

Third, I'm sending our FEMA Director, James Lee Witt, to New Jersey and New York today to inspect the damage and report back immediately on what more we need to do. I want to make sure that the assistance is delivered responsibly, efficiently, and in adequate amounts.

Again I want to say, as I did yesterday, that in difficult times like this, we're reminded that the power of the American spirit is even strong-

er than the power of a hurricane. The American people are supporting all those who have been injured in this, and we will stand by them until they recover.

Thank you very much. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:20 a.m. at the Wall Street Landing Zone upon arriving in New York City.

Remarks to the 54th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York City

September 21, 1999

Thank you very much. Mr. President, Mr. Secretary-General, members of the United Nations General Assembly, good morning. I hope you will forgive me for being a little hoarse today. I will do the best I can to be heard.

Today we look ahead to the new millennium, and at this last General Assembly of the 20th century, we look back on a century that taught us much of what we need to know about the promise of tomorrow. We have learned a great deal over the last 100 years: how to produce enough food for a growing world population; how human activity affects the environment; the mysteries of the human gene; an information revolution that now holds the promise of universal access to knowledge. We have learned that open markets create more wealth, that open societies are more just. We have learned how to come together, through the U.N. and other institutions, to advance common interests and values.

Yet, for all our intellectual and material advances, the 20th century has been deeply scarred by enduring human failures, by greed and lust for power, by hot-blooded hatreds and stone-cold hearts.

At century's end, modern developments magnify greatly the dangers of these timeless flaws. Powerful forces still resist reasonable efforts to put a human face on the global economy, to lift the poor, to heal the Earth's environment. Primitive claims of racial, ethnic, or religious superiority, when married to advanced weaponry and terrorism, threaten to destroy the greatest

potential for human development in history, even as they make a wasteland of the soul.

Therefore, we look to the future with hope but with unanswered questions. In the new millennium, will nations be divided by ethnic and religious conflicts? Will the nation-state itself be imperiled by them or by terrorism? Will we keep coming closer together instead, while enjoying the normal differences that make life more interesting?

In the new century, how will patriotism be defined, as faith in a dream worth living or fear and loathing of other people's dreams? Will we be free of the fear of weapons of mass destruction or forced to teach our grandchildren how to survive a nuclear, chemical, or biological attack?

Will globalism bring shared prosperity or make the desperate of the world even more desperate? Will we use science and technology to grow the economy and protect the environment or put it to risk, put it all at risk in a world dominated by a struggle over natural resources?

The truth is that the 20th century's amazing progress has not resolved these questions, but it has given us the tools to make the answers come out right, the knowledge, the resources, the institutions. Now we must use them. If we do, we can make the millennium not just a changing of the digits but a true changing of the times, a gateway to greater peace and prosperity and freedom. With that in mind, I offer three resolutions for the new millennium.

First, let us resolve to wage an unrelenting battle against poverty and for shared prosperity so that no part of humanity is left behind in the global economy. Globalism is not inherently divisive. While infant mortality in developing countries has been cut nearly in half since 1970, life expectancy has increased by 10 years. According to the U.N.'s human development index, measuring a decent standard of living, a good education, a long and healthy life, the gap between rich and poor countries on this measure has actually declined.

Open trade and new technologies have been engines of this progress. They've helped hundreds of millions to see their prospects rise by marketing the fruits of their labor and creativity abroad. With proper investment in education, developing countries should be able to keep their best and brightest talent at home and to gain access to global markets for goods and services and capital.

But this promising future is far from inevitable. We are still squandering the potential of far too many: 1.3 billion people still live on less than a dollar a day; more than half the population of many countries have no access to safe water; a person in South Asia is 700 times less likely to use the Internet than someone in the United States; and 40 million people a year still die of hunger, almost as many as the total number killed in World War II.

We must refuse to accept a future in which one part of humanity lives on the cutting edge of a new economy, while the other lives at the knife edge of survival.

What must we do? Well, we can start by remembering that open markets advance the blessings and breakthroughs we want to spread. That's why we in the United States have worked to keep our markets open during the recent global financial crisis, though it has brought us record trade deficits. It is why we want to launch a new global trade round when the WTO meets in Seattle this fall; why we are working to build a trading system that strengthens the well-being of workers and consumers, protects the environment, and makes competition a race to the top, not the bottom; why I'm proud we have come together at the ILO to ban abusive child labor everywhere in the world.

We do not face a choice between trade and aid but instead the challenge to make both work for people who need them. Aid should focus on what is known to work: credit for poor peo-

ple starting business; keeping girls in school; meeting the needs of mothers and children. Development aid should be used for development, not to buy influence or finance donors' exports. It should go where governments invest in their people and answer their concerns.

We should also come to the aid of countries struggling to rise, but held down by the burden of debt. The G-7 nations adopted a plan to reduce by up to 70 percent the outstanding debt of the world's poorest countries, freeing resources for education, health, and growth.

All of us, developed and developing countries alike, should take action now to halt global climate change. Now, what has that to do with fighting poverty? A great deal. The most vulnerable members of the human family will be first hurt and hurt most, if rising temperatures devastate agriculture, accelerate the spread of disease in tropical countries, and flood island nations.

Does this mean developing countries then must sacrifice growth to protect the environment? Absolutely not. Throughout history, a key to human progress has been willingness to abandon big ideas that are no longer true. One big idea that is no longer true is that the only way to build a modern economy is to use energy as we did in the industrial age. The challenge and opportunity for developing countries is to skip the cost of the industrial age by using technologies that improve the economy and the environment at the same time.

Finally, to win the fight against poverty, we must improve health care for all people. Over the next 10 years in Africa, AIDS is expected to kill more people and orphan more children than all the wars of the 20th century combined. Each year diseases like malaria, tuberculosis, pneumonia leave millions of children without parents, millions of parents without children. Yet, for all these diseases, vaccine research is advancing too slowly, in part because the potential customers in need are too poor. Only 2 percent of all global biomedical research is devoted to the major killers in the developing world.

No country can break poverty's bonds if its people are disabled by disease and its government overwhelmed by the needs of the ill. With U.N. leadership, we've come close to eradicating polio, once the scourge of children everywhere. We're down to 5,000 reported cases worldwide. I've asked our Congress to fund a major increase

to finish the job; I ask other nations to follow suit.

We've begun a comprehensive battle against the global AIDS epidemic. This year I'm seeking another \$100 million for prevention, counseling, and care in Africa. I want to do more to get new drugs that prevent transmission from mothers to newborns, to those who need them most. And today I commit the United States to a concerted effort to accelerate the development and delivery of vaccines for malaria, TB, AIDS, and other diseases disproportionately affecting the developing world. Many approaches have been proposed, from tax credits to special funds for the purchase of these vaccines.

To tackle these issues, I will ask public health experts, the chief executive officers of our pharmaceutical companies, foundation representatives, and Members of Congress to join me at a special White House meeting to strengthen incentives for research and development, to work with, not against, the private sector to meet our common goals.

The second resolution I hope we will make today is to strengthen the capacity of the international community to prevent and, whenever possible, to stop outbreaks of mass killing and displacement. This requires, as we all know, shared responsibility, like the one West African nations accepted when they acted to restore peace in Sierra Leone; the one 19 democracies in NATO embraced to stop ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and Kosovo; the one Asian and Pacific nations have now assumed in East Timor, with the strong support from the entire United Nations, including the United States.

Secretary-General Annan spoke for all of us during the Kosovo conflict, and more recently in regard to East Timor, when he said that ethnic cleansers and mass murderers can find no refuge in the United Nations, no source of comfort or justification in its charter. We must do more to make these words real. Of course, we must approach this challenge with some considerable degree of humility. It is easy to say, "Never again," but much harder to make it so. Promising too much can be as cruel as caring too little.

But difficulties, dangers, and costs are not an argument for doing nothing. When we are faced with deliberate, organized campaigns to murder whole peoples or expel them from their land, the care of victims is important but not enough. We should work to end the violence.

Our response in every case cannot or should not be the same. Sometimes collective military forces is both appropriate and feasible. Sometimes concerted economic and political pressure, combined with diplomacy, is a better answer, as it was in making possible the introduction of forces in East Timor.

Of course, the way the international community responds will depend upon the capacity of countries to act and on their perception of their national interests. NATO acted in Kosovo, for example, to stop a vicious campaign of ethnic cleansing in a place where we had important interests at stake and the ability to act collectively. The same considerations brought Nigerian troops and their partners to Sierra Leone and Australians and others to East Timor. That is proper so long as we work together, support each other, and do not abdicate our collective responsibility.

I know that some are troubled that the United States and others cannot respond to every humanitarian catastrophe in the world. We cannot do everything everywhere. But simply because we have different interests in different parts of the world does not mean we can be indifferent to the destruction of innocents in any part of the world.

That is why we have supported the efforts of Africans to resolve the deadly conflicts that have raged through parts of their continent; why we are working with friends in Africa to build the Africa crisis response initiative, which has now trained more than 4,000 peacekeepers from 6 countries; why we are helping to establish an international coalition against genocide, to bring nations together to stop the flow of money and arms to those who commit crimes against humanity.

There is also critical need for countries emerging from conflict to build police institutions, accountable to people and the law, often with the help of civilian police from other nations. We need international forces with the training to fill the gap between local police and military peacekeepers, as French, Argentine, Italian, and other military police have done in Haiti and Bosnia. We will work with our partners in the U.N. to continue to ensure such forces can deploy when they're needed.

What is the role of the U.N. in preventing mass slaughter and dislocation? Very large. Even

in Kosovo, NATO's actions followed a clear consensus expressed in several Security Council resolutions that the atrocities committed by Serb forces were unacceptable, that the international community had a compelling interest in seeing them end. Had we chosen to do nothing in the face of this brutality, I do not believe we would have strengthened the United Nations. Instead, we would have risked discrediting everything it stands for.

By acting as we did, we helped to vindicate the principles and purposes of the U.N. Charter, to give the U.N. the opportunity it now has to play the central role in shaping Kosovo's future. In the real world, principles often collide, and tough choices must be made. The outcome in Kosovo is hopeful.

Finally, as we enter this new era, let our third resolution be to protect our children against the possibility that nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons will ever be used again.

The last millennium has seen constant advances in the destructive power of weaponry. In the coming millennium, this trend can continue, or if we choose, we can reverse it with global standards universally respected.

We've made more progress than many realize. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine courageously chose to give up their nuclear weapons. America and Russia have moved forward with substantial arms reduction. President Yeltsin and I agreed in June, even as we await Russian ratification of START II, to begin talks on a START III treaty that will cut our cold war arsenals by 80 percent from their height.

Brazil has joined the Non-Proliferation Treaty, capping a process that has almost totally eliminated the threat of nuclear proliferation in Latin America. We banned chemical weapons from the Earth, though we must implement the commitment fully and gain universal coverage. One hundred and fifty-two nations have signed the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, and while India and Pakistan did test nuclear weapons last year, the international reaction proved that the global consensus against proliferation is very strong.

We need to bolster the standards to reinforce that consensus. We must reaffirm our commitment to the NPT, strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention, make fast progress on a treaty to ban production of fissile materials. To keep existing stocks from the wrong hands, we

should strengthen the Convention on Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials. And today, again, I ask our Congress to approve the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

We must stop the spread of nuclear weapons materials and expertise at the source. Since 1992, we have worked with Russia and the other nations of the former Soviet Union to do that. We are expanding that effort because challenges remain. But thus far, we can say that the nightmare scenario of deadly weapons flowing unchecked across borders, of scientists selling their services, en masse, to the highest bidder has been avoided. Now we must work to deny weapons of mass destruction to those who would use them.

For almost a decade nations have stood together to keep the Iraqi regime from threatening its people and the world with such weapons. Despite all the obstacles Saddam Hussein has placed in our path, we must continue to ease the suffering of the people of Iraq. At the same time, we cannot allow the Government of Iraq to flout 40—and I say 40 successive U.N. Security Council resolutions and to rebuild his arsenal.

Just as important is the challenge of keeping deadly weapons away from terrorist groups. They may have weaker capabilities than states, but they have fewer compunctions about using such weapons. The possibility that terrorists will threaten us with weapons of mass destruction can be met with neither panic nor complacency. It requires serious, deliberate, disciplined concern and effective cooperation from all of us.

There are many other challenges. Today I have just spoken about three: the need to do something about the world's poor and to put a human face on the global economy; the need to do more to prevent killing and dislocation of innocents; the need to do more to assure that weapons of mass destruction will never be used on our children. I believe they are the most important. In meeting them, the United Nations is indispensable. It is precisely because we are committed to the U.N. that we have worked hard to support the management—effective management of this body.

But the United States also has the responsibility to equip the U.N. with the resources it needs to be effective. As I think most of you know, I have strongly supported the United States meeting all its financial obligations to the

United Nations, and I will continue to do so. We will do our very best to succeed this year.

When the cold war ended, the United States could have chosen to turn away from the opportunities and dangers of the world. Instead, we have tried to be engaged, involved, and active. We know this moment of unique prosperity and power for the United States is a source of concern to many. I can only answer by saying this: In the 7 years that I have been privileged to come here to speak to this body, America has tried to be a force for peace. We believe we are better off when nations resolve their differences by force of argument, rather than force of arms. We have sought to help former adversaries, like Russia and China, become prosperous, stable members of the world community, because we feel far more threatened by the potential weakness of the world's leading nations than by their strength.

Instead of imposing our values on others, we have sought to promote a system of government, democracy, that empowers people to choose their own destinies according to their own values and aspirations. We have sought to keep our markets open, because we believe a strong world economy benefits our own workers and busi-

nesses as well as the people of the world who are selling to us. I hope that we have been and will continue to be good partners with the rest of you in the new millennium.

Not long ago, I went to a refugee camp in Macedonia. The people I met there, children and adults alike, had suffered horrible, horrible abuses. But they had never given up hope because they believed that there is an international community that stood for their dignity and their freedom. I want to make sure that 20 or 50 or 100 years from now, people everywhere will still believe that about our United Nations.

So let us resolve in the bright dawn of this new millennium to bring an era in which our desire to create will overwhelm our capacity to destroy. If we do that, then through the United Nations and farsighted leaders, humanity finally can live up to its name.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:35 a.m. in the Assembly Hall. In his remarks, he referred to United Nations General Assembly President Theo-Ben Gurirab; United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan; President Boris Yeltsin of Russia; and President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

Remarks at a Luncheon Hosted by United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan in New York City *September 21, 1999*

Mr. Secretary-General, distinguished leaders: Tomorrow we will be exactly 100 days away from the beginning of the new millennium. The calendar tells us how old the world is, but we are thinking about something fresh, something new. And it is altogether fitting that we should be here at the United Nations, which is a very young attempt by the world to make ourselves better and to make our children's future brighter.

I would like to say how deeply pleased I am that the United Nations is being led today by a man of the ability and character of the Secretary-General. He continues to speak and act with authority. He said recently that the aim of the U.N. Charter is to protect individual human beings, not to protect those who abuse them. He reminded us that even in these times

of phenomenal prosperity, half of all humanity subsists on less than \$3 a day.

So, Mr. Secretary-General, I thank you for your leadership and your direction.

Let me say that I'm thinking, myself, also a lot about the future. And I plan to be, at least part of the time, a future resident of New York. Now, when I move here, I will be able to complain about all the traffic jams around the U.N.—[*laughter*]—and all those important people who keep me from getting to my appointed rounds. If I get very upset, I may even write a letter to my United States Senator. [*Laughter*]

But let me say, again, in all candor, the United States is humbled and honored to host the United Nations. We are honored to be a part of your leadership for peace in East Timor