

Remarks at the Menorah Memorial at Babi Yar in Kiev *May 12, 1995*

Thank you, Rabbi, to the people of Ukraine, and especially to the veterans of World War II and the children who are here.

Here on the edge of this wooded ravine, we bear witness eternally to the consequences of evil. Here at Babi Yar, almost 54 years ago, more than 30,000 men, women, and children were slaughtered in the first 3 days alone. They died for no other reason than the blood that ran through their veins. We remember their sacrifice, and we vow never to forget.

In late September 1941, the Nazi occupying army ordered the Jewish population of Kiev together, with their valuables and belongings. "We thought we were being sent on a journey," one survivor recalled. But instead they were being herded to the ravine, stripped, and shot down. By year's end, more than 100,000 Jews, 10,000 Ukrainian nationalists, Soviet prisoners of war, and gypsies had been exterminated here.

The writer Anatoly Kuznietzov was a child in Kiev during the war. He remembers the day the deportations began. "My grandfather stood in the middle of the courtyard straining to hear something. He raised his finger. 'Do you know

what?' he said with horror in his voice. 'They're not deporting them. They're shooting them.'"

Years later, Kuznietzov brought the poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko to Babi Yar. And that night, Yevtushenko wrote one of his most celebrated poems:

Over Babi Yar there are no memorials. The steep hillside, like a rough inscription. I am frightened. Today I am as old as the Jewish race. I seem to myself a Jew at this moment.

These words speak to us across the generations, a reminder of the past, a warning for the future.

In the quiet of this place, the victims of Babi Yar cry out to us still. Never forget, they tell us, that humanity is capable of the worst, just as it is capable of the best. Never forget that the forces of darkness cannot be defeated with silence or indifference. Never forget that we are all Jews and gypsies and Slavs. Never forget.

May God bless this holy place.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:12 p.m.

Remarks at Schevchenko University in Kiev *May 12, 1995*

Thank you very much.

I first would thank Olexiy Meleshchuk for that fine introduction. I thank Olena Sheveliova for her fine remarks and for representing the university students here. I thank the rector, Viktor Skopenko, for his remarks and for the honorary degree, which I will treasure and display in the White House.

I am delighted to be joined here by my wife and by ministers and other important members of our administration, by the mayor of Kiev and members of your National Government, and by former President Kravchuk. I am glad to see them all here, and I thank them for being here with me today. I am deeply honored to be the first American President to appear before the people of a free and independent Ukraine.

Today we celebrate the alliance of our peoples, who defeated fascism 50 years ago. We shared victory then, but the cost to your people of that victory was almost unimaginable. More than 5 million Ukrainians died in the conflict. I am pleased that now after all these years we can pay tribute to the extraordinary sacrifice here in the Ukrainian homeland.

It is fitting that we are meeting at this institution, named for Taras Schevchenko. More than 30 years ago, America recognized his passion for freedom by erecting a statue of Schevchenko in the heart of our Nation's Capital. Now, at last, America also honors this great champion of liberty in the heart of Ukraine's capital.

I am also glad that we are meeting here at this university because so much of your nation's

future depends upon this place of learning and others like it throughout your land. Here, the knowledge that Ukraine needs to build itself will be found. Here, the dreams of a new Ukraine will be dreamed.

I would like to say a special word to the students and scholars here. I know the times are difficult now, and I commend you for taking the hard road, for putting the needs of your future and your nation above immediate personal concerns. Your efforts will be repaid, for your independent country has a better chance to create freedom and prosperity than it has had in centuries, and to do it in a way that is uniquely your own as one of Europe's oldest peoples forging one of its newest democracies.

Ukraine is rising to the historic challenge of its reemergence as a nation on the world's stage. Already your nation can claim responsibility for a major contribution to global peace. Your wise decision to eliminate nuclear weapons on your territory has earned your nation respect and gratitude everywhere in the world.

Your accession to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty has sent an unmistakable message for peace and against weapons of mass destruction. Without those farsighted acts, the historic vote yesterday by the world's nations to extend the Non-Proliferation Treaty indefinitely and unconditionally would not have been possible. This will make the people of the world for generations to come safer and more secure.

For 25 years, this treaty has been the cornerstone of the world's efforts to reduce the dangers of nuclear weapons. I am proud of the leadership of the United States in securing the extension of the treaty. But I am also proud of the role that Ukraine played, and you should be proud as well. In the short period of your independence, you have helped make the world a safer, more hopeful place, and I thank you for that. *[Applause]* Thank you.

A few moments ago Rector Skopenko quoted Taras Shevchenko's question, "When will we receive our Washington with a new and righteous law?" The answer is now, because so many Ukrainians are striving to build a nation ruled by law and governed by the will of the people. Holding free, fair, and frequent elections, protecting the rights of minorities, building bridges to other democracies, these mark the way to a "new birth of freedom," in the phrase of our great President Abraham Lincoln.

Already you have held a landmark election that produced the first transfer of power from one democratic government to another in any of the nations that emerged after the collapse of the Soviet Union. You have put tolerance at the heart of your law and law at the heart of your state. You have claimed your place in the ranks of the world's great democracies, as demonstrated by the sight of your flag flying next to the American flag at the White House during President Kuchma's historic visit last November.

You have earned the admiration of the free world by setting on a course of economic reform and staying on that course despite the pain of adjustment. President Kuchma's decision to launch ambitious economic reforms and to press ahead with them was truly bold. We know that after so many decades of a command-and-control economy, reform carries real human cost in the short term in lost jobs, lower wages, lost personal security.

But your efforts will not be in vain, because the course is right, even if the path is difficult. The toil is bitter, but the harvest is sweet, as the old proverb says. In time, your transformation will deliver better, more prosperous lives and the chance for you and your children to realize your God-given potential. You and your children will reap the harvest of today's sacrifices.

In the pursuit of peace and prosperity, you have been well served by President Kuchma and his government's bold and farsighted leadership. You should know this: As you build your future, the United States will stand with you.

For America, support for an independent Ukraine secure in its recognized borders is not only a matter of sympathy, it is a matter of our national interest as well. We look to the day when a democratic and prosperous Ukraine is America's full political and economic partner in a bulwark of stability in Europe.

Fifty years ago, Americans and Ukrainians engaged in a common struggle against fascism, and together we won. When U.S. troops met a Soviet force at the Elbe for the first time and made that legendary handshake across a liberated Europe, the unit they met was the First Ukrainian Army.

Cruel events made that embrace brief. During the decades of East-West separation, it was left to a million Ukrainian-Americans to keep alive the ties between our people. They fought hard

to ensure that the hope for freedom for you never died out. Today, their dreams are being fulfilled by you. And on behalf of all Ukrainian-Americans, I rejoice in standing here with you.

In the months and years ahead, our partnership will grow stronger. Together we will help design the architecture of security in an undivided Europe so that Ukraine's security is strengthened. We will increase defense contacts between our nations, consult with one another as NATO prepares to expand, and foster ties between Ukraine and the West. Ukraine has already taken a strong leadership role in forming the Partnership For Peace, which is uniting Europe's democracies in military cooperation and creating a more secure future.

We will work with one another as Ukraine becomes a full partner in the new Europe, and we will deepen the friendship between our peoples in concrete economic ways.

The United States has shown its support for Ukraine in deeds, not just words: in the commitment of more than a billion dollars in assistance over 3½ years for political and economic reform, another \$350 million to help eliminate nuclear weapons, in leading the world's financial institutions to commit \$2.7 billion for Ukraine's future and urging our partners in the G-7 to do even more. We will continue to work to assist you to build a brighter future.

Our nations have established vigorous trade and investment ties, and a group of American and Ukrainian business people are promoting these ties here in Ukraine this year and next year in their meeting in the United States. Together we will enter into exciting new ventures, such as a commercial space launch cooperation.

All these efforts will help to build a Ukraine that is sovereign and democratic, confident and successful, a Ukraine that will fulfill the hopes of your 52 million citizens and provide an essential anchor of stability and freedom in a part of the world still reeling from rapid change, still finding its way toward the 21st century.

Of course, in the end it is you who will make your own future. The people of Ukraine have it in their power to fulfill their oldest wishes and shape a very new destiny. To live up to that promise, to make the most of your role in this global economy in the information age, your ability to learn and learn and learn will be essential. And so I urge you to take to heart the words of Schevchenko: "Study, my brothers, study and read, learn of foreign things, but don't forget that which is yours."

Our two nations are bound together by a common vision of freedom and prosperity. Together we shall make that vision real.

As the great poet of our democracy, Walt Whitman, wrote a century ago, "The strongest and sweetest songs yet remain to be sung." Those strong, sweet songs are of free people fulfilling their hopes and dreams; they are the songs of Ukraine's tomorrows.

God bless America. *Slava Ukrainiy.*

NOTE: The President spoke at 11 a.m. at the Volodymyrs'ka Street Plaza. In his remarks, he referred to student speakers Olexiy Meleshchuk, Kyiv-Mohyla Academy University, and Olena Sheveliova, Schevchenko University; Viktor Skopenko, rector, Schevchenko University; and Mayor Leonid Kosakivsky of Kiev.

Message to the Congress Transmitting the District of Columbia Supplemental Budget and Rescissions May 12, 1995

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with section 446 of the District of Columbia Self-Government and Governmental Reorganization Act, I am transmitting the District of Columbia's 1995 Supplemental Budget and Rescissions of Authority Request Act of 1995. This transmittal does not represent

an endorsement of the contents of the District's budget.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
May 12, 1995.