

When we launched this commission 2 years ago in Madrid, we hoped it would lead to a pragmatic and truly distinctive working partnership. Ukraine is a nation critical to our vision of an undivided, peaceful, democratic Europe.

The experience of the last 2 years has vindicated our hopes. Our Armed Forces are working together well in Bosnia. Ukraine played a vital role in Kosovo in the verification mission until it was driven out by the regime in Belgrade.

I appreciate President Kuchma's efforts to persuade Mr. Milosevic to end his campaign against the Kosovar Albanians so that the Kosovar people can come home with security and self-government.

Ukraine has also proposed an ambitious program of cooperation with NATO, and the Alliance has agreed to establish our very first Partnership for Peace training center in the Ukrainian town of Yavorov. Our nations also will support Ukraine's efforts to reform its economy, deepen its democracy, and advance the rule of law, all vital to Ukraine's security and the success of our partnership.

When we act to maintain peace and security in Europe, we will strive to do so with our partners, including Ukraine. That is what we hope to do with Ukraine and other nations in Kosovo once peace is restored there.

We have taken many practical, good steps toward realizing the promise of our partnership. But we should also not lose sight of the larger significance of what we are trying to do here, in light of the history of Ukraine and the history of Europe, for the people of Ukraine have felt the horrors of communism and fascism and fam-

ine. At different points in this century, the flags of five outside powers have flown over Ukrainian territory. Now Ukraine flies its own flag, and it is incumbent upon all of us to support Ukraine's transition and what its people have called their European choice.

Ukraine still faces large challenges: political, economic, environmental. But now it is free to choose its destiny. And it has used that freedom to choose democracy and tolerance and free markets, integration, and the choice to dismantle its nuclear arsenal.

President Kuchma's presence here is a reminder that most of Europe is coming together today. Most of Europe has rejected the idea that the quest for security is a zero-sum game in which one nation's gain is another's loss. So most of all, I want to take this opportunity on behalf of the people of the United States to express my respect and gratitude to President Kuchma and the people of Ukraine for the choices they are making, and to assure them that all of us and our partners will stand with them as they work for a better future.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 4:28 p.m. at the Mellon Auditorium. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary General Javier Solana of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization; President Leonid Kuchma of Ukraine; and President Slobodan Milosevic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Secretary General Solana and President Kuchma.

Remarks at a Dinner Honoring the Leaders of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council

April 24, 1999

Thank you very much. Please be seated. Mr. Secretary General, Mrs. Solana, allies, and friends: It's a great honor for Hillary and for me to welcome the largest group of world leaders ever to assemble in Washington here to the White House on this beautiful spring evening.

Just a few years ago, a gathering of all the nations here in partnership would have been unthinkable. But we are all here tonight because

we are thinking—we are thinking of a future brighter than the past; a future of shared values and shared visions; a future in which we define national greatness by its commitment to human rights and mutual respect, not to ethnic and religious bigotry; in which we measure the success of nations by how well we lift people up, not by how much we tear them down.

In a world full of both promise and peril, where for good or ill our destinies are more and more linked, we have chosen to be allies, partners, and friends. In an age most observers define by the rise of modern technology, modern scientific breakthroughs, a modern global economy, it is ironic and painful that all over the world and, of course, especially in Kosovo, the peace is threatened by the oldest demon of society: the fear and hatred of the other, those who are of a different race or ethnic background or religion.

Just a few days ago, a voice from the age we honor at this 50th anniversary summit spoke to us from his home in Poland. Marek Edelman, a hero of the Warsaw ghetto uprising, published a letter here in an American newspaper urging all of us to persevere in Kosovo. "I know," he wrote, "like all of my generation, that freedom has and must have its price."

Tonight we remember that the burden of defending freedom and peace is lighter when it is shouldered by so many. And we remember that the cause of freedom and peace is stronger when it is embraced by a group of nations as great and diverse as those who are joined together in this Council.

And so I ask all of you to join me now in a toast to the leaders and the people of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council. And thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:27 p.m. in the pavilion on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary General Javier Solana of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and his wife, Concepcion. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Secretary General Solana.

Remarks at the Opening of North Atlantic Council Meeting With the Frontline States

April 25, 1999

Thank you very much, Mr. Secretary General. We want to welcome the leaders of all the frontline states here and say that we are very grateful for what you have done. The people of Albania and Macedonia have welcomed almost half a million refugees to their countries, often, literally, into their homes. You have shared what you have, though the strains are immense. NATO is working to relieve your burden with the United Nations by building camps, providing supplies, helping to bring more refugees to other countries until they can return to Kosovo. We must do more, intensifying our relief operations, taking our share of refugees.

The nations of the region have risked and even faced armed confrontation with Serbia, by facilitating and supporting our campaign to end the bloodshed in Kosovo. Yesterday—or Friday, NATO made its position very clear. We said, unambiguously, if Belgrade challenges its neighbors as a result of the presence of NATO, we will respond.

The nations of the region have faced enormous economic dislocation and losses. We are committed to working with you and with multi-

lateral institutions to ease your emergency needs and help you with your debts. You want a better future for your nations and your region, and there, as well, we are committed to help.

Many of us have tried to lay out a vision for the region, a positive alternative to the violence and ethnic hatred, a vision of people and nations working together, bridging old divides, forging a common future of peace, freedom, and prosperity. How do we get there?

First of all, we must prevail in Kosovo. A just end to the conflict is essential to putting the entire region on the path to stability. Second, we must strengthen our efforts to support economic development and deeper democracy, ethnic and religious tolerance, and regional integration in southeastern Europe. We must build on the many positive ways in which the nations of the region, often with our support, already are bringing change at home, in cooperation across borders.

In that regard, I want to especially commend Slovenia's strong efforts in recent years to reach out to its neighbors. We will work toward the day when all the people of the region, including