

Exchange With Reporters Prior To Discussions With President Michal Kovac of the Slovak Republic in Prague January 12, 1994

Partnership For Peace

Q. President Clinton, what's been the reception so far to what you have brought to these nations?

The President. So far, so good.

Q. No objections, sir?

The President. We've had three different conversations, of course, and this will be the fourth. And each of them—although leaders can characterize them for themselves—but I have been very pleased so far.

Q. Have they raised security issues with you, that they are worried that if there should be some kind of resurgence in Russia that they feel protected, or are they still worried about this?

The President. No one has said that they expect something like that in the near future. What no one knows is whether the future of Europe will be like its past or if it will be different.

Q. Are you saying that all have accepted the Partnership so far?

The President. You'll have to ask them when we do the press conference.

NOTE: The exchange began at 11:06 a.m. in the library at the U.S. Ambassador's Residence. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

The President's News Conference With Visegrad Leaders in Prague January 12, 1994

President Clinton. Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to the very beautiful American Embassy.

I have just finished a very productive and enjoyable working lunch with the leaders of the Visegrad states: President Vaclav Havel and Prime Minister Vaclav Klaus of the Czech Republic; President Arpad Goncz and Prime Minister Peter Boross of Hungary; President Lech Walesa and Prime Minister Waldemar Pawlak of Poland; and President Michal Kovac and Prime Minister Vladimir Meciar of Slovakia.

I want to at the outset stress my appreciation to President Havel, Premier Klaus, and the Czech people for their hospitality and contributions to our meeting, and I thank again all the Visegrad leaders for joining here today.

This region, where the great democratic rebirth of Europe began 5 years ago, holds a special place in my own affections. I first came to this city 24 years ago this week. And two of my senior national security advisers were born in this region: the Chairman of our Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Shalikashvili, who spent most of his early years in Poland, was born there;

and my U.N. Ambassador, Madeleine Albright, who was born here in Prague. I told President Havel yesterday that the Czech Republic is the only nation in the world that has two Ambassadors in the United Nations.

I have come to Europe to help build a new security for the transatlantic community for the 21st century. During the cold war the security of the Western alliance was defined by the division of Europe. Our new security must be defined by Europe's integration, the integration of a broader Europe based on military cooperation, robust democracies, and market economies. That was my message in Brussels, where I met with our NATO and European Community allies. And it will be my message as I travel to Moscow.

I am mindful of an old Polish saying, which I have, I hope, learned to pronounce properly: *Nic o nas bez nas*, nothing about us without us. And so I have come to this region to share my thoughts directly with your leaders and your people. I believe the United States must make clear to all of you first that we are committed to helping you continue your work of reform