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**From:** sbwhoeop [redacted]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 8, 2010 2:35 PM  
**To:** H  
**Subject:** H: First review of your speech. Goad you used Acheson. Sid

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 Hillary's Homerun of a Speech  
 by Tunku Varadarajan  
 September 8, 2010 | 12:16pm

[redacted] **Hillary Clinton speaks at the Council on Foreign Relations September 8, 2010 in Washington, DC. (Mark Wilson / Getty Images) The secretary of State delivered the best speech of the Obama administration this morning. Tunku Varadarajan on her "new American moment"—and why she's better than her boss.**

Behold the Hillary Doctrine. And heap abundant gratitude—and rose petals if you have them on hand—on the firm, unfussy, deeply reassuring woman who has just offered it up to the world.

In the 20 months since this administration began administering (a verb I use only in the loosest sense), the speech Wednesday morning by Hillary Clinton, delivered at the Council on Foreign Relations, was the first time we have been given an unreserved lift of the heart by any of its members. It was, by far, the best speech of this administration. Whereas her president has frequently wrung his elegant hands, doing the rounds of the world to reassure foreign leaders that America is a cuddly bunny at heart, the secretary of State declared Wednesday that we are all living "a new American moment—a moment when our global leadership is essential." There was no bowing from her to potentates in robes; there was, instead, a promise that "we will do everything we can to exercise the traditions of American leadership at home and abroad."

What is so piquant here is not the fact that Hillary understands that Obama is president. It is the growing sense that Hillary would have made a much, much better president than Obama.

Try this for size: "The United States can, must and will lead in the new century." In order to do that, Clinton promised "a new global architecture," "built to last and withstand stress." And in a muscular departure from the way in which this administration—for fear of seeming Bush-like—has been shrinking from the unembarrassed propagation of American values, she uttered these plainspoken, unadorned words: "Democracy needs defending."

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Human rights, too, came in for a robust airing: China was scolded, and exhorted to follow "the rules of the road" in its aspiration to be a great power; as was Russia, for its invasion of Georgia. The message: We may live in a multipolar world, but we have higher standards by far than those who would style themselves as our equals.

Clinton used phrases like "American might," words that we are more accustomed to hearing from Republicans—words that we've come to believe that many Democrats can't bear to voice. How refreshing, therefore, that she should reach into a vocabulary of pride that most American citizens would applaud.

Hillary Clinton invoked the name of Dean Acheson in her reference to the need for "good, old-fashioned diplomacy," and there certainly was an air of the Achesonian, of the statesman, about her speech. Good, old-fashioned diplomacy, it should be noted, is in contrast to Obama's apparent preference for seeing America as a nation like any other, only a bit bigger, richer, and better-armed. Clinton's "old-fashioned" diplomacy is based, by contrast, on the unquestionable premise that America is the world's leader. Not primus inter pares; just primus.

In her speech, Clinton referred to the sources of "American might." The first, of course, is "economic power." But it is her hailing of the second—America's "moral authority"—that was so invigorating.

It was Acheson who said: "The most important aspect of the relationship between the president and the secretary of state is that they both understand who is president." What is so piquant here, in this administration, is not the fact, plain to behold, that Hillary understands that Obama is president. It is the growing sense that Hillary would have made a much, much better president than Obama.

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