

some people are concerned at the wide variety of views and the loud expression of those views we see in the Duma here after the last election. That can be a healthy thing if, but only if, everybody else's views are respected and protected too. For once democracy becomes an instrument of crushing the views of the minorities, of those who disagree, of those who don't have the muscle, then democracy itself soon disappears.

The third great challenge you face today is redefining the role of your great nation in this age: What does it mean to be a great power in this 21st century? How will you define it? How will you know Russia is a great nation? If someone asked you to describe it, looking to the future, how would you know? If someone asked you to describe it looking back in the early 1800's, you would say, "We are a great nation because we beat Napoleon and ran him out of Russia." Right? Whether you agree or disagree with the Communist system, you can say you were a great nation in the sense that you loomed large at the height of the Soviet empire with the Warsaw Pact. Great does not always mean good, but at least it's large.

How will you define your greatness? It is a profoundly important question that you must answer. I think there are some different ways to describe it. Russia cosponsored with the United States the Middle East peace process. I think it was a very great thing when Israel and the PLO signed their accord on September 13, 1993. I think it is a good thing that we are continuing to work until a comprehensive settlement is reached in that troubled area.

I think it was a great thing what we did today with the Presidents of Ukraine and Russia and the United States, agreeing to get all the nuclear weapons out of Ukraine and to give fair compensation to that nation for the uranium they are giving up. It makes the world a safer place. It makes your nation and mine less vulnerable to nuclear terrorism or threats. It shows that we can move beyond the nuclear age entirely.

There are still questions, you know, in the world about how you will define your greatness. When I was at the NATO conference and afterward, there are nations that live between Western Europe and the border of Russia who still wonder what the future holds, nations who said, "Put me in NATO now just in case. Oh, I believe this President of Russia when he says he respects the territorial borders of other nations,

but look at the history of Russia. Think of the national impulse. Draw another line across Europe now, while you have a chance." There are people who are in the Baltic nations now who hear some of the debate in your politics, who hear the threats to take them over again. One of your political leaders even suggested you might like to have Alaska back. I don't think I can go along with that. [Laughter]

I say that because all those definitions, I would argue to you, are looking to yesterday. What in the world would you do with an army of occupation to the east? How would you pay for it? And what would it give you? How would you be more powerful than some small nation, one of the industrial tigers of Asia, for example, producing and selling goods and services at such a rate that their people's incomes are going up by 10 percent a year, and they are giving the people who live there the opportunity to do things that would have been undreamed of by their parents or grandparents? This is a very serious thing.

I believe that the greatness of a nation that lasts for centuries and centuries and centuries, as this nation has, is the ability to redefine itself in every age and time. The young people of Russia especially now have a chance to show that a great power can promote patriotism without expansionism, that a great power can promote national pride without national prejudice. That, I submit, is your challenge.

Today, you face no threat from invasion. That was a legitimate concern of Russia for decades and decades, a legitimate reason to want a buffer zone around your borders in former times. It is not there now. I believe the measure of your greatness in the future will be whether Russia, the big neighbor, can be the good neighbor.

That is why it is so important that as your forces operate beyond your borders, they do so according to international law, why it is important that you continue your planned withdrawal from all the Baltic States, why it is important that your nation work with the United States and the rest of Europe to build the Partnership For Peace called for at the NATO conference this year, so that for the first time in the history of nation states we can have a Europe that is united by a shared commitment to democracy, free-market economies, and mutual respect for borders, instead of a Europe that is divided, for the first time in history.