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TRUST AND RESPECT:
FUNDAMENTAL
REQUIREMENTS FOR
EUROPEAN
INTEGRATION

Dubrovnik, where this historical city state of centuries ago actively developed the consultative process of discussion and consensus, is an appropriate and beautiful location for a discussion of European Integration for the 21st century. Now in less than 30 days the world will welcome a new century. We are here at a historic moment.

The 21st century will be a new era. We exit from a century that was full of difficult, tragic years for the peoples of Europe and the world. Two world wars and almost 50 years of an oppressive Communist domination left its imprint on our cultures and peoples.

Integration must be sensitive to the past century of experiences for the peoples of Europe.

The end of the last decade of the 20th century, symbolized by the fall of the Berlin Wall, witnessed the end of the communist empire in Europe and the dignity of independence at long last occurring for the peoples in Eastern, Central and Southeastern Europe. We can celebrate these recent historic developments and look to the new era. It will be here in 3 weeks and a few days.

New eras bring new opportunities, different responsibilities. Great distances have disappeared; instant communications to all parts of the world are available to most of us. Several decades ago, The British writer Barbara Ward predicted a "world village" where the people of the world would be next-door neighbors. Her prophecy, ridiculed by many, is today a geopolitical reality.

This is the world as we meet in Dubrovnik on the eve of a new century.

CHALLENGES FOR THE INTEGRATION IN EASTERN AND CENTRAL EUROPE

We examine, in Eastern and Central Europe, situations that would have seemed impossible a decade ago. Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Ukraine, Czech Republic, Slo-

vakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Croatia, and others are now independent sovereign states. The often predicted claim that Soviet communist control would “bury” the west has faded into the history books. The soviet empire lasted 74 years.

The sweep of independence that fundamentally changes that situation for these peoples also altered the world's power structure. The disappearance of the Soviet Union from the world's scene leaves the United States, as the world's only significant world power.

The Western Europe powers of the United Kingdom, France, and Germany are the major powers on the European scene. The geo-political reality of the 21st century is the special position of the world's significant (USA) and the major powers.

They have a unique challenge in the process of integration to exercise leadership and judgment.

Their leadership should be **nature, magnanimous, and caring**. Despite being ruled by outsiders – in some cases like Croatia – for centuries, these countries preserved their cultures, language and traditions. It is a credit to the strength of these cultures that peoples, especially after the pain of the Communist dictatorships, arrived at long last as sovereign, independent states with cultures preserved.

This did not always happen with countries that were dominated by other states with another language. My Irish Grandparents, for example, had little or no knowledge of their native Irish language. They, like most of their countrymen, lost their language which is an essential factor in a country's culture. All efforts to reestablish the original Irish language as the contemporary language of the Irish people have not been successful.

SPECIAL CHALLENGE TO THE U.S.A.

The peoples of Europe and the Euro-Atlantic Community are committed to the core principles involving democratic government, religious freedom, civil society, and human rights. While the overall commitment to these values is strong, the governments and leaders of the European and Euro-Atlantic communities should eloquently and forcefully confirm these commitments.

Significant world power status places a special burden on the United States. For over two decades the U.S.A. has issued an annual report, evaluating from the American perspective, the status of human rights in the world.

Inspired by President Jimmy Carter, the purpose of the annual evaluation was indeed noble; to advance the cause of human rights throughout the world.

The history of the past several centuries teaches us that any “big power” should be careful about the public perception of its role when commenting on the activities of other states.

As a private American supporting the purpose of the annual evaluation, I would urge that greater care be given to the tonal quality of the document.

As Americans, we recognize that our country has not been perfect in these matters. There is no question that the U.S. leadership in human rights has been superb, but there should be no arrogance.

There are some historical facts in the 19th century that most Americans would prefer had not occurred. Most recently many Americans are troubled by the number of African-Americans who fall victim to a tragic life style that leads in some cases to capital punishment.

Only recently the U.S. government started to examine allegations of the killing of civilians in Korea by the U.S. armed forces. While still only an allegation, it is a source of some embarrassment.

Americans can not - should not - be arrogant as we judge other states on their human rights records. Now is an appropriate time as we enter the new century, with an emphasis on greater cooperation with the new states of Eastern and Central Europe, to assure that the tonal qualities of U.S. statements on human rights are carefully written. All tendencies toward self righteousness should be avoided.

TRUST AND RESPECT: BETWEEN GOVERNMENTS

Trust and respect should be the cornerstone of relationships between government in the 21st century. Here the significant and major powers should be careful about the perception of promoting their core beliefs in the smaller states of Europe. They must avoid giving the appearance of becoming involved in internal matters unless there is, as recently seen in Yugoslavia, a severe ongoing violation of human rights. In the more moderate, internal cases where the human rights situation does not meet the expectations of the major powers, the governments concerned should engage in dialogue and persuasion.

This procedure, rather than public criticism of the small states governments, on non-urgent matters will be more conducive to development of respect and trust between the states.

This meeting taking place in Dubrovnik in 1999 could not have happened between 1939 and 1991. What a

change that we can celebrate today in this historic city. In that period all of the countries of Eastern, Central, and Southeastern Europe were controlled by oppressive communist dictatorships. The government of the west through this period maintained the rights of the peoples of these countries to democratic governments. The western states built up a great reserve of respect for what they did in that long period of suffering for the peoples from Estonia to Macedonia.

THE PEOPLE IN THE FUTURE

With this historical backdrop, a sense of understanding and respect can be developed among all states of European and North American communities.

While there is no question about the important role of governments we should in the 21st century, put greater emphasis on the role of people. It was only a decade ago that unfriendly governments energized the natural contacts between the peoples of Eastern and Western Europe and with the peoples of North America.

Now the walls have disappeared. As next door neighbors without impediments we are free to be in contact with one another.

Contacts between people, rooted in respect and dignity should be encouraged. Students and young people are already leading the way.

Professional groups, labor leaders, Church official, farmers groups are all encouraged to visit one another across boundaries.

President Eisenhower, before leaving office as President of the United States, founded the people-to-people international movement. In the dark days of the Iron Curtain period, the people-to-people movement encouraged people to write letters to the peoples in Eastern Europe. Letters in the 1960's was about the only way that contact was permissible.

Now the gates are wide open and the free movement of people - in the 21st century should be a major factor in the integration of our societies.

UNIVERSITIES AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The strong cultures of Eastern and Central Europe produced some of the great universities of the world. It is even more remarkable that during the period of almost 50 years of communist dominance the universities remained basically committed to their historic values and culture.

I have had the privilege of visiting many of them from the Baltics to Croatia. We should recognize this heritage and in the 21st century take steps that will facilitate greater exchange between the young people – many will be future leaders – of the European and North American universities.

One semester, a year or even more of study in another culture will lead to greater respect and understanding of the global environment of the 21st century.

Young people are generally more open to the other point of view and to other cultures. The mosaic of varying cultures is one that we wish to preserve; the respect for one another. Teen age athletes, cultural groups and others with the enthusiasm of young people can be the foundation of a new world order. Our governments should encourage and facilitate these exchange programs. This will be a rewarding road to greater integration.

PRESERVATION OF DIFFERENT CULTURES

While the 21st century should place a greater focus on integration, it should also be sensitive to preserving their respective cultures especially those of Eastern and Central Europe that survived decades of oppression.

Integration should mean a respect of the mosaic and not for a weakening of the differences in traditions.

Differing histories have resulted in different sensibilities. The major powers should be especially careful not to ignore the impact of these cultures and histories on the morale of the peoples of the smaller states.

Patience, dialogue and persuasion should be the characteristic of the relations in the 21st century between the major powers and the smaller states.

FORGIVENESS AND RECONCILIATION

We should begin the new century with a spirit of reconciliation. During the Nazi, Fascist and Communist periods there were crimes against humanity; violations of human rights and other oppressive acts.

There has been considerable success in identifying and bringing to trial the major personalities who engaged in these obscene crimes. There should be continued vigilance in bringing to trial any of the major culprits that have not yet been identified.

During this same period there were minor characters in three oppressive regimes of the Nazi, Fascist and Communist periods. They gave into pressure and for selfish reasons cooperated with these cruel forces.

But now our respective governments should consider an act of **forgiveness** and **reconciliation**. Do we want to cloud the new century with continued investigations, trails of a few older citizens who committed a minor crime during the Nazi, Fascist or Communist eras?

Judeo-Christian and other religions traditions have recognized the benefit to everyone when there is forgiveness. Once this occurs there will be a healing and reconciliation.

Here in Dubrovnik we should signal our support for forgiveness and reconciliation as contributing to the trust and respect that we wish to have fully integrated into our communities.

SUMMARY

The 21st century for the first time in history gives that states of Europe and the Atlantic communities the opportunity to enjoy a framework of similar values in democracy, civil society, religious freedom and human rights. This has been made possible by the convergence of the end of oppressive communist domination in Eastern and Central Europe with the end of great geographic distance and the arrival of instant world communications.

The 21st century mosaic should include the varying cultures in all their original vibrant design; part of the community rich in democratic values.

Trust and respect for one another will enhance our relationships.

What a magnificent opportunity for all of us.