

Over the past half-century, the transatlantic community only realized half the promise of World War II's triumph over fascism. The other half lay captive behind Europe's walls of division. Now we have the chance to realize the full promise of Europe's victories without its great disappointment: Normandy without Yalta, the liberation of the Low Countries without the Berlin blockade.

During this past half-century, transatlantic security depended primarily on the deterrents provided by our military forces. Now the immediate threat to our East is not of advancing armies but of creeping instability. Countering that threat requires not only military security but also the promotion of democratic and economic renewal. Combined, these forces are the strongest bulwark against Europe's current dangers, against ethnic conflict, the abuse of human rights, the destabilizing refugee flows, the rise of aggressive regimes, and the spread of weapons of mass destruction.

The integration of the former Communist bloc with the rest of Europe will be gradual and often difficult, as Germany's bold efforts demonstrate. And like all great opportunities, we must remember that this one could be fleeting. We must not now let the Iron Curtain be replaced with a veil of indifference. For history will judge us as it judged with scorn those who preached isolationism between the World Wars and as it has judged with praise the bold architects of the transatlantic community after World War II.

With the cold war over, some in America with short memories have called for us to pack up and go home. I am asked often, "Why do you maintain a presence in Europe? How can you justify the expense when we have so many problems here at home?" We tried that, right after World War I. The American people this year proved their resistance to the siren song of global withdrawal. We did so when the Congress voted for the North American Free Trade Agreement, voted for America to compete in a global economy, not to retreat. And we did so when we reached out to Europe and to others and, in working with the European Union, led the world to accept a new GATT agreement on world trade. I have come here today to declare and to demonstrate that Europe remains central to the interests of the United States and that we will help to work with our partners in seizing the opportunities before us all.

Without question, Europe is not the only focus of our engagement. We must reach out to Latin America and to Asia, areas that are increasingly important both to the United States and to Europe. And our bonds with Europe will be different than they were in the past, but make no mistake about it, the bonds that tie the United States and Europe are unique. We share a passionate faith that God has endowed us as individuals with inalienable rights and a belief that the state exists by our consent solely to advance freedom and security and prosperity for all of us as individuals. That is still a radical idea in the world in which we live. Developed by Locke and Montesquieu, put into practice in my country by Jefferson and Madison, it has toppled tyrants, it has drawn millions to our country's shores. Over three centuries, the ties of kinship between the United States and Europe have fostered bonds of commerce, and you remain our most valued partner, not just in the cause of democracy and freedom but also in the economics of trade and investment.

But above all, the core of our security remains with Europe. That is why America's commitment to Europe's safety and stability remains as strong as ever. That is why I urged NATO to convene this week's summit. It is why I am committed to keeping roughly 100,000 American troops stationed in Europe, consistent with the expressed desires of our allies here. It is not habit but security and partnership that justifies this continuing commitment by the United States. Just as we have worked in partnership with Europe on every major security challenge in this century, it is now time for us to join in building the new security for the 21st century, the century in which most of you in this room will live most of your lives. The new security must seek to bind a broader Europe together with a strong fabric woven of military cooperation, prosperous market economies, and vital democracies.

Let me speak briefly about each of these. The first and most important element of the security must be military strength and cooperation. The cold war is over, but war itself is not over. As we know, it rages today not only in distant lands but right here in Europe and the former Yugoslavia. That murderous conflict reminds us that even after the cold war, military forces remain relevant. It also reveals the difficulties of applying military force to conflicts