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countries, often, literally, into their homes. You have shared what you have, though the strains are immense. NATO is working to relieve your burden with the United Nations by building camps, providing supplies, helping to bring more refugees to other countries until they can return to Kosovo. We must do more, intensifying our relief operations, taking our share of refugees.

The nations of the region have risked and even faced armed confrontation with Serbia, by facilitating and supporting our campaign to end the bloodshed in Kosovo. Yesterday—or Friday, NATO made its position very clear. We said, unambiguously, if Belgrade challenges its neighbors as a result of the presence of NATO, we will respond.

The nations of the region have faced enormous economic dislocation and losses. We are committed to working with you and with multilateral institutions to ease your emergency needs and help you with your debts. You want a better future for your nations and your region, and there, as well, we are committed to help.

Many of us have tried to lay out a vision for the region, a positive alternative to the violence and ethnic hatred, a vision of people and nations working together, bridging old divides, forging a common future of peace, freedom, and prosperity. How do we get there?

First of all, we must prevail in Kosovo. A just end to the conflict is essential to putting the entire region on the path to stability. Second, we must strengthen our efforts to support economic development and deeper democracy, ethnic and religious tolerance, and regional integration in southeastern Europe. We must build on the many positive ways in which the nations of the region, often with our support, already are bringing change at home, in cooperation across borders.

In that regard, I want to especially commend Slovenia's strong efforts in recent years to reach out to its neighbors. We will work toward the day when all the people of the region, including the Serbs now suffering under reckless tyranny, enjoy freedom and live together.

This will require a commitment by nations of the region to continue political and economic reforms. And I particularly respect the efforts of Bulgaria and Romania in this regard, to stick with their programs under very difficult circumstances. It will require that we sustain our engagement. I welcome the suggestion of the German-EU Presidency to hold a conference in Bonn next month to advance these common efforts. I hope our finance ministers, when they meet here next week with international financial institutions, will explore imaginative and aggressive ways for us to help.

Finally, we must continue to strengthen the security bonds between your countries and NATO. Five of the nations here are NATO partners. Yesterday NATO and its partners agreed to deepen our security engagement. We will continue to work with Bosnia and Croatia on implementation of the Dayton accords, looking toward eventual partnership. And yesterday NATO adopted a robust membership action plan to help aspiring nations strengthen their candidacy so they can enter NATO. New members will bolster our Alliance and Europe's security.

In all the countries present here today, leaders and citizens are working to realize a vision just the opposite of Mr. Milosevic's, reaching across the divides to pursue shared dreams of a better life. All of them are on the right road, and we must travel it with them to ensure that they succeed.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:14 a.m. at the Mellon Auditorium. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary General Javier Solana of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization; and President Slobodan Milosevic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). The transcript made available by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Secretary General Solana.

Remarks at the Opening Session of the Summit of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council

April 25, 1999

Thank you very much, Mr. Secretary General. First of all, I would like to join you in welcoming all the members of our Partnership Council. From Central Asia to North

America, from the Mediterranean to the Baltic, this Council and the Partnership for Peace are building a region of shared values and shared endeavors.

Many nations in this room, indeed, are accepting risks and hardships to support the peace in southeastern Europe. To be sure, there are challenges to our common vision of a Europe undivided, democratic, and at peace: the challenge of overcoming instability and economic hardship in the Balkans; of defeating those who employ ethnic hatred in the service of power; the challenge of integrating a democratic Russia into the European mainstream; the challenge of averting a gulf between Europe and the Islamic world; the challenge of resolving tensions in the Aegean.

We must see reducing conflict and tensions and increasing prosperity and integration as two sides of the same coin. Therefore, as we fight against ethnic hatred in Kosovo, we must fight for the rebuilding of southeastern Europe and the integration of the region into the larger European community.

We must continue to strengthen the Partnership for Peace and deepen the role that our partner countries play in the planning and execution of the missions we undertake together. We must continue to build on our cooperation with Russia, with Ukraine, with all the members of this Council, to advance the interests and ideals we share.

We must continue the enlargement of NATO, the Partnership for Peace, and the Partnership Council. All of these things, I am convinced, will make Europe stronger and freer and more stable. And I think that I can speak for my friend Mr. Chretien, when I say that those of us in North America strongly support it.

As I said last night at our dinner, if you look around this room, the idea that all of us could be sitting here together around one table would have been unthinkable just a few years ago. We are here around this table together because we are thinking about our common future. And that is the best thing to say about this meeting today.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:08 p.m. at the Mellon Auditorium. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary General Javier Solana of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization; and Prime Minister Jean Chretien of Canada. The transcript made available by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Secretary General Solana.

Remarks at the Close of the NATO 50th Anniversary Summit

April 25, 1999

Hello. I am going to read a statement, and then I have to go, unfortunately, to another appointment. But Secretary Albright, Secretary Cohen, Mr. Berger, General Shelton are going to be available to answer questions.

We came to this summit committed to chart a course for the NATO Alliance for the 21st century, one that embraces new members, new partners, and new missions. Here we committed NATO first to fulfill its mission of collective defense with the ability to meet new security threats; second, to remain open to new allies and to seek stronger partnership with nations all across Europe, central Asia, and obviously including Ukraine and Russia.

We've also reaffirmed our determination repeatedly to intensify our actions, military and economic, until we achieve our objectives in Kosovo. On this, the Alliance leaves Washington more united even than it was when we came here.

Meanwhile, we will stand by the neighboring countries that have accepted risks and hardship in support of this effort. If Mr. Milosevic threatens them for helping us, we will respond. And we will work to support democracy and development in the region, so that the forces pulling people together will be stronger than those pulling them apart, and all nations—including, someday, a democratic Serbia—can join the European mainstream.

What NATO did here this weekend was to reaffirm our commitment to a common future, rooted in common humanity. Standing against ethnic cleansing is both a moral imperative and a practical necessity, as the leaders of the frontline states, who have so much at stake in the outcome, made so clear to us.

Our vision of a Europe undivided, democratic, free, and at peace, depends upon our constructive commitment to the hundreds of thousands of poor refugees, so many men,