of national standards, the President has called for national tests in 4th grade reading and 8th grade math, to make sure our children are able to master the basics. And this is what he has been talking about in legislatures, like Maryland and Michigan, and it really fits in with America Reads, it fits in with the technology initiative, it fits in with teacher training -- all of which are part of this overall call for action.

I'd like to ask the Secretary to speak because, as I said, I guess I first worked with then-Governor Riley, I don't remember, 15 years ago, a long time ago, when we were all working on education reform in our states, the southern states particularly where the need was so demonstrably great. And nobody has been at this longer, worked harder at or has actually more to show than this Secretary in terms of what has been done for the last four years.

SECRETARY RILEY: Thank you very much. And I appreciate the chance to be with you and Dr. Marshall Smith; my acting deputy, Mike Smith, is here also.

When I think back to 1983, when The Nation At Risk first came out, I was in the middle of school reform in South Carolina. The Education Improvement Act we called it, which was very controversial and it was said by the Rand Corporation to be the most comprehensive of any of the states --

it was in here, it was big. It involved a lot of controversial things like taxes or whatever. Our state was a very low support system for education. And we were in the middle of this important fight and I was going all out with it. The people were for it; the legislature wasn't. And the people and I were trying to get the legislature to support this major education reform.

And about that time The Nation At Risk came out. Ted Bell was here, as you recall. And I can't tell you how much it helped in South Carolina to have a national thrust of something that was important to the nation. It just caught on with our state reform. It gave us a tremendous impetus forward and it was right exciting to see that happen.

Then as we followed a lot of reform then in the '80s, a lot of governors were very much involved in a lot of ways -- a lot of them started out of the south. And then in, of course, '89, when we had all the governors come together -- Bill Clinton was one of the leaders with George Bush -- and came out for the goals and the standards discussions, which were serious. So we come on in to where we are then with Goals 2000 in 1994 and School-to-Work and a lot of the things that have happened.

When I first came here and the Department of Education was considered to be on the "hit list" -- somebody said the other day now we've gotten on the "hot

list." So we've gone from the

"hit list" to the "hot list." But when we were looking at things in 1994, we were so excited to see the framework being made for national support of the states in terms of developing a national standards movement that was really meaningful. And now we see 48 states now that have content standards -- some are stronger than others, but see that kind of energy occurring. Getting standards down into the classroom is very difficult, and that's the process that is taking place now.

And then the testing that the President has proposed really puts a focus on it that we think is going to be extremely important. I've been all over the country, talked to parents and educators and whatever -- leaders -- and it is to me seen as a very important focus for us to -- in those two basic skills, 4th grade reading and 8th grade math, with algebra and some geometry.

I was just up in New York this morning, and to show you how that's moving, this was a look at Central Park East Secondary School, a little small high school that has a well-known reputation. But we're looking at the school-to-work kind of approach, preparing young people for careers and college -- all young people, to have them thinking college. This school, a very disadvantaged generally student body, and 97.5 percent of the students finish high school and they would be entitled to a HOPE Scholarship under the President's proposal. Ninety

percent go to college. Not too many years ago it was under 50 percent in that area.

So what we're doing is taking that school and four others in four other urban areas and showing what works and how it works well. And we've gotten some of the top educators in the country involved in that process -- we announced it this morning in New York -- really getting standards out there where they're meaningful to all students and all families and all parents. And it's not just something that we talk about in educational circles, to get the engaging work down in the classrooms where young people are learning in depth and what matters.

Now, if you look at what we then need in this country to do the job in education that the American people are absolutely into -- and I think all of you that have polls in your papers or networks or whatever know that -- is leadership. That's what we need. We need to reach parents. We need to reach students and teachers and others -- leaders, community leaders in this movement for high standards. And the things are in place. The states are getting the standards in there on down to the classroom. So leadership I think is what we need, and I am very honored to be a part of this team.

I would close my little remark by saying Richard Elmore -- who many of you perhaps know as a education

research person at Harvard, very well respected and written a number of books -- and he said the other day of a goals panel meeting that he traveled all around the country, been in a lot of major urban areas and in every urban area -- major urban area in this country, he said, you can find three of the very best schools in the world, and you can find three of the very worst. Now, that says

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to me that there is a best way of doing it, like Central Park East, and you can develop that kind of motivation, that kind of a spirit of the belief in education. That can be done and we're going to show it. And it's really from here on out, I think, it's very important just to stimulate parents and grandparents and others to believe in their children and believe in education and that's a big part of what we're doing.

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March 12, 1997 11:29 Eastern Time

SECTION: NATIONAL

LENGTH: 2863 words

HEADLINE: Remarks by Hillary Clinton and Secretary Riley on Education Part 2 of 7)

DATELINE: WASHINGTON, March 12

BODY:

Following is a transcript of remarks by Hillary Clinton and Education Secretary Richard Riley in a roundtable discussion on education (Part 2 of 7):

MRS. CLINTON: I also want to be sure that you understand how the President sees this and how the Secretary is planning it, because he often -- the President often says we want national, not federal standards. And that's really what he means; that there are, as the Secretary said, about 48 states that are working, and most of them very effectively, on creating standards.

But what we need in order for those states and the parents who live in those states and the kids who go to those schools and the teachers who teach in them to know whether or not the standards that are being implemented are really going to produce the results that we all want for our children is some form of measurement. And that's where the test comes in. And Mike Smith has been involved in education for a very long time and is really on the front line working on determining what tests to be used, how the tests will be used. And I wanted him to talk a little bit about what it is we're going to do, what these tests are, because I think that's where a lot of the questions as we proceed will come.

MR. SMITH: Thank you. Let me motivate this a little bit. Last week, Mr. Engler came out for the tests. And on Saturday night, I guess, Mr. Lott came out against the tests. So there has been some disagreement in the Republican Party.

The Secretary mentioned that we were now at the point where about 48 states had standards, and a number of those states have assessments that measure those standards and things. In your packet, there is a chart which compares the National Assessment of Educational Progress standards with state standards. And what you see in that chart is that an awful lot of students pass state standards but do not pass National Assessment of Educational Progress standards. That happens in southern states; it also happens in states like Wisconsin. And what this is indicating is that while the standards movement is really moving well -- that is, lots of states are adopting standards; lots of states are moving with

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assessments; they're beginning to even train teachers to be able to teach to those standards so that kids can get rewarded for what they're taught -- although they're doing well, they're not setting very rigorous standards in many instances.

And they're also running into a little bit of a problem occasionally at the state level. In a way, we've hit a plateau in the standards movement. It's the plateau of implementation. It's a lot easier to put standards in place and assessments in place. It's a lot harder to bring it down to the classroom, as the Secretary said. And we're hitting the point where the states are not, in many cases, adopting really rigorous standards. So we have two problems.

The President thought about it; the Secretary has thought a lot about this problem -- that is, the problem of not having the states set high standards and of the plateau itself, thought about a bunch of different strategies to try to overcome the problem, and settled on the strategy of having two national tests.

Now, it's kind of an odd thing to choose in some ways, but really these tests are seen as a wake-up call. It's putting high octane gasoline into the engine of the reform in some sense. The two tests were very carefully chosen. A 4th-grade test based on the National Assessment of Educational Progress, and the 4th-grade test is in reading. And if there is one time in reading, one time in a child's life when a test in reading is absolutely critical, it's in 4th grade, because children that don't do well in reading in 4th grade end up not doing well throughout high school, not going on to college. It's the best predictor of not graduating from high school.

And the reason is that in the United States most schools stop teaching reading at 4th grade, in the middle of 4th grade and beyond. Students are expected to read for meaning, read for understanding. They're expected to read textbooks in science and in English literature and in social studies and history to get understanding from them. And if they can't read independently, they're lost. They're lost for all those other subjects. They're also lost for math, because at that point they're beginning to get word problems in math. So reading at 4th grade is an absolutely critical time. And if we don't have all of our children reading well by the 4th grade, we as a country suffer.

Right now, on the National Assessment of Educational Progress, there are three levels of proficiency: basic level; proficient level, which is the level we'd like everybody to get to at some point; and an advanced level. Even at the basic level, 40 percent of our students don't succeed to that level. That's a real tragedy, and those students need to be helped.

That's, in effect, what America Reads is all about. It's real attempt to help those students reach at least a basic level. And there is also an attempt to get other kids up beyond the basic level to proficient and so on. But that's why we chose the test, 4th-grade reading, because it has this tremendous importance to the nation and because it's a basic skill and because it's a proficiency that everybody believes in. I mean, it's not controversial, like evolution or like teaching about the Civil War and reasons for it and so on. It's completely noncontroversial.

The same thing is true about 8th-grade mathematics. In 8th-grade mathematics, if you haven't gotten decent mathematics by 8th grade, you're not

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going to get the opportunity to go and take college courses in high school. If all you've had is basically arithmetic up through 8th grade, you're going to end up in remedial courses in high school, maybe a pre-algebra by the time you hit your sophomore year or so, but you're never really going to have the chance to go into those kinds of courses where the kids are going to go on, and know that they're going to go on to college.

Now, the United States received a wake-up call in mathematics about three months ago or four months ago, when the Third International Math and Science Study came out. And what that study showed was that in science we did above average internationally. This is a study of 41 nations, I believe. In science we did above average. In mathematics we did well below average, as an entire country. Statistically we were ahead of almost no country that we would consider advanced. They were all developing nations that we were ahead of. I believe we were ahead of 10 or 12 countries, something like that. So it's really pretty discouraging to take a look at a set of scores like that.

But what was encouraging about the study was that it gave some reasons why we didn't

score as well as many of our competitors. And these reasons are not -- this is not rocket science, folks. These reasons are pretty straightforward. What it says is that we don't do as well -- is, one, we don't teach the content that others learn in schools. We don't get the algebra and geometry and the more complicated math problems. We just -- are kids just aren't taught them. It's very, very simple. They just aren't taught them.

And second, our teachers teach differently than teachers in other countries. Teachers in other countries spend much more time on problems, much more time interacting with their students about the nature of the problems and about how to go about solving the problems. Teachers in the United States spend much more time showing you how to solve the problem, not inducing you to solve it yourself, not inducing you to get actively involved, not inducing you to think hard about how to solve that problem and how to solve problems like it in the future. So our teachers teach differently and our teachers give different content.

Now, that's the second reason -- that's a second reason for doing algebra or doing mathematics in 8th grade. The first reason was that it is a tipping point; it's a gateway into high school, into good high school math. The second reason is that we know what to do about this.

And the third reason is that we also have good tests in 8th grade mathematics. We have the National Assessment of Educational Progress test, and we have this Third International Math and Science Study.

So what we chose then were two basic skill areas, one in 4th-grade reading and one in 8th-grade math, both noncontroversial. The nation believes that students should be able to achieve to high proficient levels in each of those grades in those two subjects. And we were able to adopt tests based on existing good assessments. Now, the existing assessments are given out to samples. They're not given out to individual students. So we have to create some new tests. We have to create a new test in reading for individual students and a new test in math for individual students. And we'll do that over the next two

years. These tests will be ready in 1999. They will be tests that are then in effect licensed to states and to private test developers so they can put in their test batteries. This is not a brand new test that's going to added on to schools, in effect. It will be introduced in the context of the assessments that are already given.

The tests themselves will give students an idea -- students and their parents and their teachers and so on -- an idea about how they measure up nationally. Did they reach the basic level? Did they reach the proficient level? Did they reach the advanced level in both of them? And in 8th- grade math, how do they compare internationally. Did they at least reach the international mean or median? Did they reach higher than that?

Information from those tests will not be gathered by the federal government. We ask that that information be used at the state and local level, at the classroom level, be given to parents along with a lot of explanation about the nature of test itself and what students should be expected to learn.

After those tests are given in the spring of 1999, they will be released on the Internet and made available to everybody --

MRS. CLINTON: The problems.

MR. SMITH: The problems themselves, right. To home schoolers, for example, or to anybody else who wants to give these test or study the tests. In the interim, between now and 1999, the Department of Education, as the President announced yesterday, consortia of different agencies in the government, all of us will enlist the help of nongovernmental organizations outside of all the educational groups of the states and local governments and education, to try to get our nation ready for those kids to take the test in 1999.

So we will push very, very hard to get everybody reading independently by 4th grade and very, very hard to get everybody up to snuff in mathematics by 8th grade. So these tests aren't there just to embarrass people. They aren't there just to get people to give people scores. They're there to really give a call to action, in effect, for the nation -- a call to action to get our students to a point where, one, every child can read independently, and, two, we can be competitive in mathematics as a nation.

There's lots of detail on this that you may or may not want to hear, so I think I'll just stop here.

Q Should they be given the tests if they're not even getting the training or the instruction?

MR. SMITH: I think that's a very good question. That's exactly the right question. If they're not getting the instruction, then they aren't going to do well on the test. Between now and 1999, we want to encourage everybody to give them the instruction. We're going to make available all the information about the tests. We're going to make it available to everybody out there what are good methods to teach. And we still don't expect lots of kids to do very well. It will take five years or maybe even 10 years to get them to do as well as we'd like them to do. But if we don't do this now, if we don't do it now, we'll never break into this cycle.

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We tolerate a weak curriculum for poor kids and a strong curriculum for the well-to-do. And as a nation, we can't continue to tolerate doing that. And the curriculum for well-to-do kids isn't even very strong in mathematics. So we're tolerating weak curriculum in mathematics for everybody and a very weak curriculum in mathematics for our kids in our inner cities.

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SECTION: NATIONAL DESK

LENGTH: 1981 words

HEADLINE: Remarks by Hillary Clinton and Secretary Riley on Education Part 3 of 7)

DATELINE: WASHINGTON, March 12

BODY:

Following is a transcript of remarks by Hillary Clinton and Education Secretary Richard Riley in a roundtable discussion on education (Part 3 of 7):

Q Have they solved the discipline problem where they can actually get down to teaching again in these schools?

MRS. CLINTON: That's another really good question, Helen. I think a lot of districts, at least as I've traveled around and talked to principals and school board members, are beginning to take back discipline from this false idea that grew up sometime in the last 20 or so years that legally it was very difficult for a teacher in a classroom to discipline anybody. And many school boards and administrations didn't stand behind teachers. And so there were and are a lot of classrooms that are disruptive and difficult to teach in.

But my sense is -- and Mike and the Secretary are out there all the time -- is that there is a growing willingness on the part of school districts to take back their authority and to be willing to set much tougher rules, remove disruptive kids from classrooms, and try to create an orderly learning environment which, if you don't have that, a lot of what Mike is talking about that needs to be taught can be taught.

Q Will there be a clearinghouse where we'll be able to call and find out how people have scored across the nation, or are we going to have to call each state individually? You know, you talk about -- you were trying to be careful to get heavy-handed with the federal role, but are we going to be able to find out on a nationwide basis how people scored?

MR. SMITH: Well, there are two ways to find out on a nationwide basis. One would be aggregate all the scores for the individual level. The test is voluntary. We don't expect every community to take this test. We expect lots of states to take it. We hope every community in every state takes it. We expect -- you know, there will be some holdouts, at least the first year. So one way would be aggregate the individual scores, and we don't intend to do that now. So it would put you to work a little bit; you'd have to call a bunch of

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different places. The second way, though, is that there will be -- continue to be this sample basis, national assessment, which will give a national score but it will be based on a sample.

SECRETARY RILEY: The NAEP test will still be going on and they are equated. The NAEP test, some that might be of help to you, is done on a sample basis. As some of you I'm sure know, you have a country or a state or a city or whatever and get a NAEP test, but you -- it would be a sampling -- the person that takes the test -- if you were taking math in NAEP in 8th grade, you might just do the multiplication part and then you would do the division and somebody else would do another part. If you took the whole test it would take like seven hours.

So, that -- so, this is different. So, now we've got to equate with the NAEP baseline and individual test, so you would take all subjects -- if you see what I mean -- and all students would take all subjects. Every child in the 4th grade and every child in the 8th grade would be offered these tests.

Q So you don't really intend to collect all the results -- is that -- nationwide? Is that right?

MR. SMITH: That's right.

Q You may have a sample for us to give us an idea, but you won't have --

MR. SMITH: We'll have a sample for you. We also expect and we'll -- we will get out models for local districts to report the results of schools, report the results of their districts. We expect states to accumulate their results to take a look across the states at schools and at the districts. So, I think we're going to find that willy-nilly will have across the country scores kind of bubbling in.

But these will -- these tests will given at the same time that tests are now given. And if you think back to your school time, that could be at any time during the spring -- starting April up through the middle of May or so. So, the tests will be given at a number of different times. It's not all going to be given at once. Scores will come back sometime in the middle of May, and then the cities, states will begin to report them out to the public. And as they begin to report out, we'll accumulate -- of course -- after they're reported out. But we're not going to go in and take those measures ourselves. We're walking a little bit of a line here on the federal-state issue.

SECRETARY RILEY: But the important thing is that every parent -- every parent and every student will know how they stand on these two very basic -- in a transitionAL period in the whole nation.

Q -- districts where they've chosen to give these tests, and isn't one problem you're going to have here is that the districts that already have the problems -- have these inherent problems of either teachers not teaching right or not enough money in the district or the administrators not doing their job -- they're going to be the least likely teachers unions and least likely administrators to put their credibility in line and allow these tests to be given in their schools?

SECRETARY RILEY: Now, that will be more or less on a statewide basis.

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And as you know, the President's proposal is -- number one, is that we would develop the test. We would equate it with NAEP and TIMSS. That takes -- and also, we would have it administered free the first year. So, it would be zero cost to them. And we think there will be just a national --

Q What's the real purpose of the test? Is it to inform the teachers?

Q Given what happened in Milwaukee, will people want to take that test? Because you saw what happened in Milwaukee -- there were very few students who actually passed the test. And one thing we know about public education in this country is that the quality varies greatly. And will we -- are you concerned about this sort of academic stratification and we create this chasm between the haves and the have-nots?

MR. SMITH: We're completely concerned about that. And that's one of -- that's the major reason we're doing this.

SECRETARY RILEY: This will affect it positively.

MR. SMITH: Michigan just signed up for the test.

MRS. CLINTON: That means all the districts in Michigan. So that sort of solves the --

MR. SMITH: And Maryland has signed up, so, it's Baltimore. And so, in many cases, what you're going to have are states signing up. In the other cases -- I guarantee you're going to see New York come in at some point soon and New York City and L.A. and so on.

Mike, you might want to --

MR. COHEN: Well, you actually made several points I was going to make. But the states that we've been talking to were signing up to do this on a statewide basis, so that every kid in the state will take it. And one of the things that that will do, I think, is tell parents in urban areas -- the ones that you're concerned might not want to sign up for the test -- in ways that they have very difficult time of finding out now -- they will be able to find out how well their kids are doing compared to real standards that the kids going to be judged against once they leave schools. You know the phenomena of kids in any schools, but particularly in urban schools, getting all easy chair and being promoted and being told they're doing a really wonderful job only to discover that they're not doing very well in any external measure of quality.

This will be the first time that parents, particularly in urban areas, will have honest, accurate information about how well their kids are doing compared to the same kind of expectations that are set for students in surrounding suburban communities and for students all over the world. It ought

to give -- it ought to empower parents to call for and mobilize for education reforms in ways that have been more difficult for them to do now, which is exactly what you saw in Milwaukee once the shock of the low performance on the test began to take hold.

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HEADLINE: Remarks by Hillary Clinton and Secretary Riley on Education Part 4 of 7)

DATELINE: WASHINGTON, March 12

BODY:

Following is a transcript of remarks by Hillary Clinton and Education Secretary Richard Riley in a roundtable discussion on education (Part 4 of 7):

Q Can this work, Mrs. Clinton, unless states require testing in all their schools?

MRS. CLINTON: I'm sorry --

Q Will this work unless states -- can this work if states do not require testing in all their schools?

MRS. CLINTON: Ron, I think it can work initially for this first effort because what we're trying to do is to get enough states and enough districts to agree voluntarily to do that. I think we will have that. I mean, I can, sitting here right now, tell you exactly how many we'll have. But the response to the President's call has been very positive.

And I think there will be then a kind of public pressure on school districts and states for those that perhaps choose not to participate in the test in 1999, because as a taxpayer, as a parent of a child in a school -- if you start reading about this and you call us and you say, well, how are our kids doing. And they say, well, we're not going to take the test. Why not -- why aren't we going to take the test? Well, we just decided we're going to take a different test. Well, why don't we take the test that everybody is taking? I may be transferred next year to some other school district. How do I know whether that's a good school district?

So, I think there will be increasing awareness on the part of the public. As Mike was saying, what happened in Milwaukee, I think, is a positive example. I mean, the initial shock of it was disturbing to people. But the positive feedback then was, alright, what are we going to do about this?

So, I'm actually very optimistic that once we get the test fielded with enough people taking it in 1999 that that will create a momentum of its own. At least, that's what we believe will happen.

Q Mrs. Clinton, are there ways beyond these speeches to the state legislatures to try to bring Republicans on, to get them to join -- to participate in -- is the White House doing other outreach, too, not just to Democrats but to Republicans?

MRS. CLINTON: Yes. And again, Mike and the Secretary can fill you in on more details. But from the very beginning -- and I think the President said this most memorably in Maryland when he said that algebra and other courses are not partisan -- and

there's got to be a way to enlist all kinds of people. And I think that with Governor Engler signing on, I believe there will be some other announcements in the next couple of weeks of other Republican governors signing on -- I know there has been an intensive effort on the part of the White House and the Department of Education to work with members of Congress of both parties, and I think that we're very hopeful.

Now, are we going to be able to get everybody to agree? No, we're not. And, is there still going to be continuing questioning about what this means and how it's going to work? Absolutely, there will be. But I think, on balance, for having just announced it a month and a half ago, everybody is pleased at the way it's proceeding.

Dick, do you want to add anything about the partisan --

SECRETARY RILEY: Well, first of all, it's our position that education is not a partisan issue, and we don't teach children, as you've heard me say, as Democrats and Republicans, but as Americans. And the fact that since the President has really placed education as a first priority and see it rise to the top in terms of the people's interest, I think it's very clear that really what we are seeking is a movement, kind of a standards movement. And I think it's happening.

And I would invite you to look at any numbers out there of public interest or whatever -- people -- and I go to schools every day -- people are absolutely into this thing. They want their children to be able to read when they are should be able to read -- at the end of the 3rd graders. If they can't then, that means they're going to demand and we're going to be demanding with them that something be done to make sure in the 4th and 5th grade that that child then gets the resources put to him or her to learn how to read. The whole volunteer program is to have a mentor or a tutor be with that child, perhaps from kindergarten forward at the teacher's request. The teacher is the one that says who will have a mentor or not, working closely with the teacher. And then, all of the teachers are into raising standards, principals and everybody else.

I think you're seeing a very exciting thing take place that I call a movement. And I hope that's going to be true. And it will be the best thing that will happen to this country.

Q Mr. Secretary, if you will, though, your enthusiasm for this movement seems contradictory to Mr. Smith's assertion that you've hit a plateau and that the states are themselves underachievers in not setting rigorous standards. What leverage do you have to move the states to set higher standards, or is it just through this kind of sort of bully pulpit approach?

SECRETARY RILEY: That has a lot to do with it, Charles. And it is the bully pulpit because I think it's something that they're listening to the leaders on. And that's why I'm glad we're here talking about it today. I don't think we've reached some kind of a plateau at all. If you look at the --

Q I'm sorry, I could have sworn I heard the word plateau from your colleague. That's what I find --

MRS. CLINTON: I'll give Mike an equal chance to respond because I think I know what he said, but he maybe --

SECRETARY RILEY: In reading, we have been pretty level in reading for some time. In math, where we've had math standards out there -- and just think about standards, if you would -- standards is a definition of what a child should know and be able to do in a certain grade in a certain subject. And then you put all the resources into reaching that standard. And you're not all here, there and yonder. And that makes sense. And that's what everybody's doing. In math, we've had the standards out there since the late '80s. In math, the recent NAEP test -- '90, '92 and '96 shows a constant uplift in 4th, 8th and 12th grade.

Now, reading, we haven't done as good a job, but internationally we stand pretty well reading. We're one of the top countries in reading, but our competitive problem is math and science in other countries. But you're right about reading being rather leveled off, and that's why we want this impetus on reading. And a lot of it is afternoons and evenings, and a lot of it is kids -- to some of you television people that are watching television instead of reading -- (laughter) -- and we're trying then to get more of an interest in reading early.

MRS. CLINTON: Mike, do you want to -- I want Mike to just --

SECRETARY RILEY: Defend yourself. (Laughter.)

MR. SMITH: If you take a look at -- let me just borrow this for just a second -- at this one chart, which is, I think, a telling chart in here, state NAEP scores for 4th grade reading compared to state's own assessments. And if you've looked at that, what you'll see is that in Connecticut against NAEP 38 percent scored proficient, in their own state assessment 48; Wisconsin 35 percent scored proficient, 88 in their own assessment; and so on.

That's the plateau I'm talking about. That is -- we have a movement that we hope -- we hoped -- and we still hope will result in high challenging standards for all kids. And if in fact our standards are low, that movement's stalled a little bit. Remember, it's only six years old. But if we let it stay with low standards, it will never succeed. We've got to jar it out of the low standards part of it. And that's what I meant.

MRS. CLINTON: It's like the end of Garrison Keillor, when he does his Lake Wobegone thing, he says, well all the children are above average. A lot of the states that Mike's talking about -- the standards that have been set did make movement. I mean, I know that for a fact from Arkansas, where I know where we started in 1993 and I know where we are now.

But there's always a tendency to kind of rest on your laurels a little bit -- say, oh look how much better we're doing -- when, in fact, if you look at a

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broad-based assessment, like what we're going to be trying to do with this set of tests in 1999, everybody can do better.

And, Mike, you had your -- you wanted to add something to that?

MR. COHEN: Yes, I wanted to go back to an earlier question also about the bipartisanship and what we're doing to reach out to Republicans because I think that's very important

(End of side one of tape.)

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HEADLINE: Remarks by Hillary Clinton and Secretary Riley on Education Part 5 of 7)

DATELINE: WASHINGTON, March 12

BODY:

Following is a transcript of remarks by Hillary Clinton and Education Secretary Richard Riley in a roundtable discussion on education (Part 5 of 7):

(Begin side two of tape; in progress)

-- and one of the nice things is that actually, and one of the nice things is that actually, a number of the Republicans are reaching out to each other on our behalf in this. Just about a week and a half ago, there was an op-ed piece in The Washington Post by two former Assistant Secretaries of Education -- one, Diane Rabich (phonetic) from the Bush administration who led the effort for that administration to promote standards and Checker Finn (phonetic), who was an Assistant Secretary in the Reagan administration who did the same thing there. The two of them wrote an op-ed piece, I think we may have a copy of it here someplace if you're interested, that basically says the President's right on this issue. We do need national standards, we need them in these subjects, kids ought to be find out how well the students are doing, and I think we're going to see even more of that kind of effort where people who you don't normally associate with this administration are signing on to this effort.

The Business Roundtable -- thank you, I'll pass this around -- the Business Roundtable, for instance, the day after The State of the Union addressed -- endorsed the testing proposal and mostly the other business groups have been very positively responding to it as well. So I think people who are not, again, part of what you would normally associate with the Clinton administration are nonetheless seeing this is the kind of effort that can bring people together around what's important in education. I think we will see them continue to build support for it.

Q So where is Chelsea going to college? (Laughter.)

MRS. CLINTON: Somewhere with high standards. (Laughter.) I wanted to get back to your question about stratification, and it was really Helen's question as well. Nobody looks forward to the results of this test confirming what many of us assume by other evidence and anecdotally will be the case, which is large numbers of children, principally in disadvantaged situations, are not going to do well on this test; there is, I don't think, any way to get around that.

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But that is the case right now. They're not doing well in any fair assessment of what they are learning and what they're able to at a level they're able to perform at when they leave school. And the real issue for us as we look at this is, what is the best way to try to help those children? How do we equip parents and schools and communities with the tools they need to demand and then to obtain better educational outcomes for these kids.

Well, the first thing, we believe, is you have to have honest, accurate information about what it is that they are learning right now, and that is a lot harder than it might seem, because there is not a willingness on the part of many people to trumpet their failures and their disappointments, and instead there is a tendency to say, well, what would you expect -- we have children from a certain socioeconomic background and you can't expect them to do very well. But we now know so much more than we knew in 1983, and even in 1989, about what works with such children.

As the Secretary said, we can go into any urban district and we can find, as he visited this morning, a school that takes the same kids from the same kind of neighborhoods where failure is the norm, and turns them into academic successes. The key is, why don't we replicate that more? Why don't we take the schools that work for these vulnerable children and make them the models? They are everywhere in our country, but for some reason that is often difficult to understand, they don't serve as models, and people don't line up at their door to find out what works, and in part because there's no sense of accountability out there in the entire educational system.

This is a first step to try to obtain that accountability. And then, if you look at the rest of the call for action, we know we have to do better teacher preparation and training. We think charter schools will be a way of helping. We think technology will be a way of helping. So we have a whole set of responses to what we think will be the unfortunate results of the tests for some people.

Q Let me follow up on that. How much -- you said you don't want the fact that it's a poor district to be an excuse for complacency or to explain away failure. How much of it, in your view, though, is explained by the resources that individual school districts have?

MRS. CLINTON: You know, that's a hard question, because I think -- I would rather answer it like this: I'd rather say all of it is probably explained by the resources available to a child from the moment that child is born until that child leaves school. Because I think if you only look at the school, you may miss some of the very important resources that have to take place in the family prior to the child going to school.

I've also -- and I think both the Secretary and Mike have seen where the magic of learning goes on and where the children are motivated and they do well. And I've seen other schools where they have a lot of computers and new equipment

and the teachers aren't trained to use it. So that you can find almost any set of circumstances in an American school, and I guess I would say that, yes,

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resources count, but when I think of resources I think about the motivation and training of teachers, not just the salary or the facilities. I think that's one of the reasons we're trying to look at this in a comprehensive way.

SECRETARY RILEY: Let me mention something I think would be interesting to you when

you're talking about disadvantaged people. Our biggest program by far, of course, is Title I, and that is a major help to state and local schools for disadvantaged kids.

When we came here four years ago, it was -- oh, Chapter I it was called then -- and it had a special watered down curriculum for disadvantaged kids, starting from kindergarten forward, went all the way through high school. It had a watered down set of assessment where a kid could go through school and virtually be practically learn very little and still get by, and one of the first things -- and the President and I talked about this a number of times is, we did away with that and we came out -- what has been the reauthorization, the new Title I -- it's the same standard for all children. And, yes, the test scores show a difference at first, but you will never, by being dishonest with them, you will never help them. Dishonesty can never be a good policy in education.

So the first thing we did is we urged, through Goals 2000 and everything else, to get standards up there, all the states, and then to do away with for poor children a watered-down curriculum and watered-down testing and making it tougher and harder, and it's the best thing in the world for those kids.

MRS. CLINTON: I just want to -- one quick example on that -- I've been in and out of schools a lot in the last couple of years, and just within the last couple of months I was in a school with kids who were poor, disadvantaged kids, however you want to describe them -- multiracial school, and the classroom was crackling with excitement. I mean, the kids were into hands-on learning, they were asking questions, they were talking with each other, and then a little while later I was in another school, a different district, same kind of socioeconomic and racial mix of kids, and they were sitting there in their seats copying sentences from a workbook.

Now, it broke my heart, because I walked around there and I looked at these bright young kids, laboriously copying what was in that workbook, and the teacher was very proud. This was the class they chose to show me. They could have taken me anywhere else. You know, it was so difficult, because here is a teacher who is devoted to these kids and the kids are trying hard, and yet the whole system in that school -- and I would I guess say in much of that district that the school was in -- just doesn't -- is not organized to prepare the kids with even the resources that it has -- better than they are doing. Because what I saw in the first school was not expensive. I mean, they were doing experiments with what floated and what didn't float and making lists about things. And these workbooks probably cost as much as what they were doing in the first class.

So part of what we have to do by using this testing information is to kind of open up the minds of people who are in the classroom already so they're more willing to change what they do and to use the resources they already have. And

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we think we can do that.

Q Mrs. Clinton, are you concerned that you might find more of those classrooms? I mean, the TIMSS studies said the teachers do not focus enough on problem-solving. And one of the reasons is that so many teachers teach to the test. They know that they face these standardized tests at the end of the year and they want to prepare the students for them, and so we've got rote learning in the classrooms. We might see many teachers do this as they try to prepare their students for this test in 1999.

MRS. CLINTON: Well, Mike is the expert on this, but I'll let you -- go ahead.

MR. SMITH: They will teach to the test, but they won't teach to the test questions, which is what they often do in the United States. That is, they give the same tests year after year after year, something like the Lake Wobegone effect, actually, that a man reported a few years ago. And one way that happens is that the -- in many, many districts they give exactly the same form of the test year after year after year. And after a while, the teachers know what's on the form. And, lo and behold, if the word "ambiguous" is on that reading test, magically it occurs in the classroom three or four days before your test.

So teaching to the test has two meanings. One is teaching specifically to the test. The other is teaching the kind of content that the test is going to cover. And we're going to be very clear about what the content is that the test is supposed to cover. We're going to give examples using not the federal government now, but using the International Reading Association and using other organizations of what are good books that kids could be reading at second grade, third grade, fourth grade, reading independently -- the kinds of inferences they're expected to make out of paragraphs and short stories and so on -- the kinds of sentences they're expected to be able to write, for example when they're answering a question that isn't just a multiple choice question. Many of these questions will be questions actually to expect them to actually produce some language.

Q And you're confident that that will lead to dynamic classroom teaching and hands-on learning?

MRS. CLINTON: We've seen it. We have seen it.

MR. SMITH: It's not the test alone that will do that, it's an example, it's giving examples of teaching strategies that in fact lead to good results from those tests, and that will do it.

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HEADLINE: Remarks by Hillary Clinton and Secretary Riley on Education Part 6 of 7)

DATELINE: WASHINGTON, March 12

BODY:

Following is a transcript of remarks by Hillary Clinton and Education Secretary Richard Riley in a roundtable discussion on education (Part 6 of 7):

Q How far along are you in the development of the tests now? You say it's going to be arranged through competitive contracts.

And the other thing I wondered was whether you could quantify so far your reaction to the tests -- you know, how many states are on board or whatever.

MR. SMITH: We're a month and a half into it, right -- this whole business announced -- we will be going out in the next 10 days on the Internet with what's called an RFP, which is a request for a proposal, which will attract comment for 10 days or so. We'll then have another 10 days to take advantage of those comments and change things, and then we'll put out the RFP. So within the next month and a half we'll have the RFP -- request for proposal on the street, we'll have it awarded by the summer, and we have a very detailed -- as you might imagine, this is a tight schedule -- we have a very detailed time line and right now we're a little bit ahead.

Q When you talk about awarding it by this summer, is there going to be like basically one group then that's going to come up to develop this test --

MR. SMITH: No, I think we'll probably have one group for one test and one group for another test, would be my guess. There will be a third group.

Q What kind of group are we talking about? Can you --

MR. SMITH: Well, it will be -- one obvious example is the Educational Testing Service, which now does the national assessment of educational progress. And I'm sure that they could be one of the winners of this. But they could have considerable competition as well.

SECRETARY RILEY: Well, we're building on the reputation of NAEP and TIMSS, which these are equated with and done the same way. So I mean, it's not like we're coming out of nowhere on this. We have a baseline, they're going to

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equate this test on the baseline, you'll be able to compare how you stand with how things were in the country five years ago, and so forth.

MR. SMITH: That's a very good point. Most tests take four or five years to develop. The reason they take four or five years to develop is you have to settle on the content that you want in the test first, and you have to settle on something called the performance standards. That is the levels that you want students to be able to achieve to.

We leapfrog those, because they're already in the National Assessment of Educational Progress. They have a content standard, basically, that we would base the test upon. And that, in fact, we'll use that content standard to provide us with ideas about information that we should be putting out there to teachers and to parents and so on about what kind of content to teach.

SECRETARY RILEY: It is very well respected. And that's why you see people like this saying this makes good sense.

Q The second question was could you quantify how many states are interested already or have indicated interest? Is D.C. --

MR. COHEN: So far two have publicly signed up, but I would say there are another eight to 10 that we have talked with in the last couple of weeks that have expressed a serious interest. Keep in mind, states don't adopt tests overnight. This is a serious decision for a state to make.

Q -- don't know what the test is yet.

MR. COHEN: They know what's on the test and they know a fair amount about what the specifications for the test are going to be.

Q Who has signed --

MR. COHEN: Michigan and Maryland. And I think you'll see --

Q Have you had any communication with them --

MR. COHEN: I have not talked to anyone in D.C.

Q Will there be any consequence for the test for either the school districts or students themselves, either encouraging the schools not to pass them on to the next grade, or is this just an assessment of how they --

MR. SMITH: Well, remember those decisions are all made at the local and state level. and that's not a cop-out, in the sense that this test will be like any other test in that sense. It will be in a test battery and -- a set of other tests. And if they use the other tests for purposes of that

sort, they might use this test. Now, this test will have to meet the same standards. There is something called psychometric standards and they're set by the American Psychological Association, and the National Council of Measurement in Education and so on, and they set out a set of standards. The test will have to meet all those standards.

Part of the standards have to do with what a test is used for, and so the test has to meet certain standards in order to be used for what's called a high stakes test -- a retention test or graduation test.

Q Mrs. Clinton, in Arkansas, when you decided something needed to be done

about the schools that you and your husband had some effect over, you worked to require that teachers be tested, you worked to require the school districts have certain standards that be met. I know it's apples and oranges and maybe you can explain why it is, but why didn't you require here that states perform these tests?

MRS. CLINTON: Because education is primarily a state and local responsibility in our country, and I think there are a lot of strengths to that. And when the President talked about national, not federal, standards, and voluntary testing, he was respecting that division of responsibility. So in Arkansas, which at the state level accredits schools, accredits teachers, there were certain ways of exercising that responsibility that could be connected with the outcome of the test. At the federal level that is not authority vested in the federal government and it's not authority that the President and the Secretary is seeking.

Q Are you afraid that with Mr. Lott's opposition that there may be some way Congress tries to block this, and if not Congress, individual state legislatures that may challenge decisions made by their governor or their state chairman of the Board of Education?

MRS. CLINTON: The Secretary has Mr. Lott's statement in front of him so --

SECRETARY RILEY: I don't see where he opposes testing as such. He made a broad statement to a group of conservatives -- now derail the President's plan to revitalize education standards. I mean, certainly someone could say, well, that testing was a part of that, but I don't see that as an attack on testing itself.

MRS. CLINTON: But I think part of the reason why I thought that we might want to talk about education standards is that I think there's a lot of misunderstanding about what this proposal is and what it would do. And I would hope that everyone would take the time to talk to the Secretary or Mike Smith about what it is we're trying to achieve and how it is not an attempt to micromanage what goes on in the classrooms of America, but instead, to set a national benchmark against which local districts can measure themselves.

And I think in this time of accountability in both the public and the private sector, and particularly in education, as more school districts and states learn that that is what this test is for, I think they will be more and more willing to say they want to be part of that. It will help them with their job.

Q How worried are you by the sort of extreme right -- it's not the Business Council that's going to provide the opposition to this, it's a group that you're familiar with and have spoken with on other occasions -- it's talk radio, it's cultural conservatives, it's the Christian right who this touches a nerve on them and, frankly, you touch a nerve on them -- or so I've heard. (Laughter.) How do you deal with that?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I think the President's speeches in Maryland and Michigan really did deal with that effectively. There will be opposition no matter what is done in education because it's such an important issue and people feel so personally about their children's education and about the future of

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education in the country. I don't think that the opposition should be troubling at all. I think that's healthy for people to raise questions and debate.

But what I'm hoping is that through speeches by the President and others who share his commitment to this effort, more and more Americans will understand what it is, so that if someone makes a charge against what the President is trying to do, they will be able to sort that out and say, well, that's not what he's trying to do. He's not going into a local school district and say here's what you must teach on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. He's saying here's what we think 4th graders ought to be able to do in reading, and here's what we think 8th graders ought to be able to do in math. It is up to you, local school districts, to think of the most effective way to move your students to be able to achieve at that level.

Q He raises a good point, because you have become identified with this initiative, you're traveling around the country, and groups for whom this is a lightening rod have also in the past made you a lightening rod. And I'm wondering, given that circumstance, both how you are received when you go out and why you would take this on, because of that -- of the opposition.

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I guess the first reason is because I've worked on it since 1983 when I chaired the Commission on Education Standards in Arkansas and we ran into some of the very same issues. And I think I have a good appreciation for the legitimate concerns people have. But there are those who for partisan or ideological reasons will not ever support any kind of national standard or national assessment. And I just respectfully think that they are wrong and that a commitment to national standards is the best way we know to help local districts benchmark their own practices and to come up with ways that will help all the children achieve at a higher level.

So it's something that I have a long history with, I am very committed to, and I think is the most important way that I know of that we can try to move every young person up the educational ladder.

But Dick was the Governor of South Carolina; he's well aware of the kind of opposition that is out there, but we just don't see it. It may burn up some radio talk show host's telephone lines, but that's not what we hear and see as we're traveling around talking to teachers and parents and students.

Is that your experience?

SECRETARY RILEY: I think you're exactly right. And the President, of course, is a former governor, I'm a former governor -- we are very respectful of the state's responsibility. Every state constitution requires free public education for all children in the state. That's a state responsibility. The federal role is very important in this country in this education era-information era, and certainly our role we think is very important.

The conservatives, if there's anything that they are clear about, is to emphasize the basics. That is in education terms, that is the clearest message -- one of the clear messages you get from strong conservative parents, is to emphasize the basics. That's what we're doing, and that's why this is, in my judgment, something that I think is going to be uniformly accepted and even demanded by conservative parents. They want to know how their children are doing on the basics. And as the President said, reading is reading, and math is

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math, and that is a clear demarcation of the very basic basics in education.

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March 12, 1997 11:41 Eastern Time

SECTION: NATIONAL DESK

LENGTH: 2917 words

HEADLINE: Remarks by Hillary Clinton and Secretary Riley on Education Part 7 of 7)

DATELINE: WASHINGTON, March 12

BODY:

Following is a transcript of remarks by Hillary Clinton and Education Secretary Richard Riley in a roundtable discussion on education (Part 7 of 7):

Q On a different subject, I think we'd be remiss if we didn't ask you about the campaign finance controversy that's going on. Specifically, do you think in perfect 20-20 hindsight that it would have been better if Maggie hadn't taken that check -- or rejected the check and said, hey, just bring that down the street to the DNC?

MRS. CLINTON: Oh, I think as the President said on Friday, in retrospect, I'm sure that she wishes that's what she had done. But many of you know Maggie and she's an honorable and courteous person, and what she did is legal and proper under the prevailing rules. But given the concern that it raised, I'm sure she wishes she had said, go mail it or go walk it over yourself.

Q Do you wish she had done that?

MRS. CLINTON: Oh, for her sake, certainly, yes.

Q Do you wonder, or have you wondered how it was that this fellow, Johnny Chung, came to sort of apparently camp out in your outer office, hoping that he would see you, chatting up the staff, there for reasons that were not apparently readily apparent to anyone there? What happened?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I think that my staff is a polite and courteous group, and certainly has over the last four years been very willing to be courteous to people who came into the White House or who had business they said in the White House or the Old Executive Office Building. And if you were there, I guess the only way I can explain it is that that's what they thought they were doing, is being courteous.

Q And may I just ask how it was that he came to be admitted so often?

MRS. CLINTON: I don't know that. I don't know anything about that. But it wasn't only people in my office who admitted him, as I'm sure you know; other people did as well. And I really don't know anything about why or under what

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circumstances.

Q Well, given the whole campaign and the Lincoln Bedroom and all of the things -- the revelations and may even be sort of deflecting from the issues you're trying to promote, it seems to be -- what would you do differently in retrospect? I mean, do you have any regrets? Did you talk to these people at midnight in the Lincoln Bedroom?

MRS. CLINTON: We certainly did, Helen. I mean, I think that -- I'd say a couple of things about that. First of all, anyone who knows my husband knows that he enjoys people, he counts thousands, if not hundreds of thousands of people among his friends. He likes spending time with people. When we arrived here at the White House, I think we were overwhelmed by the honor of living here and by the history that happened here, and we were excited to share it with a lot of people. And we did.

We invited friends of longstanding, people we wanted to get to know better, public officials that -- well, Secretary Riley spent the night here with his father. It was something that --

SECRETARY RILEY: A confession is in order, I think.

MRS. CLINTON: It was something that we really felt privileged about being able to share with people who felt the same regard and valued this house the way I think Americans do. We also invited hundreds of thousands of people to events here at the White House of all kinds. You've covered many of them. And so when I look at people asking questions about why did you have these people spending the night, it, to me, was a very natural part of who my husband is and who are friends are and who people that he wants to talk to are. And he would, oftentimes when he heard somebody was in town or might be on the way to Washington, say, gosh, I'd love to see him or her and talk to them, which he did with Dick Riley's father.

And during the day, because he worked so amazingly hard, there wasn't time. But if they'd stay up and stick it out, he could come and talk to them at 10:00 p.m. or 11:00 p.m. or 12:00 a.m. or 1:00 a. m. in the morning. And he did on countless occasions. These are people that he enjoyed being able to give tours to -- I cannot tell you how many times, in the middle of the night, we'd be walking up and down the ground floor or the first floor, and the President would be talking about the significance of a portrait, or what happened in this room. Anyone who has ever spent any time with him knows that he just reveres living here. But I hope everyone knows how gregarious and truly outgoing he is, that he would want to share that with as many people as possible.

SECRETARY RILEY: Since my name came up -- (laughter) -- I had -- my father was 93 years old and was really beginning to slip. He was very close friends with the President and the President asked him to come spend the night. And so we came with him, and it was a great gesture.

Q Mrs. Clinton, do you feel confident there was no blurring of the lines on your side, whether it was the stop in Guam which has been written about, or anything subsequently? And have you taken any additional steps beyond what the White House has to ensure some things be done differently in the future?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I think that the President has pretty much outlined

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what people will be thinking about in the future, and certainly no one likes to be held up for any kind of public inquiry, and nobody did anything that they thought was wrong at the time or that they were advised was wrong. So, that certainly nobody did anything that was improper, but nobody wants to raise even the shadow of a doubt about what is or is not appropriate behavior. So that's why, even for actions that are within the realm of propriety and legality, that it's going to be common sense to be much more careful so that nobody does anything that can raise any questions.

Q Mrs. Clinton, on Johnny Chung, I believe the record shows that on 21 of the 50 occasions he was here, he was, in fact, cleared through your office. Are you saying you don't know why any of those 21 events occurred, other than a courteous staff?

MRS. CLINTON: I don't know. I don't keep track with who is waved into the White House. That's not something I have any knowledge of. And I don't know what he was telling anybody or what he was asking anybody. I just don't have any knowledge of that.

Q Could I just ask, did it ever occur to you, since this is your house as well, who are these people -- the ones that perhaps Ann Lewis described as not yet friends? That's a curious locution.

MRS. CLINTON: Well, we knew everybody who was invited. We may not have been the best of friends with everybody; we may not have known everybody for 30 or 40 years, but we knew everybody who was invited. And some we knew very well and some we were just getting to know. But they were all people that the President wanted to spend time with. And he did.

Q Mrs. Clinton, do you know specifically who in your office admitted Mr. Chung?

MRS. CLINTON: I wouldn't -- I don't know anything about that.

Q -- Vice President's acknowledged making some fundraising phone calls, and the President said he couldn't quite rule that out on himself. Did you make any of those kind of phone calls yourself during the campaign?

MRS. CLINTON: I do not recall making any, but I'm not going to say absolutely never. I just don't ever recall being asked to make any; I don't recall making any.

Q Were you involved in fundraising?

MRS. CLINTON: I certainly was, and I'm very pleased that I was, Helen. I think that there's a tendency to fast-forward through what was going on in '94 and '95 that made all of us who believed in what the President was doing and what the odds were against the policies that he had been championing, to be as hard-working and enthusiastic as we could about trying to help him with his agenda. And that included many things. It was many, many speeches; it was many, many events. And it was also trying to help raise money for the message that the President wanted to try to get out.

Because when I think back on that period, it is very clear in my mind as I think back, that the Gingrich revolution, the Contract on America, all of that was going full-blast, and the message about and the environment was just getting

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swallowed up -- so that the President's agenda, those of us who supported it, thought was right for the country.

Q It never occurred to you that some of this money might be coming from foreign sources?

MRS. CLINTON: No, it never occurred to me. But, Helen, I didn't have any responsibility for keeping up with any of that.

Q Can I ask one non-campaign question before we go back on policy, although not totally related to education? On welfare reform -- did you see the article in the Atlantic that Peter Edelman wrote about Bill Clinton's biggest mistake? If you didn't see it, you must have clearly been familiar with the argument of both Marian Wright Edelman. They are such close friends and this has been an issue that has been so close to you -- I was curious to your reaction when people who are longtime friends and longtime ideological soulmates make criticism that direct about administration policy. How do you react to that and how do you respond to those people?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I respect their opinion, because they have earned the right to express an opinion. They have worked, both of them, very hard over many years on behalf of the underlying social and economic problems that cause people to be impoverished and have less opportunities than we'd want them to have. And this was an honest disagreement, and I have no bad feeling at all about that. We just see differently the way to the same objective.

There's no doubt in my mind that we all want to give people the tools of opportunity including education so that they can make good decisions in their own lives. The question is, how do we get there, and sometimes people who agree on goals will disagree on process or steps to be taken.

Some of your questions about the test suggest legitimate concern -- what will happen when this test is given and people don't do well. I'm very concerned about that. But having thought it through for many years, I don't see any other way. And the President has become the leading spokesman for saying we have to do this in order to get to the goal we all want. And I feel the same way about welfare.

Q Well, you supported his signing.

MRS. CLINTON: Yes, I did.

Q You never said that at the time, though. I mean, you were very silent.

MRS. CLINTON: Oh, yes, I did.

Q Did you?

MRS. CLINTON: Oh, yes, I did. I said that I supported his signing. I had problems with certain sections of the bill; I said that at the time as well. But we are in a new era of working out the relationships in our society and certainly understanding the role of government and creating conditions in which people have a maximum chance to flourish and make their own way in life. And I'm not sure that any of us know exactly what's going to work, so that we're all trying as hard as we can to make the best decision based on the evidence we have available to us. And we have to be flexible and we have to be willing to take evidence like the results of tests and make hard decisions and try to do better. And we have to take evidence like what happens when welfare reform is

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implemented and what happens to the children, particularly, and make sure that we have plans to be able to deal with that.

But I think you have to proceed on the assumption that we are trying to get to the same goal. And that's why I have absolutely no argument with people who say, that's not how I would have done it. And I think we have to keep the dialogue going and keep open to what critics who are acting in good faith are saying, so that we can try to do a better job.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END 5:46 P.M. EST

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March 17, 1997, Monday, FINAL EDITION

SECTION: TELEGRAPH (NEWS), Pg. 1A

LENGTH: 1377 words

HEADLINE: Hillary Clinton taking a new tack this time; First lady embarks on 2nd-term strategy to spruce up image

BYLINE: Susan Baer, SUN NATIONAL STAFF

BODY:

WASHINGTON -- For the first time, Hillary Rodham Clinton went last week on a domestic trip with a small contingent of press at the back of her plane. For the first time, she sat down recently with a group of reporters to talk about her pet issues.

The only thing unusual about these firsts is that it took the first lady a second term in the White House to agree to them.

Trying to deflect the layers of controversy that have been as much a part of her persona as rotating hairstyles and a three-prong name, Mrs. Clinton, 49, has embarked on a new, long-term strategy to spruce up her image, put out some of the sparks that crackle around her and help the public get to know her better.

The past week -- in which she presided over a briefing on education, spent a 17-hour day making speeches and appearances in Little Rock, Ark., and then left yesterday on a two-week goodwill trip to Africa -- has offered a glimpse into the kind of role she is molding for herself for the next four years and, in a way, for posterity.

The role appears to be one part traditional hostess and nurturer -- walking through a disaster site in a pink knit suit, pearls and shimmering stockings last week, she patted the shoulders of tornado victims in Arkansas -- to two parts policy-minded intellectual and advocate.

She may be working the levers more quietly than before, but she is still engaged in policy, with her White House operation a sort of mini-think tank for social issues.

Earlier this year, Mrs. Clinton held a round-table discussion on "micro-credits," small-business loans intended to boost depressed areas. She has attended a Cabinet-level meeting on education and, traveling the nation to promote her husband's school initiatives, she has beefed up her staff with a second speech-writer.

Mrs. Clinton is also organizing -- and, with her husband, will preside over -- a White House Conference on Early Childhood Development, scheduled for next month. Scientists have been invited to the session to discuss the latest

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research on the development of the brain in the first three years of life.

"She sees herself as a bit of a catalyst to get people exchanging ideas," says her press secretary, Marsha Berry.

'Micro-issues'

But bruised from the health care reform debacle in her husband's first term, Mrs. Clinton is fixing her energies on small initiatives -- what one friend called "micro-issues" -- rather than grand, sweeping proposals.

"I think you're going to see her giving attention to particular programs rather than making big policy speeches," says her friend Brooke Shearer, an Interior Department official. "She's more likely to say, 'Here's a program that works,' rather than, 'Here's a 10-part program for federal initiatives.' "

Another part of the second-term strategy, one she decided on only reluctantly and somewhat begrudgingly, involves lifting the veil -- a little.

"She's willing to be more accommodating," says Melanne Verveer, her deputy chief of staff. "She recognizes its importance for the things she cares about."

But she still keeps a tight rein on her image -- even to the point of ensuring that she is photographed from her left -- and on her dealings with the press.

Unlike a typical freewheeling news conference, Mrs. Clinton's briefings for reporters -- the second of which was held last week -- are focused on a particular subject. In January, micro-credits; last week, early childhood education and national testing standards.

Held in the White House Map Room -- the site of her husband's famed coffees with contributors -- 20 journalists sit around a table decorated with floral arrangements, each reporter assigned a seat with a hand-scripted White House place card and offered a beverage. Mrs. Clinton sits at the head of the table, flanked by a Cabinet secretary and other Cabinet and White House officials.

At last week's session, Education Secretary Richard W. Riley sent around the table a photograph of his new granddaughter in a bunny suit. It is a far cry from the rough-and-tumble feeding frenzies of the White House briefing room.

Public Policy 101

"Today we're going to talk about education," Mrs. Clinton declared at the opening of the briefing, sounding like a professor at a Public Policy 101 lecture hall.

"It's unique to her," Verveer says of the forum the first lady has devised for meeting with the press. "It's rooted in substantive considerations. It's a comfortable approach for her. It's a respectful setting for both sides."

Although the briefing ended, inevitably, with a flurry of questions about the first lady's involvement in campaign fund-raising irregularities -- she responded by saying she didn't know why a controversial contributor was

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repeatedly allowed into her office -- for the better part of an hour, she held forth on education.

Education, the centerpiece of President Clinton's agenda for his second term, is also the key component of the first lady's second-term portfolio.

Hoping for another shot at affecting policy, she is returning to a safe issue that made her something of a hero when she was Arkansas' first lady.

As chair of a statewide task force to overhaul the education system in Arkansas, Mrs. Clinton pushed through reforms such as teacher testing and higher standards that were unpopular at first but proved effective in improving the state's schools.

This time around, she is trying to promote the president's call for national testing standards. (So far, only Michigan, Maryland and schools on military bases have signed on for the voluntary tests in reading and math that Mr. Clinton proposed.) She is also speaking out for her own favorite cause, the development of the brain in the first years of life and the need to read to toddlers.

Mrs. Clinton is not likely to have the kind of overt lawmaking role that caused such an uproar in the first term. But she has been -- and intends to be -- in the thick of it, describing her role as one of an advocate and spokeswoman.

The questions she is asked when she speaks to school boards, mayors and teachers, she said, "aren't questions that the president gets asked when he's standing in front of a legislature. And if they don't get asked, they kind of leave people wondering, 'Well, wait a minute, what about this?' and 'How is this going to work?' So the more that people [such as] me, or the secretary, can get out there, in smaller groups, the more people will have their questions answered."

Mrs. Clinton's aides say she is likely to continue to hold briefings on various subjects of personal interest -- such as health care, adoption, the arts, the District of Columbia, welfare reform -- on a monthly basis.

"There are enough issues out there that she's going to want to have an impact on," says Berry.

In fact, while many recent first ladies have made their mark in one area -- Barbara Bush in literacy, Nancy Reagan in fighting drug abuse -- Shearer says, "Hillary is kind of all over the place."

As she's expected to be over the next four years.

Struggling to keep her agenda from being upstaged by various controversies -- or by the report due out by Whitewater independent counsel Kenneth W. Starr -- Mrs. Clinton is expected to do a fair amount of foreign travel in the next four years.

Foreign travel plans

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The current six-nation tour of Africa with her daughter, Chelsea, will be followed by trips with her husband to Mexico and Latin America this spring.

Shearer says she believes it's "good for her" to get out of town. "You take on a kind of unusual Washington-centric perspective when you stay here," she says.

What's more, there are not likely to be questions about the Lincoln Bedroom in Eritrea and Zimbabwe.

Aides say Mrs. Clinton could step up her travel schedule even more after Chelsea leaves for college in the fall.

The first lady says her daughter, who so far has been accepted to Harvard University, has not decided where she will go. "Things are out of my control," Mrs. Clinton quipped at last week's group interview. "I'm only the mother."

But she did reveal that Chelsea is interested in studying medicine.

With an expression of relief, the first lady added: "Not politics."

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March 11, 1997, Tuesday

SECTION: NEW; Pg. 1A

LENGTH: 1032 words

HEADLINE: First lady defends fund raising, pledges caution

BYLINE: JANE FULLERTON, ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

BODY:

WASHINGTON -- In her first public comments on the fund-raising controversy at the White House, Hillary Rodham Clinton said Monday that nobody -- including herself, her husband and her top aide -- did anything improper in receiving campaign contributions or serving as hosts for overnight guests and said White House officials would be more careful about such matters in the future.

"Nobody did anything that they thought was wrong at the time or that they were advised was wrong," she said. "Certainly, nobody did anything that was improper, but nobody wants to raise even the shadow of a doubt about what is or is not appropriate behavior.

"So that's why, even for actions that are within the realm of propriety or legality, it's good common sense to be much more careful so that nobody does anything that could raise any questions."

Her comments came during a meeting with about 20 reporters in the White House Map Room. Most of the discussion centered on President Clinton's education initiatives -- particularly his call for standardized national testing -- which the first lady has taken a leading role in advocating.

She will be in Little Rock today to discuss similar programs when she speaks to a literacy conference about the importance of early childhood education. She also will tour the new neonatal unit at Arkansas Children's Hospital and attend a fund-raising dinner for the Single Parent Scholarship Fund.

But she will begin her day in Benton, where she will get a first-hand look at the damage tornadoes caused March 1. She will visit Saline County's Bennett Acres Mobile Home Park, where three people died.

That human toll is why the first lady chose that location for her visit, she said.

"I try to go after a lot of the initial looking at the damage occurs, so I can sit and talk with people," she said. "One of the things I have found is that in the immediate aftermath of a tornado, people's adrenaline is pumping and there's a lot of energy.

"But then it begins to sink in, and I'm concerned about how people feel now that they really grasp that their belongings are gone, that those favorite pictures of their children or maybe the job they worked at has been destroyed."

But Monday, she was assessing the damage from the storm of controversy that has hovered over the White House in recent weeks.

Last week, White House officials acknowledged that the first lady's chief of staff, Margaret Williams, accepted a \$ 50,000 donation to the Democratic National Committee from a California businessman visiting the White House.

In his news conference Friday, the president strongly defended Williams' character, saying that all she did was pass the check along to the Democratic National Committee. On Monday, Hillary Clinton also stood firmly behind her longtime aide.

In retrospect, the first lady said, Williams wishes she had just told businessman Johnny Chung to mail the check himself.

But, she hastened to add, Williams is "an honorable and courteous person. And what she did is legal and proper under the prevailing rule."

Chung has been portrayed as a fan of the first lady, one who was admitted to the White House grounds 49 times. In all, he donated \$ 366,000 to the Democratic National Committee, all of which is now being returned because of concerns about the money's origin.

The first lady was asked how Chung -- whom a National Security Council staffer had characterized as a "hustler" trying to impress his Chinese business associates with his access to the Clintons -- could have gained repeated entry to her office. She chalked it up to common courtesy.

"My staff is a polite and courteous group," she said, "and certainly has over the last four years been very willing to be courteous to people who came into the White House ... I guess the only way I can explain it is that that's what they thought they were doing -- being courteous."

Vice President Gore has acknowledged soliciting donations to the Democratic National Committee from his White House office, and the president has left open the possibility that he may have done the same.

The first lady also said she didn't recall soliciting any campaign contributions from the White House herself, but she would not rule out the possibility.

"I do not recall making any, but I'm not going to say absolutely never," she said. "I just don't ever recall being asked to make any; I don't recall making any."

But she acknowledged being involved in fund-raising and added that she was "very pleased" by that.

The first lady also addressed questions about the number of overnight guests

who have spent the night in the Lincoln Bedroom and other rooms at the White House.

White House officials recently released a list of 938 overnight guests -- including 372 categorized as friends from Arkansas -- during the Clintons' first four years at 1600 Pennsylvania Ave.

"When we arrived here at the White House, we were overwhelmed by the honor of living here and by the history that happened here," she said, "and we were excited to share it with a lot of people -- and we did."

The first lady rattled through a list of people who had been there -- longtime friends, people they wanted to get to know better, public officials. She turned to Education Secretary Richard Riley, seated next to her to discuss education topics, and said he had spent the night in the Lincoln Bedroom.

Riley explained how the president had invited Riley's 93-year-old father to spend the night shortly before the elderly man's death.

"It was a great gesture," Riley said.

And yes, the first lady said, her husband has often served as late-night tour guide for guests at the White House.

"If they'd stay up and stick it out," she said, "he'd come and talk to them at 10 or 11 or 12 or 1 o'clock in the morning. ... I cannot tell you how many times in the middle of the night, he'd be walking up and down the ground floor or the first floor and the president would be talking about the significance of a portrait or what happened in this room."

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

January 30, 1997

REMARKS OF THE FIRST LADY,
SECRETARY OF TREASURY BOB RUBIN AND
AID ADMINISTRATOR BRIAN ATWOOD
IN PRESS BRIEFING

The Map Room
1:30 P.M. EST

MRS. CLINTON: I want to go ahead and get started. I wanted to wait until some of the people who were in the other briefing could get here, but I don't want to wait too much longer so that we'll have a chance to visit. And if they come in, they can just join us.

I really appreciate all of you gathering here today to talk with us about something that is very important and near and dear to my heart. Some of you who have accompanied me on some of our overseas trips know that we have visited microenterprise projects and you have seen for yourselves some of the potential that those projects hold for transforming the lives of men and women and children. And I greatly appreciate the continued interest of those of you who have been with me on these trips and the new interest of others of you.

I'm also pleased that Treasury Secretary Rubin and Administrator Atwood could be here, along with their key staffs who have been working on microenterprise issues both within the domestic arena and internationally.

And over the next week, a number of activities will take place here in Washington that will showcase microenterprise, both its successes in developing countries and its application in advanced economies such as ours.

A little later this afternoon, the President will announce the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Microenterprise Development. These awards are our first effort to recognize within the United States the extension of credit and economic opportunity to Americans who might otherwise lack the chance to become economically self-sufficient. I should mention that these rewards are a direct outgrowth of the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. They represent our nation's commitment to the platform of action agreed to in Beijing.

On Monday, Secretary Rubin, Administrator Atwood and I will speak at an international microcredit summit here in Washington. This conference brings together experts from around the world to talk about ways we can learn from each other and to apply lessons within our own borders. That is a commitment that AID has under Brian Atwood's leadership to pursue what he calls, lessons without borders. And microenterprise is just one aspect of that.

Later Monday afternoon, I will have the opportunity to visit a microenterprise project in Washington called FINCA, which operates on several continents. Those of you who were with me in Nicaragua and in Chile in 1995 will remember that we visited FINCA projects on that trip.

I want to move on to some brief remarks by Secretary Rubin and Brian Atwood, but I want to reiterate something that I have said repeatedly about microenterprise. Although I view this as a very important tool for economic and social development, it is not by any means the only tool that we need to be utilizing here and abroad to promote opportunity among people.

And I think it will have special application in the whole array of tools we attempt to use in moving people from welfare to work. But it also has implications for working poor people, for communities that have lost enterprise and economic opportunity. But it has to fit in with other efforts that are designed to equip people to make better decisions for themselves.

So with that, let me turn to Secretary Rubin.

SECRETARY RUBIN: Well, microenterprise lending is something that the President and the First Lady were involved with when they were in Arkansas, so this has a real history in the Clinton administration. The President, when he ran in '92, as some of you may remember, advocated a nationwide network of community development banks.

After the election, one of the first things the President did was to set people to work to turn that vision into a reality, and out of that came the CDFI Fund which was enacted and is now in the process of being implemented. The first grants have been given out. And I think it's an -- I think both the CDFI Fund, which is a fund of grants to community development institutions of various kind around the country, and the microenterprise program, which is conducted within the Community Development Fund, are both very, very important ideas.

As the First Lady said, they are part of a much broader effort to bring the residents of the inner cities and other depressed areas in our country into the economic mainstream. I've had a personal belief for a long time that the issues of the inner city and more generally the issues of those who live in depressed areas -- rural and inner city -- are probably the single most economic problem our country faces. And this country will never be what it can be economically or socially for any of us, no matter where we live or what our income is, unless we deal with those problems.

When the First Lady went to Asia and came back and talked to us more about the microenterprise area, I particularly felt an enormous sense of energy about this idea. I think it's a very important idea. It is still a relatively small program in this country. But I think it is a very, very big idea, very, very important idea. And I think it will be an important part of the effort -- an effort that we must be successful at over time if we're going to be the kind of country we want to be, to bring the residents of these depressed areas into the economic mainstream.

MR. ATWOOD: It's obvious that we're operating nowadays in a global economy and that there are a lot of interconnections between the international arena and our domestic economy. This idea is an idea that we first heard about in Bangladesh, and we've brought it back -- and Mohammed Unis, who also, I think, came to Arkansas to brief the First Lady and Governor Clinton at the time, and the first real experiment in this was the Good Faith Fund in Arkansas financed by the South Shore Bank in Chicago.

We, in this administration, have really given this a boost because we announced in 1994 a major microenterprise initiative. We began then spending about \$130 million a year. We are out ahead of the revolution that's occurring around the world -- obviously started and we give full credit to Mohammed Unis -- but the work that we have done has really encouraged a lot of others. We're funding about 150 microenterprise institutions in 40 countries and we feel that we're reaching about 20 million people.

Now, just last year, we worked to negotiate with the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD a document that put forth some targets for the international donor community. One of the targets was that we would try to reduce by one-half extreme poverty. When I say extreme poverty, I'm talking about \$370 or so a year -- people who make about \$1 a day. Part of the effort is this microenterprise effort. There are about 1.3 billion people. We've got to make inroads if we're going to do it.

We tried to keep our loans to under \$300 overseas. And people say, my goodness, that's very small, but think about the people who live in extreme poverty -- \$370 a year. People paid back these loans to the tune of over 95 percent repayment rate. Banks around the world, including a lot of American banks, are now beginning to get very interested in this.

Mrs. Clinton visited Banco Sol in Bolivia, which is now the number one bank in Bolivia. We started that program with about \$4 million. They now have a loan portfolio of \$30 million and 60,000 people who have benefitted from the program are active -- actually have loans that are active at this point.

So this is really a revolution. It is hitting here. We've taken our Lessons Without Borders program to many cities, and Mrs. Clinton spoke to the national conference where a lot of cities were represented in Baltimore just a few months ago. The people of Baltimore sent a delegation to Kenya to look at our microenterprise program there. They created a women's entrepreneurs fund, which is a microenterprise fund in Baltimore. It's really catching on. And I will conclude by saying that of the awardees this afternoon -- there are seven -- four of them were AID recipients. They were working with us, helped us fashion our program. So you can see the interconnectiveness that I've talked about. We're learning lessons from our work overseas.

MRS. CLINTON: I just would add, before we throw it open for questions on this or related subjects, that part of what is attractive about this effort is something that both Brian and Bob alluded to, and that is there is a stereotype of people who are poor, and particularly people who have been on welfare in our country which is just not accurate when it comes to describing the full range of human potential and skills that are available if nurtured and if given a chance to flourish.

We found that in Arkansas when we began to work with South Shore Bank, which is located in Chicago, and was really -- I guess it's fair to say, Brian -- the first effort to transplant some of the lessons learned abroad at home. But to put it in an American context, you cannot take what is done in Bangladesh and transfer it directly to Chicago or Arkansas or Washington, D.C., but you can take the principles underlying what was done in Bangladesh and take those principles and begin to make them work in the American context. And that is what South Shore has done for a number of years, and what we did in working with them in Arkansas.

What I would hope that would come out of this emphasis on microenterprise and the relationships that can be built in communities because of the catalyzing of this kind of economic activity is a greater appreciation in our society at large about the capacity of people at all levels in our country. One of the things that I'm heartened by is something Brian said -- is that a number of commercial banks are now recognizing that there are markets in our own country that they have ignored, and that by thinking anew about how to provide credit in some of our poorest communities, it's going to be good for them as well as for those residents.

And I guess I would just end by saying if you visited enough of these projects, as I have now here and abroad, you will be struck by the tenacity and the commitment of people to help themselves if given what I call these tools of opportunity, one of which is credit.

So we're very hopeful about this, not only in terms of the projects that are being done and the recognition that we're giving them, but in the ripple effect, in the way that not only more projects like this can be started, but others who extend credit, who offer opportunities in the private marketplace will begin to think differently about what is out there that can be available.

So with that, I would be glad to -- yes.

Q Can I follow up on that -- that rickety bus ride into Jessore when Mohammed Unis was explaining how that one beggar woman was finally convinced to take one dollar, and you saw in the faces what a difference it made -- but that's a Third World country. And when you get to the giant engine of the American economy, what is your realistic expectation that some of these micro loans and microenterprises are really going to make a difference, particularly when you're looking at the numbers of people, welfare-to-work -- what's a realistic expectation of the kind of impact it would have?

MRS. CLINTON: I'm not sure that we know, Ann, but I can say based on my experience -- and then certainly Brian and Bob and the people who are working on this can add to that -- I think it's a very realistic strategy to pursue. And I can't say the numbers of people who will be affected or the communities that will be revitalized in whole or in part, but you may remember just a few weeks ago I went with Secretary Cisneros to announce this new community bank in Washington, D.C., and I have followed its development and I have kept in touch with the people who are working on it, and I know from sitting there talking to those people who are going to be both investors and borrowers from that bank that it has tremendous potential.

Now, that doesn't mean it's going to be easily implemented or that there aren't going to be changes that will have to be made in both the philosophy and the practice of it as we move it on a broader scale here in America. But just based on the examples that I know, examples from Illinois, from Arkansas, now from Washington, it is clear to me that if you look at depressed urban and rural areas, particularly urban areas in America, there's a lot of income in those areas, because of transfer payments and because, frankly, of illegal transactions that go on. So there's money in those neighborhoods.

What there isn't is capital accumulation that can be translated into economic institutions, jobs, and everything we think of as the market economy being able to spawn greater opportunity. If we can crack that through microenterprise, through community development fund efforts, if we can begin to get capital and credit into those neighborhoods, we know that there are people there who will be able to create businesses and jobs. So it's just a question of how much patience we're willing to exercise, how much support we're willing to give, and how much of a subsidy there needs to be in the beginning, because there does have to be some subsidy to start with.

Do you have anything to add to that?

SECRETARY RUBIN: No, I think the question is critical mass, and the First Lady said it very well.

Q Is there money in the President's budget for this?

SECRETARY RUBIN: Yes. We have an appropriation request in the budget to be submitted next Thursday for the Community Development Fund, and it's a substantial -- we're not going to pre-announce the budget, but it's a substantial request. And those funds, amongst other things, can be used to help fund these microenterprise institutions around the country.

Q Can you just give us an idea of how that could grow over last year?

MRS. CLINTON: Oh, you want us to spoil all the surprises. (Laughter.)

SECRETARY RUBIN: I'll tell you what we plan to do. I have to help. (Laughter.)

Q I think it's already out.

SECRETARY RUBIN: Okay. We're requesting \$125 million for the Community Development Fund this year, and then we scale it up in over a five-year period, requesting \$1 billion. We think, as I said before, this is a program with enormous potential. Some portion of that will be available for microenterprise lending, and that's an issue that the people who run the Community Development Fund will have to decide as they go along. But they had a very large number of institutions that were interested in the microenterprise areas, and we think it's a very promising area.

Q How do you measure the success rate of these programs? I guess in one way, it's easy at such a micro level, but once these things get going and are translated to the United States, how do you measure whether they're working or not, the success rate?

MRS. CLINTON: I think there are a number of measurements that I would point to. One, the loan repayment rate, which historically, both internationally and here at home is phenomenally high. And we're talking about loan repayment rates in the neighborhood of 98, 99 percent. I think when I go to FINCA on Monday, their loan repayment rate is what -- 98, 99 percent? So that's a measurement of success -- that people are taking seriously their responsibilities with the money entrusted to them, paying it back. And they pay it back with interest. I mean, it is something that is a market-driven model.

Secondly, I think if you look at where some of the community development bank-like projects have been operating for a significant period of time, you can actually see the differences. Like if you were to go to South Shore in Chicago, you can go to neighborhoods and see the kind of critical mass the Secretary's talking about, because you can see whole streets with flourishing small businesses, whereas 10 years ago they were burned-out holes. There was nothing there. So that you can actually see the transformation.

And I think the third thing I would say is that one of the ways I would measure success is to see how much this government effort spurs private action as well. And it's kind of like the Internet. I mean, that was a government project. People forget that. It was created by the government. It was nurtured by the government. It was subsidized by the government. Then it was spun off into the private market. What I would like to see is 5, 10 years from now, having community banks that are free-standing private banks -- maybe they would be part of a larger holding company -- back in neighborhoods, back on street corners -- banks like I used to remember when I was growing up, with people being able, with advances in technology, to get small loans again. I mean, right now most banks won't even process a loan less than, what,

\$2,500 in lots of areas.

So I think a third measure of success is how much the private sector will recognize this market as one that want to be part of.

Q What typically is the interest rate? We asked earlier today about commercial rates.

MR. ATWOOD: In this country there certainly are commercial rates because of usury laws and the like. Overseas, they charge actually a little more, but one has to remember that the poor, even if they didn't have access to one of these facilities, go to the old money lenders. And the old money lenders really sting them with high interest rates -- I mean, double.

Q But what is it that your subsidizing if these are market-rate loans?

SECRETARY RUBIN: These microenterprise lenders, because these are small loans, have very large operating costs relative to the loan made. So that even if you have an extremely high repayment rate, as the First Lady said is what we generally expect will be the case, and you have market rates of interest, you're still having to absorb very high operating costs per loan.

Q Mrs. Clinton, is this something you intend to focus on over the next four years? Do you think this is one of the major themes that you'll try to pursue over the second term?

MRS. CLINTON: I think it fits into what I have tried to do really for 25 years, but certainly over the last four, and will continue to do, which is to look for ways to promote the tools of opportunity for people. I believe very strongly that part of what my husband is trying to do, and people like Bob and Brian helping him to do, is to create conditions -- social, political, economic conditions -- that will equip more people to be able to be, as Bob says, full participants in the mainstream economy, be able to make good decisions for themselves.

And so that's something that I've done for a long time and I'll continue to do. And I view this as an area, a strategy that has a lot of promise.

Q There were some international goals that Mr. Atwood was talking about. Do you have domestic goals, like how many people at this point are participating and how many would you like to participate? And also, one thing that I'm not clear about is, banks often do have stringent rules about who can borrow, who can't, who's reliable, who's not. Do they bend those rules, or do they change them in some fashion?

MR. ATWOOD: I think within the case of microenterprise lenders you really have to look at creditors in a somewhat different way. You have to try character judgments about people rather than using the conventional criteria. And thus far, it is a relatively small -- relatively small in this country. But I think the idea itself is a very, very big idea. And I think the key is for us to support it so that it can become what it has the potential to be.

Q So do you have actual figures on how many people are participating at this point?

MR. ATWOOD: I don't know the answer to that.

STAFF PERSON: -- is quite young -- organization is less than five years old. One of our bidders has actually documented -- developing this country -- organizations that serve several hundred, even several thousand microentrepreneurs. We do not have a total number --

MR. ATWOOD: Just to add one point, that the banks and the participants in these organizations also offer a support mechanism. They create networks so that it isn't just as if you give a loan to someone and they're out on their own. They make contacts with other people, the suppliers for the kinds of things they need. And, obviously, in our capitalist society, there is room to grow. They grow -- the next thing they may ask for is a Small Business Administration loan. But they can move from the micro state to the small business to the medium-size business.

MRS. CLINTON: I just wanted to add to that before we turn to Jim. I think that's a point that we probably should have made earlier. Some of the models that are most successful take people and create what are called, alternatively, things like borrowers groups or marketing groups or whatever, so that people come together and they support each other in the process of taking out a loan, and then they support each other's business. So that, for example, if you -- when I was in Washington a few weeks ago, there is a little, tiny store -- a little, tiny restaurant that got a microenterprise loan. And so the people in the neighborhood who are part of that group, they frequent that restaurant. They begin to understand that if they support that restaurant, then when they go to take a loan maybe to start a used car lot or whatever, they can do business. So that in a sense, it's recreating the community support for a marketplace and getting people back into the idea that by supporting their neighbors and their businesses they too will prosper.

And lots of loan groups will not lend to the next person in line for a loan unless the first person has paid off the loan. So there is an incentive for the second, third, and fourth people who wish to get loans to support the businesses of the first person, because that's the way they will get their loan.

Q Historically, the survival rate on small businesses is pretty low. Do you have any idea what the success rate is -- not just on repayment of loans because the loans are small, it assumes that they can be paid back rather quickly -- but after the first, second, third year, that's when you really see a drop-off in these small businesses. They just go bust.

SECRETARY RUBIN: This is so new, I think when somebody asked before how are you going to measure success, these are the kind of things that we're going to have to work with. But I think as Brian and the First Lady said, it's not only money, but it's technical assistance. And it's the kind of support that can help people run their businesses more effectively. I think I would be reasonably optimistic about a success ratio in this kind of endeavor. It's going to take time before have enough data to have meaningful --

Q One other question. It's often said that good policy is often good politics. And based on the percentages and the demographics of people who get these loans -- as we understand it, 85 percent minorities, 40 percent women -- that seems to dovetail very nicely with White House outreach. Does that come into play, the politics of all this?

MRS. CLINTON: I don't think so. But I think if you were to look at the people in the areas that are most in need of this kind of economic activity, they are predominantly minority areas and very heavily female-headed household areas. So I think that you've got the demographics and the need kind of fitting together.

But I think that in many of the projects, what's interesting -- and we saw this when we were in Bangladesh and in India -- the number, the percentage of women participating is much higher, even than 40 percent.

I know when Mohammed Unis started his work in Bangladesh he intended to be revolutionary for an Islamic country and have 50-50 borrowers, men and women. But what he found was that very often in that kind of society the women were much more eager to get the loans, more responsible in getting the loans paid back. So, therefore, now their borrowers are like 80 percent, 85 percent women. And we have found that in many parts of the world. So what will actually happen when this all gets set up, I don't think anybody knows. I don't think we can predict what the breakdown in terms of borrowers will be. But it is something that we're going to try to encourage as broadly as possible, and particularly in the areas that need it the most.

Q Have you had any discussions with the Republicans about this? Do you think they'll go along with it?

MR. ATWOOD: I just want to add that this is really strongly supported by a bipartisan coalition on the Hill. I mean, this is capitalism at it's best. I mean, this is really stimulating. We're reaching for a segment of our society -- and this is certainly true in other societies around the world -- that the normal economy, if you will, the formal economy, hasn't reached for yet. And this is quintessential American values and the best of capitalism.

Q In the effort to make welfare reform work, how much do you think this can help? And in our experience with these programs, have we found that the people who end up participating are people who would have been on welfare or are they people who are working poor and wouldn't necessarily be --

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I think the best way to answer that is to say that we think this will be one of the strategies that will be helpful to certain groups of people on welfare. In the work that I'm familiar with in the projects around the country, many of the participants in these microenterprise efforts have been either on welfare at the time of their loan or just off welfare, in danger of falling back on. I mean, that kind of marginal status.

But it is certainly not limited to people on welfare. It is something that -- there are many working poor people with good ideas who are eligible for this, as well. So, again, I don't know that we have the data to answer that definitively. And a lot of it's going to be kind of a learn-as-you-go in what works best in local communities to move people off of welfare. And I think that this is only one of the tools. There's got to be a broad array of strategies to be used.

Q Mrs. Clinton, I'm just wondering if this kind of a briefing is maybe something that you plan to continue as you go about pursuing your interests in this next term. I mean, this is an unusual thing and obviously a big draw for some of us. Do you plan to spend more time with Washington-based press reporters as you go about your --

MRS. CLINTON: Yes, yes, and I do. Because I thought that -- I certainly enjoyed the trips we've taken abroad and we've had, I think, an opportunity both from my perspective and those who are traveling with us to see a lot of things and learn a lot of things that's very difficult to do in the sort of daily routine of the White House. There's so much that you have to do that is reactive and you have to constantly be covering what is of the moment.

And I think there's some advantage both for the issues that I'm concerned about and for the kind of attention that can be paid to them to try to take times like this and to step out a little bit and look at something that may not be a front-burner story, but is actually of some interest, as we've seen. There's been a tremendous amount of publicity about this, which has been very surprising to me to see the coverage both in TV and radio and in the print.

So, yes, I'd like to do this more and if I can get up the energy and time I'll do it on a regular basis on issues.

SECRETARY RUBIN: Can I add one thing on that? These inner-city issues, I said it before, I think are the most important economic issues facing this country. And I think that the First Lady participating in this way is enormously helpful. Because one of the problems is getting media attention, media focus on these very important issues and the programs that I think are responsive so that we can develop support, public and congressional support from these programs. So I think it's enormously helpful that the First Lady bring her ability to get attention to focus on issues something like this. So I at least hope you do. (Laughter.) It's a very important contribution in trying to move forward on these things.

Q Mrs. Clinton, both you and the President have talked in the past about your belief in the ability of government to do good in people's lives. It's clear that we live in pretty austere times, and it seems that both you and the President have chosen to highlight areas that have -- where government is essentially a catalyst, hopefully involving the private sector. Could you talk in general about how your views about the role and power of government have evolved, let's say from the first term until now?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I think that the way that my husband has talked about government is really what he has advocated as long as I've known him -- which is a long time now -- and what he's tried to do in every public position he's held, and what I've also tried to do.

I thought that it was very significant in the Inaugural Address when he repudiated the position that President Reagan had taken in his first Inaugural. If you remember in the first Inaugural, President Reagan said, government is the problem. And then we struggled along for more than a decade trying to figure out, well, if the government is the problem, then how do we deal on a national level with issues that confront us that can't be dealt with either individually or just through the market. And so there was a lot of back-and-forth about that and we had a kind of stand-off between those who thought government was the problem about everything, and those who thought government was the solution to everything.

And I think it is extremely significant that at the end of this first term, what the President has basically done is to resolve that debate. Now, there are still going to be rear guard actions fought by people who have a kind of monolithic view one way or the other about government. But the real challenge and the action for the next years will be to define more clearly what it means for government to be a catalyst, a partner; for government to play an appropriate role in seeding opportunity and working with other institutions in society.

And I think that has been basically, for as long as I've known Bill Clinton, what he's been struggling with. And I think that that's part of what brings people like Bob Rubin and Brian Atwood into this administration -- is to figure out how do we get the proper balance between these institutions and government. If you believe that government is the problem and the market is the solution, or if you believe government is the solution and market is the problem, you cannot make progress in dealing with what we're confronting as we move toward this new century.

So take this issue, which may look like a kind of small issue at first glance, but, as he usually is, Bob Rubin is prescient and right that this is a very big idea. And it's a big idea because it takes governmental catalytic action that will directly affect some people's lives; but more than that, create a new environment for private economic activity that could have very long-term consequences.

So that there will be and continue to be certain functions that I would argue -- speaking only for myself and not anybody else -- that only the government can do, and other functions that only the market can do. But, as with life, we will find that much of the rest of it is in this kind of gray middle. And that's where the real debate should be.

So I think that as we go forward in the next four years it will become increasingly clear -- or at least I hope it will be -- that when my husband has been talking about finding a third way and creating a new vision about how to function if you're part of the government or the market, that he wasn't sort of trying to straddle the middle or figure out a way to have it on all sides, but he was describing reality. But it was a reality that had not yet caught up with either the vocabulary or the understanding, I would argue, of most of the rest of us.

So that's where we are right now. You know, Bob, who is one of the leading sort of articulators of this -- you might want to add something. (Laughter.)

Q -- have your views changed about what the proper balance is -- that's what I'm asking.

MRS. CLINTON: Not at all. Not at all. It hasn't changed at all. I believe in the balance of power. I believe in the balance of power in government. I believe in the balance of power between government and the private sector. I believe in the balance of power between men and women. I believe in the balance of power. And I think that if you tilt too far one way or the other, you run into trouble.

But that makes it very difficult sometimes to explain in political terms, because it is much easier if you pursue a position that is either ideologically pure or more easily explained and people would say, oh, okay, she's a free marketeer, or she's a big governmenter, or whatever you might want to say; when the truth is that what we've tried to do from the beginning of this country is to strike that balance.

Now, the balance changes as society's needs change, as economic conditions change. And so that's what we're up against now, I would argue.

Q You're saying, then, that Bill Clinton invented triangulation before it became -- (laughter.)

MRS. CLINTON: Well, let me just say, that I think if you go back and study him closely and look at what he did as a governor, that it's fair to say that he understood that balance and argued for it and took stands against both extremes, as I would characterize them, for quite some time.

Q Mrs. Clinton, I really hate to bring up front-burner issues, but duty calls. There is one that we just had a briefing on, and that's that computer list. Would you care to say anything about that? Because you have been depicted as the person who pushed that. And also the allegations that it was actually used in a political purpose by the DNC.

MRS. CLINTON: Well, here's what I know about it -- and I wasn't aware that it was an issue until just a little while ago when somebody said it had been raised. As I understand it, the computer database was put into place to keep track of events and people associated with the official business of the White House. And so far as I know, that is how it was used. There were many practical uses for that. You know, had we invited somebody to a dinner before? We didn't know. We had no records.

If you recall, when we arrived here there was no computer system, basically. It had been removed or it didn't exist, I can't remember which. And you can't run any kind of modern enterprise without some kind of database. And that's what I assume the database was created for and used for.

Q Mrs. Clinton, you're given credit for ordering this in 1994 or when you needed some way to keep track. I guess the question is when the White House attorney's -- Counsel's Office came out with a clear directive that this can be used only for official White House business, the question became whether -- can the Democratic National Committee use the resources to send out the Christmas card or to get a Christmas card list or whether using the resources of these people have been invited to the White House, they've been guests. Can we contact them? Should we contact them for donations or party support? And I think that's where the line is. Are you aware of any of this information going to the Democratic National Committee?

MRS. CLINTON: Ann, I'm not aware of any of the specific uses. And I would doubt if I were the person who ordered it. I certainly was one of the people who said, how will we know whether people -- I'll give you a perfect example. If we're going to have a dinner, how will we even know whether somebody has been invited before? We used to get lots of calls with people who would say, I need to be at this dinner. And we'd say, we're you here six months ago. Oh no, I wasn't here. (Laughter.) So there were a lot of issues like that that struck me as being something we needed some good information on. And that's all I know about it at this time.

Q Mrs. Clinton, one of the things that happens in these memos is Marcia Scott created this -- throws your name around a lot saying that you're insisting that this be a top priority. And I wondered if -- when you're talking about changes, if you have done anything here to try to make sure people don't take your name in vain or don't give you credit or don't somehow say that Mrs. Clinton is demanding this when, in fact, maybe you really aren't after all.

MRS. CLINTON: Well, Rita, I wish I knew how to do something about that because just this week, I've had people tell me that someone has made it very clear that I want them to have a certain job -- someone I've never heard of. This happens all the time. I don't know quite how you deal with human nature on that level because I guess that's what we're talking about. But I've certainly tried to make it clear. And everyone who works for me tries to make it clear that we want to know if anybody is using my name or referring to me as being the person who has suggested something. And we're just going to do the best we can on that.

I don't know what else to say. I find it surprising. I've told this story before about Madam Mitterrand telling me that she wasn't having flowers at the state dinner because I had told people my husband couldn't be around flowers because of his allergies. And I was horrified.

Well, when we were in Australia, we were at the Governor General's house and we were walking down the grounds and the Governor General says, oh -- to my husband -- he says, so sorry we had to lock up all the kangaroos and koala bears. (Laughter.) Bill, of course, who would rather see a kangaroo and koala bear than most anything, says, what do you mean you had to lock them up? Oh, we were told you couldn't have -- and then they trace it back -- oh, I'm the one who told somebody the President couldn't see the kangaroos and the koala bears. (Laughter.)

So I think it's amusing except that it has gotten me into a little bit of controversy from

time to time. (Laughter.)

Q -- say it had to be a top priority?

MRS. CLINTON: Oh, I certainly think the White House needed a computer database. I mean, absolutely. I assume all of your businesses have some sort of computer records. But the design of it, the use of it, that was for other people to figure out. I didn't know anything about that. But I absolutely believed that we needed a computer system.

At the beginning, some of you may remember, we would have these great big events and people were turned away at the gate because there was no list, because they weren't on the list. And we had terrible, embarrassing encounters at the White House that I didn't think were appropriate. So, yes, I thought we needed some kind of database that could be used for official events.

Q Can we be on the list to get back in? (Laughter.)

MRS. CLINTON: I don't know. We'll see. I don't know.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

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HEADLINE: Saying Her Views Haven't Changed, First Lady Takes On 'Micro' Agenda

BYLINE: Peter Baker, Washington Post Staff Writer

BODY:

First lady Hillary Rodham Clinton made her second-term debut yesterday, declaring that her political philosophy "hasn't changed at all," even as she focused on an agenda radically scaled down from the one she advanced four years ago.

Rather than remake the nation's health care system, as she set out to do in 1993, Clinton began this final half of her husband's presidency concentrating on a much smaller initiative that she hopes can have big results. During a pair of White House events yesterday, she promoted a program that encourages small loans to the tiniest of businesses as a tool to alleviate poverty in inner cities and depressed rural communities.

It's a concept called "micro-credit," and it's certainly in keeping with the administration's recent penchant for micro-policy. Just as President Clinton talks about V-chips and curfews for teenagers, the first lady too is embracing a more incrementalist approach.

She's also trying out a different communications strategy, inviting in a group of reporters yesterday to discuss her efforts and promising more such briefings, a notable shift for a first lady who has felt singled by encounters with the news media and largely eschewed them in recent years.

"I'd like to do this more and if I can get up the energy and time I'll do it on a regular basis on issues," she said during a White House Map Room session.

Much like the president, Hillary Clinton sounded a centrist theme, describing government not as the solution but as "a catalyst" to spur the private sector toward larger societal goals. Her image as a liberal aside, she suggested that her outlook has always been anchored in the political middle rather than the extreme.

"It hasn't changed at all," she said of her viewpoint. "I believe in the balance of power. I believe in the balance of power in government. I believe in the balance of power between the government and private sector. I believe in the balance of power between men and women. And I believe if you tilt too far in one

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way or the other, you get in trouble."

On a day when she was being cited for ordering the creation of a controversial White House computer database, she expressed amazement at how often she is said to be the instigator of actions about which she is completely unaware.

Just this week, she said, she was told that someone was to get a job because the first lady had insisted she be hired -- a person she did not even know. While touring Australia's capital last November, she recalled that kangaroos and koala bears were locked up because someone mistakenly believed she was concerned about how they would aggravate her husband's allergies.

"I wish I knew how to do something about that," she said. "This happens all the time."

Micro-credit is something she does believe she can do something about. Beginning years before she and her husband arrived in Washington, Hillary Clinton has avidly touted such programs, but now she has succeeded in pushing them to the front stage of the White House. As the president said yesterday, it's an "obsession, almost."

During her overseas tours, she has visited micro-enterprises in places like Bangladesh and Chile and last month she helped unveil a federally funded community bank for the District.

During a ceremony in the East Room yesterday, she and the president presented awards to seven programs that have pioneered the concept and announced that the budget to be sent to Congress next week includes \$ 1 billion over five years for a community development fund. On Monday, Hillary Clinton will address an international micro-credit summit.

Such lending operations focus on businesses with five or fewer workers that need small amounts of credit -- less than \$ 25,000 -- but are generally shut out of traditional sources of loans.

It "may look like a small issue at first," Hillary Clinton said, "but . . . this is a very big idea."

GRAPHIC: Photo, frank johnston, Hillary Clinton speaks at ceremony honoring "micro-credit" programs.

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