

can achieve even deeper cuts in our strategic arsenals. Similarly, Russia's ratification of the Chemical Weapons Convention last year demonstrated that cooperation on a range of security matters will continue.

The Protocols of accession that I transmit to you constitute a decision of great consequence, and they involve solemn security commitments. The addition of new states also will entail financial costs. While those costs will be manageable and broadly shared with our current and new Allies, they nonetheless represent a sacrifice by the American people.

Successful ratification of these Protocols demands not only the Senate's advice and consent required by our Constitution, but also the broader, bipartisan support of the American people and their representatives. For that reason, it is encouraging that congressional leaders in both parties and both chambers have long advocated NATO's enlargement. I have endeavored to make the Congress an active partner in this process. I was pleased that a bipartisan group of Senators and Representatives accompanied the U.S. delegation at the NATO summit in Madrid last July. Officials at all levels of my Administration have consulted closely with the relevant committees and with the bipartisan Senate NATO Observer Group. It is my hope that this pattern of consultation and cooperation will ensure that NATO and our broader European policies continue to have the sustained bipartisan support that was so instrumental to their success throughout the decades of the Cold War.

The American people today are the direct beneficiaries of the extraordinary sacrifices made by our fellow citizens in the many theaters of that "long twilight struggle," and in the two world wars that preceded it. Those efforts aimed in large part to create across the breadth of Europe a lasting, democratic peace. The en-

largement of NATO represents an indispensable part of today's program to finish building such a peace, and therefore to repay a portion of the debt we owe to those who went before us in the quest for freedom and security.

The rise of new challenges in other regions does not in any way diminish the necessity of consolidating the increased level of security that Europe has attained at such high cost. To the contrary, our policy in Europe, including the Protocols I transmit herewith, can help preserve today's more favorable security environment in the transatlantic area, thus making it possible to focus attention and resources elsewhere while providing us with additional Allies and partners to help share our security burdens.

The century we are now completing has been the bloodiest in all of human history. Its lessons should be clear to us: the wisdom of deterrence, the value of strong Alliances, the potential for overcoming past divisions, and the imperative of American engagement in Europe. The NATO Alliance is one of the most important embodiments of these truths, and it is in the interest of the United States to strengthen this proven institution and adapt it to a new era. The addition to this Alliance of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic is an essential part of that program. It will help build a Europe that can be integrated, democratic, free, and at peace for the first time in its history. It can help ensure that we and our Allies and our partners will enjoy greater security and freedom in the century that is about to begin.

I therefore recommend that the Senate give prompt advice and consent to ratification of these historic Protocols.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
February 11, 1998.

Statement on Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt *February 11, 1998*

I have known Bruce Babbitt for many years. He is a man of the highest integrity and a dedicated public servant. I am convinced that when this matter is concluded he will be vindicated.

I look forward to his continuing service to the American people.