

year, an agreement to forever ban nuclear weapons from the Korean Peninsula. These positive developments come at a critical time of rising concern, at a time when North Korea's pursuit of nuclear arms stands as the single greatest source of danger to peace in all of northeast Asia.

This progress is a tribute to the policies of President Roh and the Government of this Republic. South Korea has systematically eliminated any possible action that could justify the North's pursuit of such deadly weapons. This Republic has rejected all weapons of mass destruction, and to give further meaning to this pledge, South Korea renounced all nuclear reprocessing and enrichment activities. On December 18th, President Roh announced that there were no nuclear weapons on South Korean soil. To any who doubted that declaration, South Korea, with the full support of the United States, has offered to open to inspection all of its civilian and military installations, including United States facilities.

At every point, South Korea's approach was open, sincere, and fair. Each good-faith action increased the call for the North to make a positive response. Today the prospects for real peace on this peninsula are brighter than at any point in the past four decades.

And yet, paper promises won't keep the peace. I call on North Korea to demonstrate its sincerity, to meet the obligations it undertook when it signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty 6 years ago. North Korea must implement in full all IAEA safeguards for its nuclear facilities without exception, and I might add, without delay. Moreover, North Korea, together with the Republic of Korea, should proceed to implement the inspection and verification portions of their unprecedented joint declaration on nonnuclearization, signed one week ago. Prompt action by the North will mark a new milestone on the path toward peace.

But let this be clear: The United States has and will support the security aspirations of its ally in the South in the cause of peace.

We are pleased that our September announcement about nuclear weapons helped lend momentum to the effort to make Korea safe from nuclear proliferation. And we've worked with others in the region to

send a multilateral message to North Korea. And we've been willing to open our facilities to Korea to challenge North Korea to do the same.

We've also left no doubt that we'll back these overtures for peace with a demonstration of our military resolve. As you know, we've postponed our plan to reduce the number of American troops stationed here in Korea. Let there be no doubt: The people of this republic should know that the United States commitment to Korea's security remains steady and strong.

I renew that pledge as an ally, as President of a nation that shares your devotion to democracy and self-determination. Down through the decades, from Korea to Kuwait, from the American soldiers who gave their lives at Inchon, Pork Chop Hill, to the Korean forces who stood with us in Desert Storm, our two nations have upheld the international ideal that between nations and not just within them, common interests call for common action.

Today, in many quarters, that ideal is being questioned, even criticized. There are those who see the many changes in our world and say, "Well, our work is done." They urge us to declare victory, celebrate the collapse of our common enemy, and then come on home. They fail to recognize a fundamental fact: The cold war era changed our world forever. We did far more than hold a common enemy at bay. Together, we built a new world: A system of collective security to keep the peace, a system of free trade that fueled a generation of prosperity the likes of which the world has never seen, and a common commitment to political openness and liberty that now sustains a worldwide movement toward democracy.

The passing of the cold war must not mark the beginning of a new age of isolationism. The nations of the free world share more than a common history; they share a common destiny. There is no going back, only forward.

The developments of the past 40 years, the dramatic expansion of democracy, the geometric increase in global trade has created a system of common interests. To turn our backs now, to walk away after this great