

the area.

If you predicated it by saying, the world will divide into three blocs, do we have any concern about domination from an economic superpower, which is Japan, I'd say you could have some concerns there. But that's not what I see as the reality. And I hope that in some way this trip contributes to the idea that we want to avoid blocs that shut people out and we want to open markets that cause people to come in.

And so, that is the way I look at it right now. But we will stay engaged. I'm looking forward to the part of my trip that takes me to Japan. We have trade problems there. They're aware of it; we're going to talk to them. But it's not going to be exclusively on that. I'm interested, as you know, in creating jobs for Americans through fair trade, through access to markets, through matters of this nature. But we also have a wide array of other considerations that I will be discussing with the very able leaders of Japan. And it might well be that we will talk about the idea that we ought not to see this world divided up into regional blocs.

So, I'll do my best in that regard.

Europe

Q. It was with some irony that I read recently in the observation of Li Peng, Chinese Prime Minister, China's Prime Minister, that in fact, with events surrounding the dissolution of the ex-Soviet empire, events in Yugoslavia, that in fact the single source of threat to your new world order is no longer security in Asia-Pacific but in fact Europe. Your comments, please.

The President. Mike, please elaborate. I didn't see the comment by Li Peng, and I need a little more of what he was talking about. Threat to Europe, in what sense?

Q. In the sense of the threat to the new world order that you referred to earlier, the theater of threat from a sort of geopolitical and military sense is no longer question marks over Asia-Pacific but more question marks over the European theater.

The President. Well, see, I wouldn't agree with the premise that in the past the con-

cern wasn't about the Soviet Union, if that's what he was talking about. The major so-called "superpower confrontation" has been between the United States and the Soviet Union, Soviet Union with its satellites and the United States with its friends and allies. And now, with the dissolution of the Soviet Union, we see that this doesn't exist. That major cold war security threat, if we handle things properly with the emergence of the republics or this Commonwealth, should no longer concern us.

We're going to stay engaged with the republics. We're going to stay engaged with the Commonwealth, helping in every way we can these now-fledgling democracies as they emerge and strengthen their independence. We want to see that there isn't a security threat from that part of the world.

I may be missing what he's getting at, but I just think we have to guard against unpredictability, and thus the security presence will remain in Asia. It may be different than it's been in the past. The whole make-up of the U.S. defenses has been changing, as you know, but we are going to retain, because of unforeseen circumstances and with the welcome of our friends in this area, a security presence here.

So, if the distinguished leader of China was implying that wasn't necessary anymore, fine. That's a good—and I'm confident that China is not seeking external hegemony. There was a time when everybody was much, much more concerned about that. But we'll be here. We'll be around as a stabilizing, reassuring security presence where wanted.

By that, I can't say that we think the only threats to worldwide security might emerge in this area; we don't. But we've had a Pacific presence, and we're going to continue to have a Pacific presence.

Still not sure I got to the point, but anyway, that's the answer.

Note: The President spoke at 12:50 p.m. at the Westin Stamford Hotel in Singapore. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.