

weapons from the former Soviet Union are no longer pointed at our children.

Our patient but hardheaded diplomacy has secured an agreement with North Korea on nuclear issues that is clearly and profoundly in our interest. The critics of that agreement are wrong. The deal stops North Korea's nuclear program in its tracks. It will roll it back in years to come. International inspectors confirm that the program is frozen, and they will continue to monitor it. No critic has come up with an alternative that isn't either unfeasible or foolhardy.

Our troops, who maintain their preparedness and their enormous capacity to stand up for freedom as the finest fighting force in the world, have stood down Iraq's threat to the security of the Persian Gulf. They caused the military regime in Haiti to step down peacefully, to give the Haitians a chance at democracy. We're using our influence constructively to help people from the Middle East to southern Africa to transform their conflicts into cooperation.

We have used our ability to lead on issues like GATT and NAFTA and the Asian-Pacific Economic Cooperation council and the Summit of the Americas to help to create a new trading system for the next century. Already trade is becoming more free and more fair and producing better jobs for our people and for others around the world.

In Central Europe, as elsewhere, the United States has moved aggressively to shape the future. The reasons are simple: Helping Central Europe to consolidate democracy, to build strong economies is clearly the best way to prevent assaults on freedom that, as this century has so painfully demonstrated, can turn quickly into all-consuming war. A healthy and prosperous Central Europe is good for America. It will become a huge new market for our goods and our services.

America is also engaged with Central Europe because it's the right thing to do. For four and a half decades, we challenged these nations to cast away the shackles of communism. Now that they have done so, surely we have an obligation to work with them—all of you who are here—to make sure that your people share with our people the rewards of freedom that the next century and the new economy can bring.

Some argue that open government and free markets can't take root in some countries, that there are boundaries, that there will necessarily

be boundaries to democracy in Europe. They would act now in anticipation of those boundaries by creating an artificial division of the new continent. Others claim that we simply must not extend the West's institution of security and prosperity at all, that to do so would upset a delicate balance of power. They would confine the newly free peoples of Central Europe to a zone of insecurity and, therefore, of instability.

I believe that both those visions for Europe are too narrow, too skeptical, perhaps even too cynical. One year ago this week, in Brussels, in Prague, in Kiev, in Moscow, and in Minsk, I set forth a vision of a different Europe, a new Europe that would be an integrated community of secure and increasingly prosperous democracies, a Europe that for the first time since nation-states came into existence on the European Continent would not be subject to a dividing line. With our engagement with the countries of Central Europe and the former Soviet Union, we can help to make that vision a lasting reality.

First, Europe must be secure. The breakup of the Soviet Union has made the promise of security more real than it has been for decades. But reform in Russia and all the states of the former Soviet Union will not be completed overnight, in a straight line, or without rocky bumps in the road. It will prove rough and unsteady from time to time, as the tragic events in Chechnya remind us today. Chechnya is part of the Russian Federation, and we support the territorial integrity of Russia, just as we support the territorial integrity of all its neighbors. But the violence must end. I call again on all the parties to stop spilling blood and start making peace.

Every day the fighting in Chechnya continues is a day of wasted lives and wasted resources and wasted opportunity. So we again encourage every effort to bring to a lasting end the bloodshed. We encourage the proposals put forth by the European Union and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. These proposals deserve to be heard and embraced.

Some have used this conflict in Chechnya to question continued American support for reform in Russia. But that conflict, terrible though it is, has not changed the nature of our interest. We have a tremendous stake in the success of Russia's efforts to become a stable democratic nation, and so do all the countries represented here today. That is why the United States will