Illey were recently on the cardiovascular surgery unit at Presbyterian Hospital/Columbia University Medical Center (NYPH/Columbia), where former President Bill Clinton underwent a successful triple bypass surgery.

During that experience, the public learned much about the expertise of the University’s heart surgeons and its cardiovascular studies. Indeed, it is a matter of record that there are many medical milestones set at Columbia and for the way this lifesaving cardiac procedure: If you scrape just below the surface, however, you will find that the University is one of the nation’s most active programs in the United States and are recognized for innovation and expertise in valve repair. CUMC is also widely known as a center for advanced cardiac surgery, and for the innovative research initiatives, visit its Web site, for viewing on at the Columbia news Web site, for future broadcast. Segments also will be made available for viewing at the Columbia news Web site, http://www.columbia.edu/irw/news/.

The discussion marked the first opportunity to interact with such distinguished visitors to the University, who turned out in throngs to visit the low Library rotunda was filled to capacity, with many more students standing outside.

In all, more than 400 students, faculty and staff attended, with many adding their voices to the discourse. Gouhnaa Prash, CC’08, an international student from Singapore, appreciated the opportunity to challenge the panelists’ remarks After speaking about the perception of America’s annual release of U.S. Human Rights Report, which criticized human rights in Singapore, she asked how on the U.S. repair our international image and how long will it take?

The discussion marked the first in a series of town-hall-style meetings called “The People Speak: A Discussion of America’s Role in the World,” which will bring together foreign policy experts, elected officials and the public to talk about important global issues nationwide. Monday evening’s discussion, the start of approximately 4,000 events planned as part of “The People Speak” series, ranging from large-scale assemblies held in major media markets and moderated by ABC News, like the one held at Columbia, to smaller grassroots gatherings in high schools, coffee shops, universities and community centers coast-to-coast.

At Columbia’s initial event, Stephanopoulos moderated a 45-minute discussion among the panelists, posing several questions to the group. Albright received the most applause of the evening for her comments such as her remark on Iraq: “We are trying to impose free- dom on an ancient civilization.”

The wide-ranging conversation was remarkably diverse: Chelsea Rucker, COO, said, “I liked that there were representatives of different points of view. Frankly, I was surprised since this is known as such a liberal campus.”

The event was taped by ABC News for future broadcast. Segments also will be made available for viewing at the Columbia news Web site, http://www.columbia.edu/irw/news/.

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