

Oct. 21 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1995

when the game's over, to respect our differences, and to be able to lose with dignity as well as win with joy—but real tolerance for differences. I mean, after all, my wife was raised in Chicago as a Cubs fan, and she married me even though I'd grown up rooting for the Cardinals. And everybody in the Midwest knows that when Cubs fans and Cardinal fans can sit down together, that's real tolerance.

If you watch one of the 178,000 Little League teams in this country, you also will see real community in America. Two and a half million of our children get together to play this sport, boys and girls. And that's not counting everyone who supports the teams and shows up for the games and practices and bake sales. Communities large and small grow up around baseball: kids playing a pick-up game until it's too dark to see, folks getting together for softball after work, families walking together to see a home game at their local ball park.

This has been a wonderful baseball season. When it's over and the owners and players sit down to resolve their labor dispute, I hope they'll remember the spirit of the season, the spirit we all feel right now, and use it to come together to build a lasting agreement. America doesn't need to lose baseball in a squabble. America needs to keep baseball.

During World War II, there was a debate about whether baseball should continue while

so many of our young Americans were fighting for freedom around the world. President Roosevelt knew we should play ball. He wrote, "It would be best for the country to keep baseball going. Everybody will work longer hours and harder than ever before, and that means they ought to have a chance for taking their minds off their work even more than before."

Well, we still need baseball. We know we have many important challenges facing us as a nation as we prepare for the 21st century. We know that we're having important debates in Washington and real differences. But tonight, I just hope Americans will be able to take their minds off all that and their own work for a moment. I hope they'll be able to wonder instead at the arc of a home run, a catch at the wall, the snap of the ball in the back of a mitt. Soon these sights and sounds will become a new part of our shared national memory of baseball.

Tonight fans of the Cleveland Indians and the Atlanta Braves will watch with special interest. But all of us Americans have reason to smile, for baseball is back.

Thanks for listening, and play ball.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 10:20 a.m. on October 20 in the Veterans Memorial Auditorium in Des Moines, IA, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on October 21.

Remarks at the Dedication of the National Czech and Slovak Museum in Cedar Rapids, Iowa

October 21, 1995

Thank you very much. President Havel, President Kovac, Governor Branstad, Senator Harkin, Congressman Leach, Mayor Serbousek, Mr. Schaeffer, Mr. Hruska, Ambassador Albright. Ladies and gentlemen, if we have not demonstrated anything else about the Czech and the Slovak heritage of Iowa, we have certainly shown to these two Presidents that you are a hearty people. I thank the Czech Plus Band for playing today. I thought they did a marvelous job, and we thank them.

I am proud to stand here with these two Presidents, each a pioneer and a patriot, each leading his nation through an epic trans-

formation, each representing the promise of Europe's future, and their presence today reflects our growing partnership as well as the deep roots of their people in the soil of Iowa.

I will never forget visiting Prague in January of 1994, the first time I had been there in 24 years, and walking across the magnificent Charles Bridge with President Havel. I remembered then all the young people I had met there a quarter century before and how desperately then they had longed for the freedom they now enjoy. In his devotion to democracy and through his courage and sacrifice, Vaclav Havel helped

to make the dreams of those young people a reality, and the world is in his debt.

President Kovac stands with us as a leader of a newly independent nation with a proud heritage and a hopeful future. Mr. President, we know your job has been and continues to be difficult. And the United States supports your personal strong commitment to openness and reform as Slovakia takes its place within the family of democratic nations. And we thank you for your leadership.

Here in America's heartland, the heart of Europe beats loud and clear. Czech immigrants first came to Cedar Rapids in the middle of the 19th century. Soon, a little Bohemia had blossomed in the city where Czech culture flourished in journalism, music, and drama.

Today that proud heritage is as vibrant as ever. One in five residents of Cedar Rapids is of Czech descent, including your mayor. There are eight major Czech-American organizations in this city, and through the Czech school, American children learn the language and traditions of their ancestors an ocean away. Just a few steps from here, the shops of Czech Village are filled with authentic crafts and home cooking. I think it's fitting that in this celebration of American diversity, we have a city which produces both Quaker Oats and kolaches. [Laughter]

In Iowa and beyond, Americans of Czech and Slovak descent have added richness and texture to our American quilt. The values they, like so many other immigrants, brought from their homelands—love of family, devotion to community, taking responsibility, and working hard—these values flourished in America and helped America to flourish.

In the mid-19th century, thousands of Czech settlers farmed America's new frontiers, an experience immortalized in Willa Cather's novel "My Antonia." Slovak immigrants brought their skill and strength to the urban Northeast and the Midwest, where they helped to build heavy industry and oil and steel and coal.

The children and grandchildren of these early pioneers, as well as more recent arrivals, have been generous with their gifts to America: Filmmakers like Milos Forman have challenged our imagination; students of the humanities have been enlightened by Jaroslav Pelikan; and stargazers stand in awe of Captain Eugene Cernan, the last human being to leave his footprints on the Moon. From city hall to Capitol Hill, indi-

viduals like Congressman Peter Visclosky of Indiana, former Congressman Charles Vanick of Ohio, and former Senator Roman Hruska of Nebraska have served our country with distinction. Our dynamic Ambassador to the United Nations, Madeleine Albright, who is here with me today, was born in Prague. And as I have told President Havel several times, the Czech Republic is the only nation in the world that has two Ambassadors at the United Nations. [Laughter]

The National Czech and Slovak Museum and Library we are privileged to dedicate here today is a wonderful tribute to two cultures and two peoples and to the contributions Czech and Slovak immigrants and their descendants have made and continue to make to our great Nation. In keeping with tradition, a dozen eggs have been added to the mortar of the cornerstone, guaranteeing that the museum will serve the public as long and proudly as the Charles Bridge in Prague. To all who have played a part in creating this great place, congratulations on your marvelous achievement.

My fellow Americans, I ask you to take just one more minute to reflect on what our history and this moment mean for us today and in our tomorrows. We celebrate a special corner of our rich and varied mosaic of race and ethnicity and culture and tradition that is America. We are many different peoples who all cherish faith and family, work and community and country. We strive to live lives that are free and honest and responsible. We know we have to build our foundation, even in all of our differences, on unity, not division; on peace, not hatred; and on a common vision for a better tomorrow. We know that our motto, *E Pluribus Unum*, is more than a motto, it's a national commitment.

As we deal with all the remarkable changes that are moving us from the cold war to the global village, from the industrial to the information and technology age, we have to remember that we cannot keep the American dream alive here at home unless we continue to make common cause with people like President Havel and President Kovac, unless we continue to stand for freedom and democracy and peace around the world.

The United States has made a real contribution to the march of freedom, democracy, and peace, in accelerating the dismantling of our nuclear weapons so that now, for the first time since the dawn of the nuclear age, there's not

a single nuclear missile pointed at a single American citizen.

We are working with people all around the world to combat the dangers of terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of destruction. We have tried to be a force for peace and freedom from the Middle East to Northern Ireland to Haiti and, most recently, in Bosnia, where we are hoping and praying that the peace talks will succeed and that the cease-fire will turn into a genuine peace agreement. All of that, of course, especially affects the efforts of these two Presidents to secure their own people and their future.

The Czech Republic, Slovakia, other nations in Central Europe, they are working hard to build the democracy and foster the prosperity that we sometimes take for granted. They've made an awful lot of progress in the face of real challenges, and we have to continue to stand by them by opening the door to new NATO members, by supporting their integration into the other institutions of Europe, by improving access to our own markets and enabling them to move from aid to trade. The Czech and the Slovak people who came to the United States helped us to build our country. It's time for us to return the favor.

More and more Americans are investing in becoming economic partners. There was \$300 million worth of economic transactions with the Czech Republic and about \$100 million with Slovakia last year, with much more in the pipeline. And I have to say, a lot of that was due to the extraordinary personal efforts of one distinguished citizen of Iowa, the head of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, Ruth Harkin, who is here with us today. And I thank her for her efforts.

Making these countries economically strong and helping them to be free and to stay free is the best way to ensure that American soldiers never again have to shed their blood on Europe's soil. It's also good business for us, as you well know. Cedar Rapids is the largest ex-

porting city per capita in the entire United States. Foreign trade creates jobs here.

But we have to do this because it's also the right thing to do. For 45 years we challenged the people of these nations to cast off the yoke of communism. They have done it, and we dare not abandon them now. We have an obligation to work together so that all our people can enjoy the rewards of freedom and prosperity in the 21st century.

I believe the citizens of Cedar Rapids understand that. Those of you of Central European descent have to know it and feel it in your bones. But all of us as Americans should feel it in our hearts, for we believe the American dream is not for Americans only. It is for every hard-working man and woman who seeks to build a brighter future, every boy or girl who studies hard and wants to learn and live up to their dreams, every community trying to clean its streets of crime and pollution and build a better future for all the people who live there, every nation committed to peace and progress. That dream belongs to every citizen of the world who shares our values and will work to support them.

President Havel, President Kovac, my fellow Americans, as we celebrate the opening of this marvelous museum, a monument to those who had faith in the American dream and who struggled to make it come true for themselves and their children, let us resolve to work together for hope and opportunity for all who are reaching for their dreams.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 11:30 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to President Vaclav Havel of the Czech Republic; President Michal Kovac of the Slovak Republic; Governor Terry E. Branstad of Iowa; Mayor Larry Serbousek of Cedar Rapids, IA; and Robert Schaeffer, president, and Roman Hruska, chairman of the board, National Czech and Slovak Museum.