Remarks to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe in Budapest, Hungary

December 5, 1994

Thank you, President Klestil, President Goncz. I am delighted to be here in this great city in Central Europe at this historic meeting.

The United States is committed to building a united, free, and secure Europe. We believe that goal requires a determined effort to continue to reduce the nuclear threat; a strong NATO, adapting to new challenges; a strong CSCE, working, among other things, to lead efforts to head off future Bosnias; and a strong effort at cooperating with the United Nations and an effort by all the nations of Europe to work together in harmony on common problems and opportunities.

In the 20th century, conflict and distrust have ruled Europe. The steps we are taking today will help to ensure that in the 21st century, peace and prosperity reign.

The forces that tore Europe apart have been defeated. But neither peace nor democracy's triumph is assured. The end of the cold war presents us with the opportunity to fulfill the promise of democracy and freedom. And it is our responsibility, working together, to seize it, to build a new security framework for the era ahead. We must not allow the Iron Curtain to be replaced by a veil of indifference. We must not consign new democracies to a gray zone.

Instead, we seek to increase the security of all, to erase the old lines without drawing arbitrary new ones, to bolster emerging democracies, and to integrate the nations of Europe into a continent where democracy and free markets know no borders but where every nation's borders are secure.

We are making progress on the issues that matter for the future. Today, here, five of this organization's member states, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia, Ukraine, and the United States, will bring the START I treaty into force and reduce the nuclear threat that has hung over our heads for nearly a half century. START I will eliminate strategic bombers and missile launchers that carried over 9,000 warheads. And it opens the door to prompt ratification of START II, which will retire another 5,000 warheads. These actions will cut the arsenals of the United States and the former Soviet Union more than 60 percent from their cold war peak. The world will be a safer place as a result.

But even as we celebrate this landmark gain for peace, the terrible conflict in Bosnia rages not 300 miles from this city. After 3 years of conflict, the combatants remain locked in a terrible war no one can win. Now each faces the same choice: They can perpetuate the military standoff, or they can stop spilling blood and start making peace.

The Government of Bosnia-Herzegovina has made the right choice by accepting the international peace plan and agreeing to recent calls for a cease-fire. So I say again to the Bosnian Serbs: End the aggression; agree to the cease-fire and renewed negotiations on the basis of the Contact Group plan. Settle your differences at the negotiating table, not the battlefield.

We mustn't let our frustration over that war cause us to give up our efforts to end it. And the United States will not do so. If we have learned anything from the agony of Bosnia, it is clearly that we must act on its lessons. In other parts of Europe, ethnic disputes and forces of hatred and despair, demagogs who would take advantage of them threaten to reverse the new wave of freedom that has swept the Continent.

So as we strive to end the war in Bosnia, we must work to prevent future Bosnias. And we must build the structures that will help newly free nations to complete their transformation successfully to free market democracies and preserve their own freedom. We know this is not something that will happen overnight. But over time, NATO, the CSCE, other European and transatlantic institutions, working in close cooperation with the United Nations, can support and extend the democracy, stability, and prosperity that Western Europe and North America have enjoyed for 50 years. That is the future we are working to build.

NATO remains the bedrock of security in Europe, but its role is changing as the Continent changes. Last January NATO opened the door to new members and launched the Partnership For Peace. Since then, 23 nations have joined

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that partnership to train together, conduct joint military exercises, and forge closer political links.

Last week we took further steps to prepare for expansion by starting work on the requirements for membership. New members will join country by country, gradually and openly. Each must be committed to democracy and free markets and be able to contribute to Europe's security. NATO will not automatically exclude any nation from joining. At the same time, no country outside will be allowed to veto expansion.

As NATO does expand, so will security for all European states, for it is not an aggressive but a defensive organization. NATO's new members, old members, and nonmembers alike will be more secure. As NATO continues its mission, other institutions can and should share the security burden and take on special responsibilities. A strong and vibrant Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe is vital.

For more than a decade, the CSCE was the focal point for courageous men and women who, at great personal risk, confronted tyranny to win the human rights set out in the Helsinki accords. Now, the CSCE can help to build a new and integrated continent. It has unique tools for this task. The CSCE is the only regional forum to which nearly every nation in Europe and North America belongs. It has pioneered ways to peacefully resolve conflicts, from shuttle diplomacy to longstanding missions in tense areas. Now that freedom has been won in Europe, the CSCE can play an expanding role in making sure it is never lost again.

Indeed, its proposed new name, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, symbolizes the new and important mission we believe it must undertake. The CSCE should be our first flexible line of defense against ethnic and regional conflicts. Its rules can guard against the assertion of hegemony or spheres of influence. It can help nations come together to build prosperity. And it can promote Europe's integration piece by piece.

By focusing on human rights, conflict prevention, dispute resolution, the CSCE can help prevent future Bosnias. We are taking important steps at this meeting for that crucial goal by strengthening the High Commissioner for National Minorities, establishing a code of conduct to provide for democratic civilian control of the military, reinforcing principles to halt the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and preparing to send CSCE monitors and peacekeepers to potential trouble spots outside Bosnia. These actions will not make triumphant headlines, but they may help to prevent tragic ones.

The principles adopted in Rome made clear that any peacekeeping mission must aim for a freely negotiated settlement by the parties themselves, not a solution imposed from the outside. And they hold that no country can use a regional conflict, however threatening, to strengthen its security at the expense of others.

I am very encouraged that with the support and involvement of the Russian Federation, we are on the verge of an agreement that the CSCE will lead a multinational peacekeeping force in Nagorno-Karabakh. The United States appreciates the willingness of many nations to contribute troops and materiel for this mission. The continuing tragedy in Nagorno-Karabakh demands that we redouble our efforts to promote a lasting cease-fire and a fair settlement. The United States strongly supports this effort and calls upon all CSCE members to contribute toward it.

The CSCE also has an important role to play in promoting economic growth while protecting Europe's resources and environment. We should strengthen its efforts to increase regional and cross-border cooperation. Such efforts can bring people together to build new highways, bridges, and communication networks, the infrastructure of democracy.

Since 1975, when the countries of Europe expressed the desire to form a community founded on common values and founded the CSCE, more progress has occurred than even dreamers might have hoped. We know that change is possible. We know that former enemies can reconcile. We know that eloquent intentions about democracy and human rights can promote peace when transformed from words into actions.

Now, almost 20 years later, our challenge is to help the freedoms we secured spread and endure. The task will require energy and strength. Old regimes have crumbled, but new legacies and mistrust remain. Nations have been liberated, but ethnic hatred threatens peace and tolerance. Democracy and free markets are emerging, but change everywhere is causing fear and insecurity.

Three times before in this century, our nations have summoned the strength to defeat history's dark forces. They have left us still with

a great responsibility and an extraordinary opportunity. Our mission now is to build a new world for our children, a world more democratic, more prosperous, and more secure. The CSCE has a vital role to play.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:58 a.m. in Patria Hall at the Budapest Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to President Thomas Klestil of Austria and President Arpad Goncz of Hungary. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at the Denuclearization Agreements Signing Ceremony in Budapest

December 5, 1994

President Yeltsin, President Kuchma, President Lukashenko, President Nazarbayev, Prime Minister Major. Today we herald the arrival of a new and safer era. We have witnessed many signatures. Together they amount to one great stride to reduce the nuclear threat to ourselves and to our children. The path to this moment has been long and hard. More than a decade has passed since the first negotiations on the START I treaty. But perseverance, courage, and common sense have triumphed.

Skeptics once claimed that the nuclear threat would actually grow after the Soviet Union dissolved. But because of the wisdom and statesmanship of the leaders who join me here, the skeptics have been proven wrong.

Ukraine's accession to the Non-Proliferation Treaty completes a bold move away from the nuclear precipice. Ukraine has joined Belarus and Kazakhstan in ridding itself of the terrible weapons each inherited when the Soviet Union dissolved. Presidents Lukashenko, Nazarbayev, and Kuchma have done a very great service for their own people, their neighbors, and indeed all the peoples of the world.

And there is no greater service that the rest of us could do for our nations, our neighbors, and the peoples of the world than to follow the advice already advanced here by President Yeltsin and Prime Minister Major and agree to the indefinite extension of NPT in 1995.

Creating security in the post-cold-war era requires that we unite, not divide. The pledges on security assurances that Prime Minister Major, President Yeltsin, and I have given these three nations move us further in that direction. They underscore our independence, our commitment to the independence, the sovereignty, and the territorial integrity of these states.

And today we have also reached a milestone in fulfilling the promise of this new era by putting the START I treaty into force, the first treaty that requires nuclear powers to actually reduce their strategic arsenals. It creates the most far-reaching verification system ever agreed upon and will eliminate over 9,000 warheads from our arsenals. It lays the foundations for even deeper arms reductions.

President Yeltsin and I have vowed already to work to put the START treaty into force at our next summit in 1995. That will cut our arsenals by another 5,000 warheads. Together these treaties will leave the United States and the former Soviet Union with only a third of the warheads they possessed at the height of the cold war. They will help us to lead the future to a direction we have all dreamed of, one in which the nuclear threat that has hung over heads for almost a half century now is dramatically reduced.

On this historic afternoon, we have shown that today's community of free nations can and will create a safer globe than did the divided world of yesterday. Together we have helped to beat back the threat of nuclear war and lighted the way to a more peaceful day when the shadow of that destruction is finally vanquished from the Earth.

I thank you all. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:41 a.m. in Patria Hall at the Budapest Convention Center, at a signing ceremony in which the parties to the START I treaty exchanged documents of ratification formally bringing START I into force. In his remarks, he referred to President Boris Yeltsin of Russia,