



Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States

Excerpts from recent speeches by Governor Bill Clinton

I believe we need to respond more forcefully to one of the greatest security challenges of our time, to help the people of the former Soviet empire demilitarize their societies and build free political and economic institutions. Congress has passed \$500 million to help the Soviets destroy nuclear weapons, and for humanitarian aid. We can do better. As Sen. Sam Nunn and Rep. Les Aspin have argued, we should shift money from marginal military programs to this key investment in our future security. We can radically reduce the threat of nuclear destruction that has dogged us for decades by investing a fraction what would otherwise have to be spent to counter that threat. And, together with our G-7 partners, we can supply the Soviet republics with the food and medical aid they need to survive their first winter of freedom in 74 years. We should do all that we can to coordinate aid efforts with our allies, and to provide the best technical assistance we can to distribute that food and aid.

I know it may be bad politics to be for any aid program. But we owe it to the people who defeated communism, the people who defeated the coup. And we owe it to ourselves. A small amount spent stabilizing the emerging democracies in the former Soviet empire today will reduce by much more the money we may have to commit to our defense in the future. And it will lead to the creation of lucrative new markets which mean new American jobs. Having won the Cold War, we must not now lose the peace.

We should recognize Ukraine's independence, as well as that of other republics who make that decision democratically. But we should link U.S. and western non-humanitarian aid to agreements by the republics to abide by all arms agreements negotiated by Soviet authorities, demonstrate responsibility with regard to nuclear weapons, demilitarize their economies, respect minority rights, and proceed with market and political reforms.

We should encourage private American investment in the former Soviet empire. The Soviet republics, after all, are rich in human and natural resources. One day, they and Eastern Europe could be lucrative markets for us.

Finally, no national security issue is more urgent than the question of who will control the nuclear weapons and technology of the former Soviet empire. Those weapons pose a threat to the security of every American, to our allies, and to the republics themselves.