

and renewal in peace. That commitment derives from more than our shared values and our admiration for your efforts. It also derives from our own security concerns. Let me be absolutely clear: The security of your states is important to the security of the United States.

At today's lunch I discussed three ways in which my nation is prepared to advance Europe's democratic integration by supporting your region's continued renewal and security. First, we discussed the Partnership For Peace, the American proposal NATO has just adopted. The Partnership invites all former Warsaw Pact and former Soviet states plus other non-NATO members in Europe to join in military cooperation with NATO in training exercise and operations jointly.

While the Partnership is not NATO membership, neither is it a permanent holding room. It changes the entire NATO dialog so that now the question is no longer whether NATO will take on new members but when and how. It leaves the door open to the best possible outcome for our region, democracy, markets, and security all across a broader Europe, while providing time and preparation to deal with a lesser outcome.

Second, we discussed ways in which the United States can help to solidify your democratic and market reforms. I stressed that I have ordered our programs to give greater emphasis to helping this region tend to reform's impacts on your workers and your communities. I talked about the ways we are working to expand trade and investment between your region, the rest of Europe, and the United States. I also discussed the steps we are taking to help the Visegrad region and other parts of Central and Eastern Europe bolster their new democracies.

We're supporting the development of a thriving civil society. And in our meeting I announced the creation of the democracy network, an initiative to bring new resources to grassroots and independent groups throughout the region. I stressed our interest in fostering regional cooperation among your countries, practical things that can advance your integration into a broader Europe.

Finally, I salute all those leaders here in Prague today who have worked to build practical regional cooperation and consensus in Central Europe at this pivotal moment in history. I congratulate them on having this regional meeting. And I suggested several ways we can help to

support regional integration, including support for regional infrastructure projects like highways and communications networks and air traffic systems.

I have greatly enjoyed my discussions today here. I assure you I will follow up on them. The United States will have a special conference this year on trade and investment in the countries represented here on what we can do to increase American investment and to increase the purchase of the products made by the people who are working hard in all of these thriving democracies.

I come away convinced that together we can place Central and Eastern Europe at the heart of a new Europe, an integrated Europe, democratic, prosperous, secure, and free. That is my commitment; I believe it is our joint commitment.

Thank you very much, and I'd like now to turn the microphone over to President Havel.

*President Vaclav Havel of the Czech Republic.* Distinguished President, ladies and gentlemen, we are living in a time of a dramatic searching for a new order, an order in which no one would be subjugated or endangered and which would make it possible for all European peoples and states to live in an atmosphere of peaceful cooperation.

Our today's meeting in Prague bears witness to the great importance which the United States and the North Atlantic alliance attach to stability, security, and peace in Central Europe, in relation to peace in all of Europe as well as to the security of the United States.

We welcome the Partnership For Peace project as a good point of departure in NATO's quest for a new identity of the alliance as a true stabilizing core of European security. We appreciate that it allows individual approaches from the various countries. At the same time, however, it depends on how energetically and how quickly the different countries will move to instill in Partnership For Peace contents meeting their interests and their possibilities. For our part, we want to do everything in our power in order that our partnership results in our full membership in the alliance. As we do not regard Partnership For Peace as a substitute for that but rather as a first step toward NATO, the reason why we want to join the alliance is that we share the values of civilization which it protects and that we want to take part in protecting them.