

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

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REMARKS AT THE ATHENS FORUM 2014:
DEMOCRACY UNDER PRESSURE
Athens, 15 September 2014

Prime Minister,
Mr. Mayor,
Excellencies,
Generous hosts,

I am so grateful to be back, and to be part of building a new and expanding tradition in the Ancient Agora.

Please forgive me if join the long line of foreigners who come to Athens and talk about Pericles.

His ears must be burning more than ever today. As we observe this International Day of

Carl Bildt, special thanks to you for flying straight from the ballot box to the birthplace of democracy.

These examples illustrate that a stable democracy is not an unchanging one. It is one where change is managed peacefully and inclusively.

That both visiting leaders have a distinguished past with the United Nations makes that point even more telling.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In your printed programmes you have a personal message from the UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, who sends his best wishes to you. Let me quote from it:

Gatherings like the Athens Forum for Democracy are living proof that inclusive participation is not only an end in itself. It prepares communities, societies and entire countries to address opposing points of view and engage in constructive criticism and deliberations.

I hope that