



Texts of Remarks

by Hillary Rodham Clinton

President Vaclav Havel

Ambassador Madeleine Albright

Kevin Klose

July 4, 1996 in Prague

Following is a transcript of Mrs. Clinton's address as delivered at Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty headquarters in Prague today:

Thank you. Thank you President Havel. Ministers, Ambassador Walker, Ambassador Zantovsky, Ambassador Albright, Mr. Klose, distinguished guests, staff of the radios, and listeners across the Czech Republic, Central and Eastern Europe, and the new, independent states.

It is an honor to have this opportunity to speak to you on the fourth of July 1996. I am especially pleased to be in the Czech Republic with the United States Ambassador to the United Nations, my friend, Madeleine Albright. Ambassador Albright is a daughter of Czechoslovakia whose family was uprooted by war and repression. In the United States she found a home, and the opportunity to rise as far as her God-given talents would take her. But never once did she forget her roots. We Americans are better for her service, and so are the people of Central Europe and around the world who believe in the cause of peace, liberty and justice.

One of the ways men and women in this country and this region kept alive their faith in freedom before 1989 was through Radio Free Europe's broadcasts.

Today I am speaking to you from the new headquarters of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty in Prague. This itself is an emblem of the political, economic and social transformations that have taken place in Central Europe.

We do it the way it has always been done best; by building and strengthening civil society, a term I borrow from social scientists and philosophers who use it to describe the countless daily associations and actions that weave together the fabric of democratic life. In the early 19th century, de Tocqueville observed that voluntary organizations, activities, philanthropic associations, had already become a hallmark of American citizenship and a distinctive part of our national life.

Civil society is the vehicle for our values, the way we convey who we are and what we stand for. And when we encounter the inevitable setbacks and historical bumps in the road, the alliance of values that fuels civil society is what will carry us through.

In the short time I've been in Central Europe, I've already met with people who are forging this alliance of values and building democracy from the ground up. Earlier this week, I met with teachers in Romania who are developing a new pedagogy that emphasizes civic participation and democratic values. I met doctors and nurses caring for children with AIDS and leaders of voluntary organizations who are training citizens to participate in elections.

In Poland, I met leaders of non-governmental organizations who are helping citizens protect the environment, improve health services, promote women's rights and strengthen the free press.

And here in the Czech Republic, another set of free and fair elections has recently taken place. And the most remarkable thing about these elections was how unremarkable they were. Candidates debated, people voted, ballots were counted, and political leaders sorted out the consequences to form a new government. That's what we call a democracy based on values in action.

In Slovakia, Hungary and Estonia, I will meet with people working to strengthen the role of minorities, incorporate women into the full life of their societies, promote an independent judiciary and free democratic institutions.

In many cases, America and Americans are supporting these local efforts. And what we are creating together is more than the training of nurses and teachers, more than the strengthening of an independent media, more than the cleaning up of dirty water and polluted air.

What we are creating together is an ethos of responsibility, caring and initiative that allows people to participate fully in the civic life of their communities and their countries.

We in America are also discovering that we have much to learn from you. As you -- the people of Central Europe --- construct democracy from the ruins of dictatorship, we Americans are reminded of just how precious freedom is, and what a stake we have in democracy's success around the world.

We also can offer, though, some lessons from our own experiences. The first is that democracy is a messy business that requires patience, hard work, flexibility and the acceptance of its inherent imperfections. For more than two centuries we Americans have been striving to perfect democracy and we will continue to do so but without any assurance we will ever fully succeed. Human nature guarantees that democracy requires constant nurturing and vigilance. But we can never waver from the struggle because nothing is more precious to us than the freedoms our ancestors struggled to preserve.

The second hard lesson is that democracy asks us to live peacefully as neighbors with people who are different from us and whom we may not even like. What most of us discover is that we share more in common than we think, and that we are stronger as a people if we overcome our superficial differences and unite around our shared interests and ideals.

And the third lesson is that democratic values must be steeped into our daily lives. President Woodrow Wilson, whose name graces the railway station and a boulevard near here, once said that "liberty does not consist...in mere declarations of the rights of man. It consists in the translation of those declarations into definite actions." Americans have taken that idea to heart.

Just last week, I was in Seattle, Washington meeting with a group of mothers who have formed a national organization to help fight crime on our streets and in their neighborhoods.

Community groups and civic associations across America raise money for their local schools, libraries, parks and hospitals. Nearly every town and city in America has voluntary church groups, Scout troops, sports leagues, book clubs, historical associations that act as mediating influences both on government and on the forces of a market economy.

Americans also come together when our values are endangered. As you may know, several dozen churches serving African-American congregations in different parts of the United States have been burned by criminals in the past few months. Our citizens have not met these acts of evil with silence or indifference. In nearly every instance, men and women of goodwill -- and all religious faiths -- have banded together to repair buildings and rebuild spirits in the aftermath of these anti-democratic hate crimes.

No country is free of purveyors of hate and fear. But the measure of a country's dedication to the values of opportunity, responsibility, community and human dignity is how it resists the forces of darkness and intolerance.

In this century, we in the West have traveled together with you down a long and hard road, with many setbacks and tragedies along the way. But you never relinquished your faith. And neither did we.

Ambassador Albright has told me the story of how in 1995, during the 50th anniversary celebration of the end of World War II, she visited the lands of western Bohemia, lands that were liberated by American troops in 1945. In every town and village she visited, the Czech people were waving American flags -- flags with 48 stars. The American troops had passed out the flags a half a century ago, when America had only 48 states. And these men and women in the Czech countryside had preserved those flags, held on to them year after year of Soviet domination, just as they had preserved their faith that freedom would finally come.

Freedom has come, and now it is up to each of us to determine what freedom will mean.

Last night, it was a beautiful evening in Prague, and I walked across the Charles Bridge. It was filled with young people, talking, laughing, listening to music. And I could not help but think that throughout Central Europe there were groups of young people doing the same.

But I was also reminded of the young men and women of earlier generations who lost years of their productive lives in prison or exile to make sacrifices for the values we celebrate today.

And I thought too of all the young people who fought and died for the freedom to form their own ideas, speak their own words, make their own decisions and dream their own dreams.

President Havel is known to RFE listeners. He was the voice of free Europe. He was a leader among those who dissented from Communist rule. He was an architect of the successful transition to democracy. He has been and remains one of the great moral leaders and philosophers of our era. And as President Havel knows so well, at the heart of freedom is a commitment to open exchange of information and opinion.

Communists sought to control those ideas and that information. But Radio Free Europe defied them. Those who advocate freedom believe when people are able to think for themselves, to make their own choices, to choose their own leaders and to express themselves politically, culturally and spiritually in their own manner, all of society will benefit. New and exciting ideas will find the soil fertile and grow. Life will be richer and we will find deeper meaning in our own lives and greater communion with others.

No institution has been more effective as an instrument for the full and open transmission of information than Radio Free Europe and no individual has been more eloquent an advocate of freedom or a more insightful instructor of freedom's responsibilities than Vaclav Havel.

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Following is a transcript of introductory remarks by Czech President Vaclav Havel today at RFE/RL headquarters. He spoke in English:

Thank you Madeleine (Albright). Nice to have you home. It is a great pleasure for us all to welcome Mrs. Hillary Clinton to the Czech Republic. I deem it an honor that she has accepted my invitation. Mrs. Clinton is esteemed by many in this country as a first lady who has filled this position with a sense of purpose and dedication. I am delighted that we shall hear her speak now.

The house where we have met for this occasion was once a symbol of the rule of totalitarianism over this country. Now with Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty as its occupants it has become a focal point spreading a message of freedom, peace and democracy to a great part of the world. It is significant that the voice of the First Lady of the United States of America will address us right here today.

Hillary, the floor is yours.

Following is a transcript of introductory remarks by Kevin Klose, President of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty:

Ladies and gentlemen, President Havel, Mrs. Clinton, Ambassador Walker, Ambassador Albright, Ambassador Zantovsky [Czech Ambassador to the United States], government officials, ministers, and distinguished guests.

On this Independence Day, 1996, the 220th celebration of the United States, we are also celebrating the second anniversary of the decision to move Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty to the former Federal Parliament Building here in Prague. We are deeply honored that Mrs. Clinton has chosen our headquarters from which to make an historic Independence Day address.

I am pleased to note that another greatly admired First Lady, Eleanor Roosevelt, broadcast a message of hope to the Soviet peoples from our New York bureau in January, 1958. And as Mrs. Roosevelt's address was carried to millions immediately, so Mrs. Clinton's address today will be carried eastward by our transmitters and satellite connections to our broadcast lands.

History has taught that democracy cannot live in an information vacuum. Indeed, a well-informed citizenry is essential for democracy and free-market economies to flourish. This powerful historic truth guides our radios each day. Our services in 23 languages provide accurate, objective news and information to millions of people across 11 time zones.

Citizens in newly emancipated lands can be freed from the past by the power of information itself to establish civil societies. The stakes are enormous. Civil societies that guard human freedoms across our broadcast region can guarantee a stable, peaceful future for all of Europe and the world. Our mission, to assist democratic change, to combat nationalism and racism, must not falter.

Thanks to the generosity and farsightedness of President Havel and the Czech government, matched by the wisdom and responsiveness of President Clinton and the United States government, we are here. We are proud to say to all, "Come to Prague."

Here at the radios you will find 350 Czechs and Americans, and men and women from more than 20 other countries, working in harmony and partnership to broadcast truthful information for the sake of our homelands and the futures of our children.

Thank you, one and all. Thank you, Mrs. Clinton, for joining us to celebrate our Independence Day.

Ladies and gentlemen, with great pleasure I introduce the United States Ambassador to the United Nations, Madeleine Albright.

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First Lady Applauds E. Europe

In Prague for the 4th, Clinton Asks Young Democracies Not to Waver

By Christine Spolar

Washington Post Foreign Service

PRAGUE, July 4—First lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, surrounded by modern-day champions of democratic principles, today encouraged developing democracies that "might question the pace of progress or the pain of change" not to waver.

"The greatest threat to democracy today is no longer a communist monolith with imperial designs," she told a crowd in the main hall of the Radio Free Europe headquarters here in the capital of the Czech Republic. Rather, Clinton said, "volatile economic and social conditions" have emerged that, in some cases, endanger ideals of a free society.

Although Clinton's speech followed the reelection of Russian President Boris Yeltsin in a hard-fought campaign against Communist leader Gennady Zyuganov, it included no allusions to that political contest or any of the democratic struggles in neighboring East European nations. After the speech, however, the first lady told reporters that Yeltsin's reelection a "very hopeful milestone for Russia and for all of us."

Instead, Clinton, as she had in visits this week to Poland and Romania, offered a feel-good vision of democracy in which she praised the struggles of each country and vowed faith in their continued progress.

Clinton, who is facing some tough domestic questions concerning the continuing Whitewater investigation and the FBI files controversy, chose one of the most stable of Eastern Europe's new democracies and one of the most receptive audiences for her Independence Day message.

The auditorium at the U.S.-funded broadcast center, once used as the Communists' parliament building, was filled with freedom fighters from another era and reporters who now broadcast to such countries as Yugoslavia, Bosnia and Bulgaria, where press freedom continues to be challenged.

The 25-minute address was later broadcast in 21 languages to an audience that, according to Radio Free Europe, includes 25 million listeners across Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

Clinton, warmly received by dissident-turned-president Vaclav Havel, spent much of her speech hearkening an ideal close to Havel's heart: the deepening and strengthening of civil



First lady Hillary Rodham Clinton addresses audience at Radio Free Europe headquarters in Prague during a three-day trip to the Czech Republic.

society, the efforts of individuals and community groups to further democratic progress.

"Civil society is the vehicle for our values, the way we convey who we are and what we stand for," Clinton said. "When we encounter the inevitable setbacks and historical bumps in the road, the alliance of values that fuels civil society is what will carry us through."

Clinton, who began her tour in Romania, stopped in Poland for two days before arriving in Prague. She will also visit Slovakia, Hungary, Estonia and Finland on a trip that, as aides explained, is meant to underscore U.S. support for new democracies in the region.

In Romania, Clinton visited teachers who are developing curricula that emphasize civic participation. In Poland, she met with more than a dozen women—senators, doctors, lawyers—who detailed their work in pushing for more powerful roles in government, business and the courts. She also visited the former Auschwitz concentration camp, where 1.5 million Jews were killed during the Nazi era and ex-

pressed horror at what she called "cold, rational evil."

Clinton has drawn friendly receptions in every city she has visited on her goodwill tour of the region. At the Wawel Castle in Krakow, Poland, she was greeted by more than 60 students from New York and Chicago who sang the "Star Spangled Banner"—off-key—to get her attention.

Clinton is visiting what are the most established democracies in the region. Unlike the fragile democracies of Bulgaria and Albania, countries such as the Czech Republic and Poland are considered strong candidates for entry to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and, in recent months, have held unquestioned free elections.

The Czech Republic, in fact, was still sorting through its latest exercise of democracy, parliamentary elections held in June, as Clinton delivered her speech. Prime Minister Vaclav Klaus, absent from the event, was sworn in today along with his second government since 1992—a three-party minority coalition. The Czech Republic split from what is now Slovakia in a smooth transition on Jan. 1, 1993.

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SLOVAKIA NGO FORUM

I have come to Central Europe with a message of hope, encouragement and support from the American people. I also bring special greetings from Slovak Americans who are proud of their ancestral homeland and the progress you are making toward a free market democracy. Slovakia is a new nation with an old history and a strong culture -- a new nation with a future among the democracies of Europe.

We have already seen you create the basic institutions of democracy where none existed before, and your economy is growing rapidly even under difficult conditions. You achieved the Velvet Revolution, and now the challenges of building a civil society lie ahead. For a democracy and a free market economy to blossom fully, certain conditions must exist. Those conditions include respect for the rule of law, a free press, an independent judiciary, and for minorities.

In light of the challenges that all democracies share, we must join in an alliance of democratic values. We must recognize that democracy is not just about institutions; it is also about the internalization of democratic values in people's hearts, minds and everyday lives.

In the short time I've been in Central Europe, I've already met with people who are forging this alliance of values and building democracy from the ground up. Non-governmental organizations throughout Central Europe today play a vital role in building a civil society and making democracy work. And, that is why I am eager to meet here with you today. I have enormous respect for the work that non-governmental groups are doing often under very trying conditions. Building a civil society is a difficult process, and I know you are facing special challenges here in Slovakia. I look forward to hearing more about the successes you have had and the obstacles that remain in our discussion today.