

Houses of the Congress. And I think the American people see that there's blame to be shared all around on all of this.

But I will make the strong view that, "Hey, this is a tough one, but let's try to get something done that's going to get this country back to work, that's going to create jobs." And we'll see. That's the approach I'll take. And I will resist and fight against things that won't do that, that will make the situation worse. And I'll fight very hard for things that I think will make it better.

And indeed, looking back over my shoulder, I just wish that the growth initiatives that I've been proposing for 3 years had been passed by the Congress. And so, I will

now challenge the Congress and ask the American people's support for a sound package. It won't have everything I'd like to see get done, I'm sure, but I think in that spirit, maybe we can get something accomplished.

Q. You'll set a deadline, sir?'

The President. You wait now and see about this message.

Note: The President's 119th news conference began at 8:40 a.m. in the Briefing Room at the White House. Gennadiy Burbulis was First Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian Federation.

Remarks at the International Conference on Humanitarian Assistance to the Former U.S.S.R.

January 22, 1992

I would first start off by saying I got bawled out by the Secretary of State for being late. And my position is: I'm not late; you guys are early.

But I just want to give a warm welcome to the United States and to Washington, our Capital, to the many distinguished guests in this room today who include foreign ministers and senior officials from 47 countries, the United Nations, major international financial institutions, and other major international organizations.

We come together this morning as partners at a historic time, a turning point in our century and, I think, in modern history. Our mission is to respond together to the dramatic revolution that swept away Soviet communism and left in its place 12 new nations moving to establish their place in the world and struggling with the critical task of feeding, clothing, and housing their peoples this winter, this spring, and beyond.

Before you discuss these issues in depth over the next 2 days, I wanted to take a moment to reflect on the meaning of these events in the former Soviet Union for those of us in North America, in Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Latin America, Asia, the Pacific, in all corners of the globe.

For nearly 50 years, throughout most of the adult lives of almost everyone in this room, mankind endured a dangerous global conflict, the cold war. It divided continents and peoples and held all countries hostage to the possibility of nuclear annihilation. The free world rose up against that threat posed by Soviet expansionism in the decades after the Second World War. We spent hundreds of billions of dollars and sacrificed precious lives and national resources in that great struggle.

With the revolution in Eastern Europe in 1989 and in the Soviet Union in 1991, that mortal threat has withered. And with the dissolution of the Soviet Union itself just last month, we find ourselves at the entryway to a new world, a world of hope for a lasting peace and growing prosperity.

Led by a courageous President, Boris Yeltsin, reformers have come to power in the enormous Russian Federation. Ukraine has won independence, and the government of President Leonid Kravchuk holds out the promise of a new political and economic order. In Armenia, a former prisoner of conscience, President Ter-Petrosyan, has led an extraordinary national effort to transform his country's economic system and lib-

erate its people from political oppression. And in Central Asia the same stories, as President Nazarbayev, President Akayev are leading the fight for reform there. A new day has dawned throughout the Commonwealth of Independent States, with hope for a fundamental transformation in the way people live and work and think.

As we begin a new year and chart our course for the rest of this decade, let us bring equal commitment to the challenge of helping to build and sustain democracy and economic freedom in the former U.S.S.R., just as we did to winning the cold war. Let us help the people throughout the Independent States to make the leap from communism to democracy, from command economies to free markets, from authoritarianism to liberty. And then let us pull together to win the peace in this post-cold-war era.

We should not underestimate the enormity of this challenge and the difficulty of unraveling economic dislocations resulting from over 70 years of Communist economics. Ultimate success or failure rests squarely with the efforts and wisdom of the peoples of Russia and the Ukraine and the Caucasus in Central Asia. The battle is really theirs to win. But they cannot win it alone. These 12 new countries will need the hard work, creativity, and good will of all of our countries from every continent.

And that is why we meet today, to assure that our commitment and assistance will be up to the task, well-conceived and efficiently executed. And we meet to demonstrate to the peoples in these new States that the international community cares about them and supports their hard struggle to build new societies on the ruins of communism.

So, let us join together to give these people a reason to hope. Let us commit ourselves this morning to work in full partnership as we proceed.

First, we must continue to act resolutely this winter, this spring, and then throughout 1992 to meet the critical emergency needs of these States, food and medical supplies and energy and shelter. The shortages now evident throughout the 12 States will not soon disappear and will require sustained attention, our sustained attention.

Second, we must also meet the challenge of promoting economic growth and development of new free-market institutions through a collective international effort to provide technical assistance. Our work will be critically important to help the new States construct banking and taxation systems, to provide a healthier environment, to promote the rule of law and, yes, nuclear safety.

In short, we must support those who are standing up for reform and freedom. We should stimulate concrete investments and expanded trade. President Boris Yeltsin's courageous economic reforms deserve our support, as do efforts in the other States to introduce economic change.

Our success or failure will hinge on our ability to work effectively together on this common cause. The challenge is too great for any one nation or group of nations. It is a global challenge requiring the efforts and commitment of nations from all over the world. And your presence here, a truly remarkable presence, is vivid testimony that this is and must be a global coalition. Nothing else can work.

As we come together during these 2 days and then certainly in the months ahead, let us do so constructively, in the spirit of partnership, avoiding sterile debates over which one of us has done the most or the least and which should lead our response to this historic challenge. All of us have a role and obligation to fulfill. And many of us have already undertaken concrete actions to help.

The European Community has shouldered a major and generous share of the burden. Its prompt actions over several years to provide humanitarian support were vitally important, and its commitment to a vigorous technical assistance program is far-reaching and most welcomed. Germany alone has assumed enormous responsibility in providing military housing and in channeling credits to the former U.S.S.R. and now to the Federation, to the Russian Federation. Other EC governments have made important contributions. The Atlantic alliance stands ready to help with the knowledge that the peoples of the former U.S.S.R. are moving toward the same values that have sustained NATO since its birth.

It is especially satisfying to see here today our friends from Central and Eastern Europe as the pioneers in discarding communism and embracing democracy. You are here as symbols of success. And though you still face problems yourselves, the world applauds your willingness to help freedom elsewhere.

The challenges before us require efforts not just from Europe but from other regions and countries as well. Japan has made important contributions, commitments and will be critical to this effort. And now other nations in the Far East and the Middle East and Latin America should commit their expertise, their resources to assure the success of reform.

And I can assure you today that the United States, which for so long has led the struggle to contain communism, is also contributing its share so that democracy is its permanent replacement. For over 40 years, we have led in the reconstruction and defense of the free world. And now that the torch of liberty has sparked freedom among our former adversaries, the greatest good of our long labor is at last visible.

The U.S. cannot and will not falter at the moment that these new States are struggling to embrace the very ideals that America was founded to foster and preserve. Accordingly, as a further U.S. contribution to this urgent worldwide effort, I am proposing that the Congress approve over \$600 million for new technical assistance and humanitarian efforts. In addition to the assistance already announced, this will bring to over \$5 billion the level of various forms of U.S. assistance to these people in their time of need.

In closing, I would like to reiterate the importance of seizing this moment to commit ourselves individually and collectively to an opportunity that may not come our way again in our lifetimes. The prospect that our former adversaries may become our friends and our partners, this is in the national interest of every country represented around this table and those countries that are not represented around this table.

By coordinating our efforts toward common goals, we have a chance to reshape the world for our children and for generations to come. And if we do not, we risk the reversal of the historic leap to freedom made by the Russian, Ukrainian, Armenian, and other peoples during these last months.

So, let us work together over the next 2 days to promote our national and collective security, continued global economic growth, and to do what is right for the ordinary people who yearn for a better, free life in these new Independent States.

Thank you all very, very much for being here. I know it is not easy to make the long trek. It is desperately important. Thank you for this opportunity to speak with you today. And may God bless the peoples of all the countries represented here and the peoples of these new, struggling Independent States. We have such confidence that we can succeed, all of us working together.

Thank you all very much.

Note: The President spoke at 9 a.m. at the Department of State. In his remarks, he referred to President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan and President Askar Akayev of Kyrgyzstan.

Remarks to the Citizens Democracy Corps Conference

January 22, 1992

This is strictly a cameo appearance, a drop-by. I would ask these distinguished panelists to excuse the interruption and let you return to your regular program in just a few minutes. But I'm delighted to see Ambassador Hartman here, who served his country with such distinction; most recent

post, unless I missed one, was to what used to be the Soviet Union, and did a great job. Then, of course, Ambassador Polansky, the CDC's Executive Director.

In less than 2 years, this Corps, this Citi-