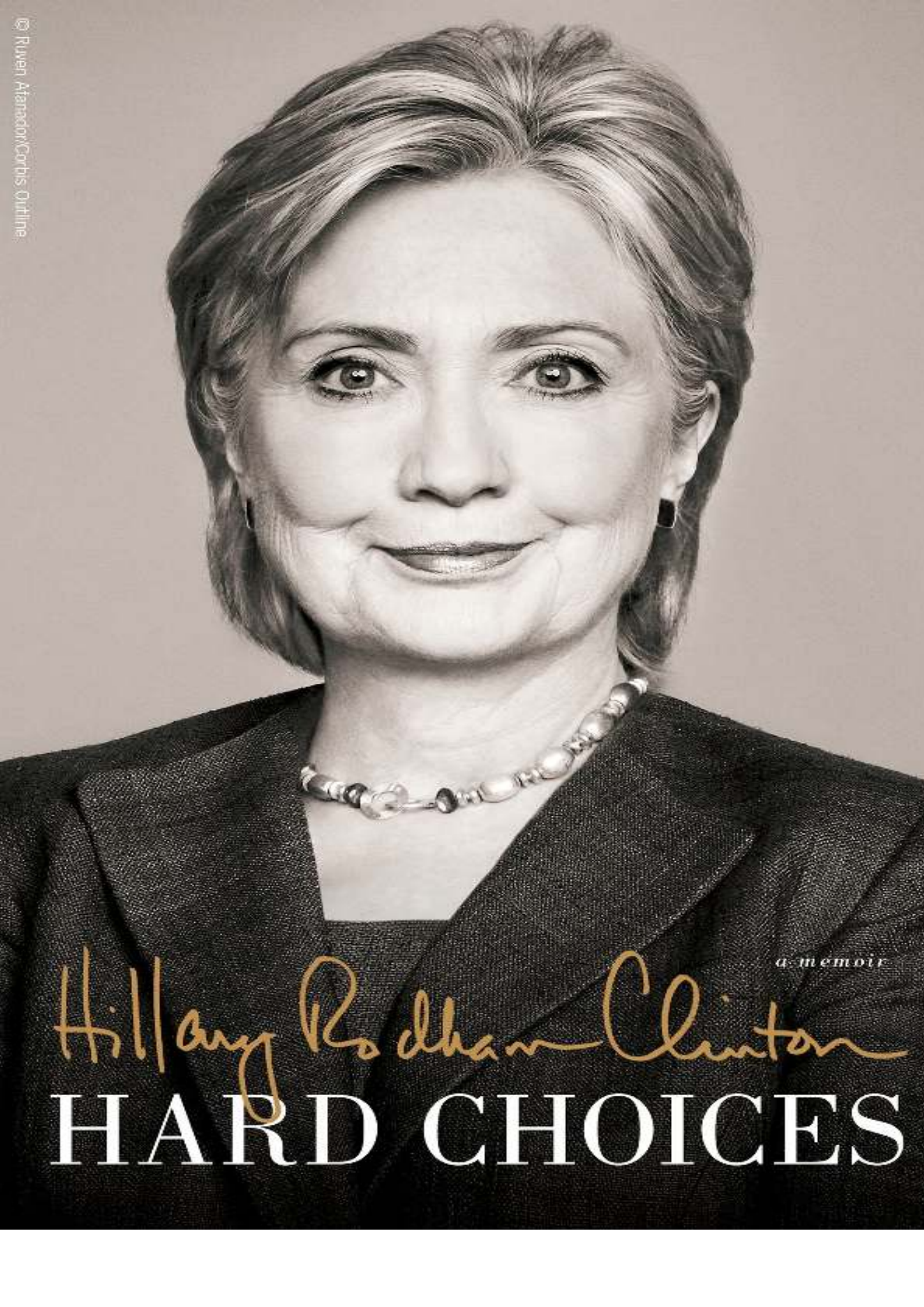


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*a memoir*

*Hillary Rodham Clinton*  
**HARD CHOICES**

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*Photographs*

*Acknowledgments*



*For America's diplomats and development experts, who represent our country and our values so well in  
places large and small, peaceful and perilous all over the world.*

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and

*In memory of my parents:*

*Hugh Ellsworth Rodham (1911–1993)*

*Dorothy Emma Howell Rodham (1919–2011)*

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All of us face hard choices in our lives. Some face more than their share. We have to decide how to balance the demands of work and family. Caring for a sick child or an aging parent. Figuring out how to pay for college. Finding a good job, and what to do if you lose it. Whether to get married—or stay married. How to give our kids the opportunities they dream about and deserve. Life is about making such choices. Our choices and how we handle them shape the people we become. For leaders and nations, they can mean the difference between war and peace, poverty and prosperity.

I'm eternally grateful that I was born to loving and supportive parents in a country that offered me every opportunity and blessing—factors beyond my control that set the stage for the life I've led and the values and faith I've embraced. When I chose to leave a career as a young lawyer in Washington to move to Arkansas to marry Bill and start a family, my friends asked, "Are you out of your mind?" I heard similar questions when I took on health care reform as First Lady, ran for office myself, and accepted President Barack Obama's offer to represent our country as Secretary of State.

In making these decisions, I listened to both my heart and my head. I followed my heart to Arkansas; I burst with love at the birth of our daughter, Chelsea; and it ached with the losses of my father and mother. My head urged me forward in my education and professional choices. And my heart and head together sent me into public service. Along the way, I've tried not to make the same mistake twice, to learn, to adapt, and to pray for the wisdom to make better choices in the future.

What's true in our daily lives is also true at the highest levels of government. Keeping America safe, strong, and prosperous presents an endless set of choices, many of which come with imperfect information and conflicting imperatives. Perhaps the most famous example from my four years as Secretary of State was President Obama's order to send a team of Navy SEALs into a moonless Pakistani night to bring Osama bin Laden to justice. The President's top advisors were divided. The intelligence was compelling, but far from definitive. The risks of failure were daunting. The stakes were significant for America's national security, our battle against al Qaeda, and our relationship with Pakistan. Most of all, the lives of those brave SEALs and helicopter pilots hung in the balance. It was as crisp and courageous a display of leadership as I've ever seen.

This book is about choices I made as Secretary of State and those made by President Obama and other leaders around the world. Some chapters are about events that made headlines; others are about the trends that will continue to define our world for future generations.

Of course, quite a few important choices, characters, countries, and events are not included here. To give them all the space they deserve, I would need many more pages. I could fill a whole book just with thanks to the talented and dedicated colleagues I relied on at the State Department. I have enormous gratitude for their service and friendship.

As Secretary of State I thought of our choices and challenges in three categories: The problems we inherited, including two wars and a global financial crisis; the new, often unexpected events and emerging threats, from the shifting sands of the Middle East to the turbulent waters of the Pacific to the uncharted terrain of cyberspace; and the opportunities presented by an increasingly networked world that could help lay the foundation for American prosperity and leadership in the 21st century.

I approached my work with confidence in our country's enduring strengths and purpose, and humility about how much remains beyond our knowledge and control. I worked to reorient American foreign policy around what I call "smart power." To succeed in the 21st century, we need to integrate the traditional tools of

foreign policy—diplomacy, development assistance, and military force—while also tapping the energy and ideas of the private sector and empowering citizens, especially the activists, organizers, and problem solvers we call civil society, to meet their own challenges and shape their own futures. We have to use all of America's strengths to build a world with more partners and fewer adversaries, more shared responsibility and fewer conflicts, more good jobs and less poverty, more broadly based prosperity with less damage to our environment.

As is usually the case with the benefit of hindsight, I wish we could go back and revisit certain choices. But I'm proud of what we accomplished. This century began traumatically for our country, with the terrorist attacks on 9/11, the long wars that followed, and the Great Recession. We needed to do better, and I believe we did.

These years were also a personal journey for me, both literally (I ended up visiting 112 countries and traveling nearly one million miles) and figuratively, from the painful end of the 2008 campaign to an unexpected partnership and friendship with my former rival Barack Obama. I've served our country in one way or another for decades. Yet during my years as Secretary of State, I learned even more about our exceptional strengths and what it will take for us to compete and thrive at home and abroad.

I hope this book will be of use to anyone who wants to know what America stood for in the early years of the 21st century, as well as how the Obama Administration confronted great challenges in a perilous time.

While my views and experiences will surely be scrutinized by followers of Washington's long-running soap opera—who took what side, who opposed whom, who was up and who was down—I didn't write the book for them.

I wrote it for Americans and people everywhere who are trying to make sense of this rapidly changing world of ours, who want to understand how leaders and nations can work together and why they sometimes collide, and how their decisions affect all our lives: How a collapsing economy in Athens, Greece, affected businesses in Athens, Georgia. How a revolution in Cairo, Egypt, impacts life in Cairo, Illinois. What a tense diplomatic encounter in St. Petersburg, Russia, means for families in St. Petersburg, Florida.

Not every story in this book has a happy ending or even an ending yet—that's not the world we live in—but all of them are stories about people we can learn from whether we agree with them or not. There are so many heroes out there: peacemakers who persevered when success seemed impossible, leaders who ignored political and pressure to make tough decisions, men and women with the courage to leave the past behind in order to shape a new and better future. These are some of the stories I tell.

I wrote this book to honor the exceptional diplomats and development experts whom I had the honor of leading as America's sixty-seventh Secretary of State. I wrote it for anyone anywhere who wonders whether the United States still has what it takes to lead. For me, the answer is a resounding "Yes." Talk of American decline has become commonplace, but my faith in our future has never been greater. While there are few problems in today's world that the United States can solve alone, there are even fewer that can be solved without the United States. Everything that I have done and seen has convinced me that America remains the "indispensable nation." I am just as convinced, however, that our leadership is not a birthright. It must be earned by every generation.

And it will be—so long as we stay true to our values and remember that, before we are Republicans or Democrats, liberals or conservatives, or any of the other labels that divide us as often as define us, we are Americans, all with a personal stake in our country.

When I began this book, shortly after leaving the State Department, I considered a number of titles. Helpfully, the *Washington Post* asked its readers to send in suggestions. One proposed "It Takes a World," a fitting sequel to *It Takes a Village*. My favorite was "The Scrunchie Chronicles: 112 Countries and It's Still About My Hair."



In the end, the title that best captured my experiences on the high wire of international diplomacy and my thoughts and feelings about what it will take to secure American leadership for the 21st century was *Hard Choices*.

One thing that has never been a hard choice for me is serving our country. It has been the greatest honor of my life.





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PART ONE

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# A Fresh Start

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## 2008: Team of Rivals

Why on earth was I lying on the backseat of a blue minivan with tinted windows? Good question. I was trying to leave my home in Washington, D.C., without being seen by the reporters staked out front.

It was the evening of June 5, 2008, and I was heading to a secret meeting with Barack Obama—and not the one I had hoped for and expected until just a few months earlier. I had lost and he had won. There hadn't been time yet to come to grips with that reality. But here we were. The Presidential primary campaign was historic because of his race and my gender, but it had also been grueling, heated, long, and close. I was disappointed and exhausted. I had campaigned hard to the very end, but Barack had won and now it was time to support him. The causes and people I had campaigned for, the Americans who had lost jobs and health care, who couldn't afford gas or groceries or college, who had felt invisible to their government for the previous seven years, now depended on his becoming the forty-fourth President of the United States.

This was not going to be easy for me, or for my staff and supporters who had given it their all. In fairness, it wasn't going to be easy for Barack and his supporters either. His campaign was as wary of me and my team as we were of them. There had been hot rhetoric and bruised feelings on both sides, and, despite a lot of pressure from his backers, I had refused to quit until the last vote was counted.

Barack and I had spoken two days earlier, late in the evening after the final primaries in Montana and South Dakota. "Let's sit down when it makes sense for you," he said. The next day we crossed paths backstage at a long-scheduled conference for the American Israel Public Affairs Committee in Washington. While a bit awkward, it gave our closest aides a chance to begin discussing details about a meeting. For me that was my traveling Chief of Staff, Huma Abedin, the savvy, indefatigable, and gracious young woman who had worked for me since my time in the White House. For Obama, it was Reggie Love, the former Duke University basketball player who rarely left Barack's side. Huma and Reggie had kept open a line of communication even during the most intense days of the campaign, a hotline of sorts, in part because after every primary, no matter who won, either Barack or I called the other to concede and offer congratulations. We exchanged calls that were cordial, sometimes even lighthearted, since at least one person on the line had a reason to be in a good mood. But more than a few calls were curt, just checking the box. Football coaches meet midfield after a game, but they don't always hug.

We needed a place away from the media spotlight to meet and talk, so I called my good friend Senator Dianne Feinstein of California to ask if we could use her Washington home. I'd been there before and thought it would work well for us to come and go without drawing attention. The ruse succeeded. I slipped around in the van's backseat as we took the sharp left turn at the end of my street onto Massachusetts Avenue and I was on my way.

I got there first. When Barack arrived, Dianne offered us each a glass of California Chardonnay and then left us in her living room, sitting in wing chairs facing each other in front of the fireplace. Despite our clash over the past year, we had developed a respect for each other rooted in our shared experiences. Running for President is intellectually demanding, emotionally draining, and physically taxing. But crazy as a nation

campaign can be, it is our democracy in action, warts and all. Seeing that up close helped us appreciate each other for having gotten into “the arena,” as Theodore Roosevelt called it, and going all the way.

By the time of our meeting I had known Barack for four years, two of which we spent debating each other. Like many Americans, I was impressed by his speech at the 2004 Democratic National Convention in Boston. Earlier that year I had supported his Senate campaign by hosting a fund-raiser at our home in Washington and attending one in Chicago. In my Senate office, to the surprise of many as time went on, I kept a photo of him, Michelle, their daughters, and me taken at that Chicago event. The photo was where I left it when I returned to the Senate full-time after the primaries. As colleagues, we had worked together on a number of bills, shared priorities and legislation. After Hurricane Katrina, Bill and I invited Barack to join us in Houston with President George H. W. and Barbara Bush to visit evacuees from the storm and meet with emergency management officials.

We were both lawyers who got our start as grassroots activists for social justice. Early in my career I worked for the Children’s Defense Fund, registered Hispanic voters in Texas, and represented poor people as a Legal Aid attorney. Barack was a community organizer on the South Side of Chicago. We had very different personal stories and experiences, but we shared the old-fashioned idea that public service is a noble endeavor, and we believed deeply in the basic bargain at the heart of the American Dream: No matter who you are or where you come from, if you work hard and play by the rules, you should have the opportunity to build a good life for yourself and your family.

But campaigns are based on highlighting differences, and ours was no exception. Despite our general agreement on most issues, we found plenty of reasons to disagree and exploited any opening to draw contrast. And although I understood that high-stakes political campaigns are not for the fainthearted or thin-skinned, both Barack and I and our staffs had long lists of grievances. It was time to clear the air. We had to get the White House to win, and it was important for the country, and for me personally, to move on.

We stared at each other like two teenagers on an awkward first date, taking a few sips of Chardonnay. Finally Barack broke the ice by ribbing me a bit about the tough campaign I had run against him. Then he asked for my help uniting our party and winning the presidency. He wanted the two of us to appear together soon, and he wanted the Democratic National Convention in Denver to be unified and energized. He emphasized that he wanted Bill’s help as well.

I had already decided that I would agree to his request for help, but I also needed to raise some of the unpleasant moments of the past year. Neither of us had had total control over everything said or done in our campaigns, let alone by our most passionate supporters or by the political press, including a large herd of bloggers. Remarks on both sides, including some of my own, had been taken out of context, but the preposterous charge of racism against Bill was particularly painful. Barack made clear that neither he nor his team believed that accusation. As to the sexism that surfaced during the campaign, I knew that it arose from cultural and psychological attitudes about women’s roles in society, but that didn’t make it any easier for me and my supporters. In response Barack spoke movingly about his grandmother’s struggle in business and his great pride in Michelle, Malia, and Sasha and how strongly he felt they deserved full and equal rights in our society.

The candor of our conversation was reassuring and reinforced my resolve to support him. While I would definitely have preferred to be asking for his support instead of the other way around, I knew his success was now the best way to advance the values and progressive policy agenda I had spent the past two years—and my lifetime—fighting for.

When he asked what he needed to do to convince my supporters to join his campaign, I said he’d need to give them time, but a genuine effort to make them feel welcome would persuade the vast majority to come around. After all, he was now the standard-bearer for our agenda. If I could shift from doing my best to be

him to doing everything I could to elect him President, so could they. Eventually almost all of them did.

~~After an hour and a half, we'd both said what we wanted to say and talked about how to move forward.~~ Later that night Barack emailed a proposed joint statement that would be released by his campaign confirming the meeting and our "productive discussion" about what "needs to be done to succeed in November." He also asked for a number to call Bill so that they could speak directly.

The next day, June 6, Bill and I hosted my campaign staff in the backyard of our house in D.C. It was a boiling hot day. We all tried not to overheat as we reminisced about the unbelievable twists and turns of the primary season. Being surrounded by the dedicated team that had fought so hard for me was inspiring and humbling. Some were friends who had worked with us on campaigns going all the way back to Arkansas. For many of the younger people, this was their first race. I didn't want them to be discouraged by defeat or turned off of electoral politics and public service, so I told them to be proud of the campaign we'd run and to keep working for the causes and candidates we believed in. I also knew I had to lead by example, and when my fireside chat with Barack the night before was a start, it was only that. It would take time for many to get past all that had happened, and I knew that people would be taking their cues from me. So, starting right then, I made clear I would be supporting Barack Obama 100 percent.

Despite the circumstances, people relaxed and had a good time. My dear friend Stephanie Tubbs Jones, the fearless African American Congresswoman from Ohio who resisted intense pressure and stayed by my side throughout the primaries, dangled her feet in the swimming pool and told funny stories. Two months later she would die suddenly from a brain aneurism, a terrible loss for her family and constituents and for me and my family. For this day at least, we were still sisters in arms, looking forward to better days ahead.

I signed off on the time and place for my final campaign appearance the next day and began to work on my speech. Writing this one was complicated. I had to thank my supporters, celebrate the historical significance of my campaign as the first woman to win a primary, and endorse Barack in a way that would help him in the general election. That was a lot of freight for one speech to carry, and I didn't have much time to get it right. I remembered bitter primary battles that went all the way to the Convention, especially Ted Kennedy's failed challenge to President Carter in 1980, and I would not let that history repeat itself. It would not be good for our party or for the country, so I was going to move quickly to publicly back Barack and campaign for him.

I wanted to strike the right balance between respecting my voters' support and looking toward the future. In person and over the phone, I went back and forth with speechwriters and advisors seeking the right tone and language. Jim Kennedy, an old friend with a magic touch for evocative language, had woken up in the middle of the night thinking about how the 18 million people who had voted for me had each added a hole in the ultimate glass ceiling. That gave me something to build on. I didn't want to repeat the standard bromides; this endorsement had to be in my own words, a convincing personal argument about why we should all work to elect Barack. I stayed up until the early hours of the morning, sitting at our kitchen table with Bill making revisions to draft after draft.

I gave my speech on Saturday, June 7, at the National Building Museum in Washington. We'd had trouble finding a location that could hold the expected number of supporters and press. I was relieved when we settled on what used to be called the "Pension Building," with its soaring columns and high ceilings. Originally built to serve Civil War veterans, widows, and orphans, it is a monument to the American spirit of shared responsibility. Bill, Chelsea, and my then eighty-nine-year-old mother, Dorothy Rodham, were with me as I made my way through the crowd to the podium. People were crying before I even started talking.

The atmosphere was a bit like a wake, charged with sadness and anger to be sure, but also with pride and even love. One woman wore a huge "Hillary for Pope!" button. Well, that certainly wasn't in the stars, but I was moved by the sentiment.

If the speech was hard to write, it was even harder to deliver. I felt I had let down so many millions of people, especially the women and girls who had invested their dreams in me. I started by thanking everyone who had campaigned and voted for me; I told them I believed in public service and would remain committed to “helping people solve their problems and live their dreams.”

I gave a special shout-out to the women of my mother’s generation, who were born before women even had the right to vote but lived long enough to see my campaign for President. One of them was eighty-eight-year-old Florence Steen of South Dakota, who insisted that her daughter bring an absentee ballot to her hospice bedside so she could vote in the Democratic primary. She passed away before the election, though, and under state law her ballot didn’t count. But her daughter later told a reporter, “My dad’s an ornery old cowboy, and he didn’t like it when he heard mom’s vote wouldn’t be counted. I don’t think he had voted in 20 years. But he voted in place of my mom.” Being a vessel for the hopes and prayers of millions of people was a daunting responsibility, and I tried never to forget that the campaign was about them far more than it was about me.

I addressed the disappointment of my supporters directly: “Although we weren’t able to shatter the highest, hardest glass ceiling this time, thanks to you, it’s got about 18 million cracks in it. And the light is shining through like never before, filling us all with the hope and the sure knowledge that the path will be a little easier next time. That has always been the history of progress in America.” I pledged, “You will always find me on the front lines of democracy—fighting for the future.” Then I added, “The way to continue our fight now, to accomplish the goals for which we stand, is to take our energy, our passion, our strength and our courage—all we can to help elect Barack Obama the next President of the United States.”

As hard as all this was for me, I learned a lot from losing. I had experienced my share of personal and public disappointments over the years, but until 2008 I had enjoyed an unusual run of electoral successes—first as part of my husband’s campaigns in Arkansas and for President, and then in my races for Senate in 2000 and 2006. The night of the Iowa caucuses, when I placed third, was excruciating.

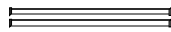
As I moved on to New Hampshire, and then across the country, I found my footing and my voice. My spirits were lifted and my determination hardened by the many Americans I met along the way. I dedicated my victory in the Ohio primary to everyone across America “who’s ever been counted out but refused to be knocked out, and for everyone who has stumbled but stood right back up, and for everyone who works hard and never gives up.” The stories of the people I met reaffirmed my faith in the unbounded promise of our country but also drove home just how much we had to do to ensure that that promise was shared by all. And although the campaign was long and exhausting, and cost way too much money, in the end the process succeeded in offering voters a real choice about the future of the country.

One silver lining of defeat was that I came out of the experience realizing I no longer cared so much about what the critics said about me. I learned to take criticism seriously but not personally, and the campaign certainly tested me on that. It also freed me. I could let my hair down—literally. Once, in an interview during a trip to India when I was Secretary of State, Jill Dougherty of CNN asked about the media’s obsession with my showing up in foreign capitals after long flights wearing glasses and no makeup. “Hillary Au Natural,” she called it. I had to laugh. “I feel so relieved to be at the stage I’m at in my life right now, Jill, because if I want to wear my glasses, I’m wearing my glasses. If I want to pull my hair back, I’m pulling my hair back.” Some of the reporters covering me at the State Department were surprised when I occasionally ditched the diplomatic talking points and said exactly what was on my mind, whether it was telling off the leader of North Korea or pushing the Pakistanis on the whereabouts of Osama bin Laden. But I no longer had much patience for walking on eggshells.

Losing also would give me the chance to talk to leaders of other nations about how to accept difficult verdicts at home and move forward for the good of one’s country. All over the world there are heads of state



who claim to stand for democracy, but then do all they can to suppress it when voters protest or decide to vote them out of office. I realized I had the chance to offer a different model. Of course, I was lucky to have lost to a candidate whose views dovetailed closely with my own and who had taken such pains to include me on his campaign team. Still, the fact that we had been fierce opponents and were now working together was a pretty impressive argument for democracy—one that I would find myself making in the years to come time and time again around the world in a job I had no idea I'd be doing.



Three weeks after my speech at the Building Museum, I was on the way to Unity, New Hampshire, a town chosen for my first joint appearance with Barack not only for its name but also because we had both gotten exactly the same number of votes there in the primary: 107 votes for Barack and 107 for me. We met in Washington and flew together on his campaign plane. When we landed there was a large tour bus waiting to take us the nearly two hours to Unity. I thought back to the amazing bus tour Bill and I took with Al and Tipper Gore right after the 1992 Democratic Convention and remembered Timothy Crouse's famous book about the 1972 campaign, *The Boys on the Bus*. This time I was the "girl" on the bus, and the candidate was neither me or my husband. I took a deep breath and got on board.

Barack and I sat together talking easily. I shared some of our experiences raising a daughter in the White House. He and Michelle were already thinking about what life might be like for Malia and Sasha if he won. The rally itself, in a big field on a gorgeous summer day, was designed to send an unmistakable message: the primary was behind us and we were now one team. People chanted both our names as we walked on stage to U2's "Beautiful Day." Large letters behind the crowd spelled out U-N-I-T-Y, and a blue banner behind the stage read, "Unite for Change." "Today and every day going forward," I told the crowd, "we stand shoulder to shoulder for the ideals we share, the values we cherish, and the country we love." When I finished, the crowd started cheering, "Thank you, Hillary. Thank you, Hillary." Even Barack joined in. "You guys peeked at my speech. You already know the first line," he joked. Then he spoke eloquently and generously about the race he had run. Bill and Barack had a long talk a few days later, clearing up lingering issues from the primaries and agreeing to campaign together.

The biggest event of the summer was the Democratic National Convention in Denver at the end of August. I had attended every Democratic convention since 1976, and, for obvious reasons, I had particularly fond memories from 1992 in New York and 1996 in Chicago. This time Barack asked me to deliver a primary time speech formally nominating him, and I agreed.

When the time came, Chelsea introduced me. I could not have been prouder of her or more grateful for how hard she had worked throughout the long primary campaign. She had crisscrossed the country on her own, speaking to young people and energizing crowds everywhere she went. Seeing her standing there before the packed convention hall, I couldn't get over how poised and altogether adult she had become.

Soon it was my turn. I was greeted by a sea of red-white-and-blue "Hillary" signs. For as many speeches as I'd given, this was a big one, in front of a huge audience in the arena and millions more watching on TV. I have to admit I was nervous. I tinkered with the speech right up until the very last minute, so that when the motorcade arrived one of my aides had to leap out of the van and sprint ahead to hand the thumb drive to the teleprompter operator. The Obama campaign had asked to see it much earlier, and when I didn't share it, some of his advisors worried I must be hiding something they wouldn't want me to say. But I was simply using every second I had to get it right.

It was not the speech I had long hoped to deliver at this convention, but it was an important one. "Whether you voted for me, or you voted for Barack, the time is now to unite as a single party with a single purpose. We

are on the same team, and none of us can afford to sit on the sidelines. This is a fight for the future. And it's a fight we must win together," I told the crowd. "~~Barack Obama is my candidate. And he must be our President.~~" Afterward Joe Biden greeted me outside the green room, falling on bent knee to kiss my hand. (Who says chivalry is dead!) Barack called from Billings, Montana, to thank me.

Earlier that day I had run into Michelle backstage at an event, and she was also appreciative of everything we were doing to help Barack. Of course, Bill was not the only spouse in the race, and Barack and I both learned that often it's your family who take attacks on you the hardest. But Michelle and I bonded over the challenges of raising a family in the public eye. Months later, over a private lunch in the Yellow Oval Room on the second floor of the White House, we talked about how the new First Family was settling in and her plans to combat childhood obesity through healthier eating and exercise. We sat at a small table looking out the windows facing south, over the Truman Balcony, toward the Washington Monument. This was my first visit back to the family quarters since leaving on January 20, 2001. I loved seeing the residence staff, who help every President's family feel at home in the White House. When I became First Lady back in 1993, it meant so much to me to hear from Jacqueline Kennedy, Lady Bird Johnson, Betty Ford, Rosalynn Carter, Nancy Reagan, and Barbara Bush about their experiences. Only a few of us have had the privilege of living in the People's House, and I wanted to provide any support I could.

I had thought my speech to the convention would be my only role there, but a determined group of non-delegates still intended to vote for me during the roll call of the states. The Obama campaign asked if I would go to the convention the next day and interrupt the roll call and instead move for an immediate declaration that Barack Obama was our party's nominee. I agreed but understood why more than a few of my friends and supporters, and delegates begged me not to do it. They wanted to finish what they had started. They all wanted history to record that a woman had won nearly two dozen primaries and caucuses and close to one thousand nine hundred delegates, something that had never happened before. They argued that if the roll call was cut short, our efforts would never be properly recognized. I couldn't help but be moved by their fierce loyalty, but I thought it was more important to show that we were completely united.

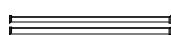
Some of my supporters were also upset that Barack had chosen Biden to be his running mate instead of me. But I was never interested in being Vice President. I was looking forward to returning to the Senate where I hoped to help lead the charge on health care reform, job creation, and other urgent challenges. I heartily approved of Barack's choice and knew Joe would be an asset in the election and in the White House.

We kept my going to the floor a secret, so it caused quite a stir among the delegates and reporters when I suddenly appeared among the thousands of excited Democrats just as New York was called to announce its votes. Surrounded by friends and colleagues, I declared, "With eyes firmly fixed on the future, in the spirit of unity, with the goal of victory, with faith in our party and our country, let's declare together in one voice right here, right now, that Barack Obama is our candidate and he will be our President." Then I moved to suspend the roll call and nominate Barack by acclamation. Up at the podium, Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi asked if there was a second for my motion, and the whole convention roared its approval. The atmosphere crackled with energy and history in the making as we rallied together behind the first African American nominee of a major party.

There was one more big surprise that week. The morning after Barack addressed the convention, Senator John McCain, the presumptive Republican nominee, announced that Governor Sarah Palin of Alaska was his choice for running mate. A resounding "Who?" echoed across the nation. We would all get to know her in the coming months, but at that point she was a near-complete unknown, even to political junkies. The Obama campaign suspected that her nomination was a blatant attempt to scuttle their hope of welcoming the woman who had vigorously supported me. They immediately issued a dismissive statement and reached out to me to say the hopes I would follow suit. But I wouldn't. I was not going to attack Palin just for being a woman.

appealing for support from other women. I didn't think that made political sense, and it didn't feel right. So I said no, telling them there'd be plenty of time for criticism. A few hours later, the Obama campaign reversed itself and congratulated Governor Palin.

Over the following weeks, Bill and I attended more than one hundred events and fund-raisers in which we spoke with supporters and undecided voters and advocated for Barack and Joe. On the morning of November 4—Election Day—we went to a local elementary school near our home in Chappaqua, New York, to cast our votes. It was the end of an unbelievably long journey. That night Bill was glued to the television, doing what he always does on election nights: analyzing all the data he could find on turnout and early exit polls. Not knowing that there was nothing more we could do to help, I tried to stay busy with other things until there was a result. It turned out to be a decisive victory, without the drawn-out waiting game we had seen in 2004 or, famously, in 2000. Huma called Reggie Love, and soon I was congratulating the President-elect. (That's how I started thinking of him, referring to him, and addressing him the moment the election was over, just as after the inauguration he would become "Mr. President.") I was elated, proud, and, frankly, relieved. It was time to exhale, and I was looking forward to getting back to the life and work I loved.



Five days after the election was a quiet Sunday afternoon, offering the perfect chance to decompress. The autumn air was crisp, and Bill and I decided to go to Mianus River Gorge, one of the many trails near where we live in Westchester County. With our hectic lives, we often seek to clear our minds with long walks together. I remember that one as particularly liberating. The election was over, and I could get back to my job in the Senate. I loved representing the people of New York, and the campaign had left me with a full agenda that I was eager to push forward. I was brimming with ideas, all of which I hoped would be strengthened by a close relationship with the incoming President.

Little did I know how close that relationship would become. In the middle of our walk, Bill's cell phone rang. When he answered he heard the voice of the President-elect, who told him he wanted to talk to both of us. Bill explained that we were in the middle of a nature preserve and needed to call back when we got home. Why was he calling? Maybe he wanted our input on the team he was putting together. Or to strategize about a major policy challenge, like economic recovery or health care reform. Or perhaps he simply wanted to line up our help for a quick burst of legislative activity in the spring. Bill, remembering his own hectic transition, guessed that he wanted to run names by us for White House and Cabinet positions.

When we got back to our house, Bill's prediction about the call proved to be accurate—for him. The President-elect picked his brain about possible members of the economic team he was assembling to tackle the financial crisis facing the country. Then he told Bill that he was looking forward to getting together with me sometime soon. I assumed he wanted to talk about working closely together on his legislative package in the Senate.

But I was curious, so I called a few members of my Senate staff to see what they thought, including my spokesman, Philippe Reines. Philippe is passionate, loyal, and shrewd. He usually knows what Washington movers and shakers are thinking even before they do. And I can always trust him to speak his mind. This time was no different. Philippe had told me two days earlier about rumors that I would be named everything from Secretary of Defense to Postmaster General, but he had confidently predicted, "He's going to offer you Secretary of State." "That's ridiculous!" I responded immediately. "Not for a million reasons!" I thought, not for the first time, that Philippe was delusional. And frankly I was not interested in serving in the Cabinet. I wanted to go back to the Senate and my work for New York. From 9/11 to the financial crash of 2008, it had been a rough eight years for New Yorkers. They had taken a chance on me back in 2000, and now the

needed a strong and committed advocate in Washington. And I liked being my own boss and setting my own schedule and agenda. ~~Joining the Cabinet would mean giving up some of that autonomy.~~

When I called Philippe on Sunday, he informed me that the media had started its cycle of speculation. ABC's *This Week* mentioned rumors that President-elect Obama was considering me for the position of Secretary of State. The program added that he was attracted by the idea of having a "team of rivals" in the Cabinet, an allusion to the 2005 best-selling history by Doris Kearns Goodwin, recounting Abraham Lincoln's choice in 1860 of William Henry Seward, a Senator from New York, to be his Secretary of State after defeating him for the Republican nomination.

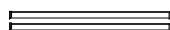
Over time I had become a big fan of Seward's, so this parallel was particularly intriguing to me. He was one of the leading lights of his day, a principled reformer, a strong critic of slavery, Governor and Senator from New York, and ultimately Secretary of State. He also helped President Lincoln draft the Proclamation of Thanksgiving, marking the day as an American holiday. He was described by a contemporary as "ruffled or excited never, astute, keen to perceive a joke, appreciative of a good thing, and fond of 'good victuals.'" I could relate to that.

Seward had been a well-regarded Senator from New York when he tried to get the presidential nomination, before running into a versatile, up-and-coming politician from Illinois. The parallel was not perfect; I hope no one ever describes me as a "wise macaw," which is how Seward appeared to the historian Henry Adams. And I was privately amused that the man who did more than anyone to thwart Seward's chances for President was the journalist Horace Greeley, who has a prominent statue in Chappaqua.

Seward also appealed to me for reasons that went deeper than historical coincidences. I had been to his house in Auburn, New York, a stop on the Underground Railroad for slaves fleeing to freedom from the South. It was filled with mementos of an extraordinary career and his fourteen-month trip around the world after leaving office. The diplomatic gallery includes tributes from nearly all of the world's leaders, most of whom were crowned monarchs, paying tribute to a humble servant of democracy.

For all his worldliness, Seward was deeply devoted to his constituents, and they to him. He spoke eloquently about the inclusive country America could be. And he followed up his words with actions. Harriet Tubman, the heroic conductor of the Underground Railroad, settled in a house in Seward's hometown, on land purchased from Seward himself. His friendship with Lincoln was especially moving. After conceding defeat in their contest for the nomination, Seward worked hard for Lincoln's election, crossing the country by rail and giving speeches. He soon became one of Lincoln's trusted advisors. He was there at the beginning, suggesting the breathtaking final paragraph of Lincoln's first inaugural address, which Lincoln turned into an appeal to "the better angels of our nature." And he was there at the end; the plot to kill Lincoln included a coordinated attack on Seward as well, though he survived. Lincoln and Seward traveled a great distance together, and their friendship and hard work helped save the Union.

Seward's work was not quite done when the Civil War ended. In 1867, in a final burst of statesmanship, he engineered the purchase of Alaska from Russia. The price, \$7.2 million, was considered so extravagant that the deal was called "Seward's Folly," although we now realize it was one of the great land transactions in American history (and a steal at 2 cents an acre). Right after graduating from college, I spent a memorable few months in Alaska, gutting fish and washing dishes. Now, as my name began to be referenced more often in connection with the job at State, I started to wonder if Seward's ghost was following me. Still, I had to ask myself, if the President-elect asked me to serve, was it pure folly to abandon the Senate and my entire domestic agenda for a short-term assignment at State?



The night after President-elect Obama's phone call with Bill, a reporter at *Glamour's* Women of the Year awards ceremony in New York City asked me on my way into the event whether I would consider accepting a position in the Obama Administration. I expressed what I was feeling at the time: "I am happy being Senator from New York." That was true. But I was also enough of a realist to know that anything can happen in politics.

The morning of Thursday, November 13, I flew to Chicago with Huma to meet with the President-elect and made it there uneventfully. When we arrived at the transition headquarters, I was ushered into a large wood-paneled room furnished with a few chairs and one folding table, where I would meet alone with the President-elect.

He looked more relaxed and rested than he had for months. Even though he faced the most serious economic crisis since the Great Depression, he appeared confident. As I later saw him do often, he went straight to the point by skipping the small talk and asking me to serve as his Secretary of State. He told me he had been thinking of me for the position for a while and believed I was the best person—in his words, the only person—who could serve in that role at this moment in time, with the unique challenges America faced home and abroad.

Despite all the whispers, rumors, and point-blank questions, I was still floored. Only months before Barack Obama and I had been locked in one of the hardest-fought primary campaigns in history. Now he was asking me to join his administration, in the most senior Cabinet post, fourth in the line of succession to the presidency. This was like a rerun of the final season of *The West Wing*; there, too, the new President-elect offers his defeated opponent the job of Secretary of State. In the TV version, the rival turns down the job first, but the President-elect refuses to take no for an answer.

In real life, President-elect Obama presented a well-considered argument, explaining that he would have to concentrate most of his time and attention on the economic crisis and needed someone of stature to represent him abroad. I listened carefully and then respectfully declined his offer. Of course I was honored to be asked. I cared deeply about foreign policy and believed that it was essential to restore our country's damaged standing in the world. There were two wars to wind down, emerging threats to counter, and new opportunities to seize. But I also felt passionately invested in reversing the massive job losses we were seeing at home, fixing our broken health care system, and creating new opportunities for working families in America. People were hurting and needed a champion to fight for them. All of that and more was waiting for me in the Senate. Plus there were so many seasoned diplomats who I thought could also be great Secretaries of State. "What about Richard Holbrooke?" I suggested. "Or George Mitchell?" But the President-elect would not be put off, and I left saying that I would think about it. On the flight back to New York, I thought about nothing else.

Before I even landed back in New York, press speculation was intense. Two days later, "Obama's Talk with Clinton Creates Buzz" ran on the front page of the *New York Times*, noting that the prospect of my nomination as the nation's top diplomat could provide a "surprise ending" to the "Obama-Clinton drama" of the Presidential campaign. Out of respect for the President-elect, I avoided confirming that an offer had even been made.

I had promised to think it over, so I did. Over the course of the next week, I talked extensively with family, friends, and colleagues. Bill and Chelsea were patient listeners and urged me to carefully weigh the offer. My friends were evenly divided between enthusiasm and skepticism. I had a lot to think about and only a few days to make up my mind. The job *was* tantalizing, and I was confident I could do it well. I'd been grappling for years with the challenges facing the United States around the world, as both First Lady and Senator, and I already had relationships with many key leaders, from Angela Merkel in Germany to Hamid Karzai in Afghanistan.

John Podesta, a valued friend, the cochair of the Obama Transition Team, and a former Chief of Staff for my husband in the White House, called me on November 16 to talk over a few issues and to reinforce how much the President-elect wanted me to accept. We discussed some of the more practical concerns, like how he would pay off more than \$6 million remaining from my campaign debt if I became Secretary of State and therefore would have to stay out of partisan politics. I also did not want to do anything that would limit the life-saving work Bill was doing around the world through the Clinton Foundation. Much was made in the press about possible conflicts of interest between his philanthropic efforts and my potential new position. That problem was quickly dispatched after the Presidential Transition Team vetted the Foundation's donors and Bill agreed to disclose all their names. Bill also had to give up holding overseas versions of the innovative philanthropy conference he had started, the Clinton Global Initiative, to avoid any perceived conflict. "The good you can do as Secretary of State will more than outweigh whatever work I have to cut back on," Bill assured me.

Throughout this process, and for the next four years, Bill was, as he had been for decades, my essential support and sounding board. He reminded me to focus on the "trendlines," not just the headlines, and to rely on the experiences.

I sought the advice of a few of my trusted colleagues. Senators Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Mikulski and Congresswoman Ellen Tauscher encouraged me to accept, as did my fellow Senator from New York, Chuck Schumer. While many enjoyed pointing out how different Chuck and I were and how competitive we were at times, the truth is that he and I were a great team, and I respected his instincts. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid surprised me when he told me the President-elect had asked him what he thought of the idea earlier in the fall, during a campaign stop in Las Vegas. He said that although he didn't want to lose me in the Senate, he didn't see how I could refuse the request.

And so my deliberations continued. One hour I leaned toward accepting; the next I was making plans for legislation I would introduce in the new session of Congress. I didn't know it then, but I later learned of the shenanigans my team and the President-elect's were playing to make it tough for me to say no. My staff told me it was Joe Biden's birthday so that I would call him two days earlier than the real date, giving Joe the opportunity to add to the cajoling. Incoming White House Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel pretended the President-elect was indisposed when I tried to call to say no.

Finally, the President-elect and I spoke on the phone in the wee hours of November 20. He was attentive to my concerns, answered my questions, and was enthusiastic about the work we might do together. I told him that although Bill's charitable work and my campaign debt weighed on me, I was most worried about whether my highest and best use was serving in the Senate rather than the Cabinet. And, to be honest, I was looking for a more regular schedule after the long campaign. I laid all this out, and he listened patiently—and then assured me all my concerns could be addressed.

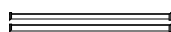
Shrewdly, the President-elect also steered the conversation away from the job offer and toward the job itself. We talked about the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the perpetual challenges posed by Iran and North Korea, and how the United States might emerge swiftly and confidently from the recession. It was great to exchange ideas in a comfortable private conversation after a year spent hammering away at each other under the hot lights of televised campaign debates. In retrospect, this conversation was even more important than it seemed at the time. We were laying the groundwork for a shared agenda that would guide American foreign policy for years to come.

Yet my answer was still no. The President-elect again refused to accept that. "I want to get to yes," he told me. "You're the best person for the job." He would not take no for an answer. That impressed me.

After I hung up, I stayed up most of the night. What would I expect if the tables were turned? Suppose I had been elected President and wanted Barack Obama to serve as my Secretary of State? Suppose I had

inherited the challenges facing him? Of course I would want him to say yes—and quickly, so we could move on to other problems. I would want the most talented public servants to come together and work hard, for the good of the nation. The more I thought about it, the more I knew the President-elect was right. The country was in trouble, both at home and abroad. He needed a Secretary of State who could step immediately onto the global stage and begin repairing the damage we had inherited.

Finally, I kept returning to a simple idea: When your President asks you to serve, you should say yes. As much as I loved my work in the Senate and believed I had more to contribute there, he said he needed me at the State Department. My father served in the Navy in World War II, training young sailors to go off to fight in the Pacific. And although he often grumbled about the decisions various Presidents made in Washington, he and my mother instilled in me a deep sense of duty and service. It was reinforced by my family's Methodist faith, which taught us, "Do all the good you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can." The call to service had helped me decide to take the plunge into elected office when I launched my first Senate campaign in 2000, and now it helped me make the hard choice to leave the Senate and accept the position of Secretary of State.



By the morning I had reached my decision, and I asked to speak to the President-elect one more time. He was delighted that I had come around. He guaranteed that I would have direct access to him and could see him alone whenever I needed to. He said I could choose my own team, though he would have some suggestions. As someone who had been in the White House, I knew how important both of those promises were. History had shown time and again that the State Department could be neglected by the White House, usually with negative results. The President-elect assured me that this time would be different: "I want to be sure you're successful." He went on to say that he knew our foreign policy partnership would not be without mistakes and turbulence, but that we would strive to make the best decisions possible for our country. We had not yet developed the close relationship that would follow, but I was touched when he said, "Contrary to reports, I think we can become good friends." That comment stuck with me in the years to come.

The President fully lived up to his promises. He gave me free rein to choose my team, relied on my advice as his chief foreign policy advisor on the major decisions on his desk, and insisted on meeting often so we could speak candidly. He and I generally sat down together at least once a week when we weren't traveling. Then there were full Cabinet meetings, National Security Council meetings, and bilateral meetings with visiting foreign leaders—and those were just the meetings with the President in attendance. I also met regularly at the White House with the Secretary of Defense and the National Security Advisor. If you add it all up, despite my vigorous travel schedule, I was at the White House more than seven hundred times during my four years. After losing the election, I never expected to spend so much time there.

In the years to come, I wouldn't always agree with the President and other members of his team; some of those times you'll read about in this book, but others will remain private to honor the cone of confidentiality that should exist between a President and his Secretary of State, especially while he is still in office. But he and I developed a strong professional relationship and, over time, forged the personal friendship he had predicted and that I came to value deeply. Not too many weeks into the new administration, on a mild April afternoon, the President suggested we finish one of our weekly meetings at the picnic table outside the Oval Office on the South Lawn, right next to Malia and Sasha's new playground. That suited me perfectly. The press called it our "picnic table strategy session." I'd call it "Two folks having a good conversation."

On Monday, December 1, President-elect Obama announced me as his choice to serve as the sixty-seventh Secretary of State. As I stood next to him, he reiterated publicly what he had told me privately: "Hillary

appointment is a sign to friend and foe of the seriousness of my commitment to renew American diplomacy.

~~The next month, on January 20, 2009, I watched with my husband in the biting cold as Barack Obama~~  
took the oath of office. Our rivalry, once fierce, was over. Now we were partners.



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