
SECURITY ASSISTANCE LEGISLATION AND POLICY

Challenges and Promises

By

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[The following is a reprint of President Clinton's address to the 48th U.N. General Assembly, New York City, September 27, 1993.]

Mr. Secretary General, distinguished delegates and guests: It is an honor to address you and to stand in this great chamber, which symbolizes so much of the 20th Century—its darkest crises and its brightest aspirations.

I come before you as the first American president born after the founding of the United Nations. Like most of the world's people today, I was not alive during the convulsive world war that convinced humankind of the need for this organization, nor during the San Francisco conference that led to its birth.

Yet, I have followed the UN's works throughout my life—with admiration for its accomplishments, with sadness over its failures, and with conviction that through common effort, our generation can take bold steps toward redeeming the mission entrusted to the UN 47 years ago. I pledge to you that my nation remains committed to helping make the UN's vision a reality.

The start of this General Assembly offers us an opportunity to take stock of where we are as common shareholders in the progress of humankind and the preservation of our planet. It is clear that we live at a turning point in human history.

Immense and promising changes seem to wash over us daily. The Cold War is over. The world is no longer divided into two armed and angry camps. Dozens of new democracies have been born.

It is a moment of miracles. We see Nelson Mandela stand side by side with President de Klerk, proclaiming a date for South Africa's first non-racial elections.

We see Russia's first popularly-elected President, Boris Yeltsin, leading his nation on its bold democratic journey.

We have seen decades of deadlock shattered in the Middle East as the Prime Minister of Israel and the Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization reach past enmity and suspicion to shake each other's hand.

We have begun to see the doomsday weapons of nuclear annihilation dismantled and destroyed. Thirty-two years ago, President Kennedy warned this chamber that humanity lived

under a nuclear sword of Damocles that hung by the slenderest of threads. Now the United States is working with Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and others to take that sword of annihilation down to lock it away in a secure vault. Let us pray it ever remains there.

It is a new era in this hall as well. The superpower standoff that stymied this body's work, almost from its first day, has yielded to a new promise of practical cooperation.

Yet today two powerful tendencies are working, from opposite directions, to challenge the authority of nation states everywhere. From beyond nations, economic and technological forces are compelling the world toward integration. These economic forces are fueling a welcome explosion of entrepreneurship and political liberalization. But they also destroy the insularity of national economies, quickening the pace of change, and making people feel insecure. At the same time, from within nations, the resurgent aspirations of ethnic and religious groups challenge governments on terms that traditional nation states cannot easily accommodate. These twin forces lie at the heart of the challenges, not only to our national governments, but also to all of our international institutions. They require all in this room to find ways to work together more efficiently in the pursuit of our national interests.

Thus, as we marvel at this era's promise of new peace, we must also recognize the serious threats that remain. Bloody ethnic, religious, and civil wars rage from Angola to the Caucasus to Kashmir. As weapons of mass destruction fall into more hands, even small conflicts can threaten to take on murderous proportions. Hunger and disease continue to take a tragic toll, especially among the world's children. The malignant neglect of our global environment threatens our children's health and their very security. The repression of conscience continues in too many nations. And terrorism, which has taken so many innocent victims, assumed a horrifying immediacy when militant fanatics bombed the World Trade Center and planned to attack this very hall of peace [i.e., the U.N. General Assembly building].

Let me assure you: whether it was the plotters of those crimes, or the mass murders who bombed Pan Am Flight 103, my government is determined to see such terrorists brought to justice.

At this moment of panoramic change, of vast opportunities and troubling threats, we must ask what we can and should do as a community of nations. We must once again dare to dream of what might be—for our dreams may be within our reach.

For that to be, we must all be willing to confront the challenges of the broader world. That has never been easy. When this organization was founded 47 years ago, the world's nations stood devastated by war or exhausted by its expense. There was little appetite for cooperative efforts among nations; most people simply wanted to get on with their lives. But a far-sighted generation of leaders from the United States and elsewhere rallied the world. Their efforts built the institutions of post-war security and prosperity.

We are at a similar moment today. The momentum of the Cold War no longer propels us. And with daunting economic and political forces pressing upon us, many of our nations are turning to focus greater attention on domestic needs—as we must.

But putting each of our economic houses in order must not mean that we shut our windows to the world. This pursuit of self-renewal in many of the world's largest economies—in Europe, Japan, and North America—is crucial, because unless the great industrial nations can recapture robust economic growth, the global economy will languish. Yet the industrial nations also need growth elsewhere in order to lift their own. Indeed, prosperity in each of our nations also depends on active and responsible engagement in a host of shared concerns: a thriving

democratic Russia not only makes the world safer, it also can help expand the world's economy. A strong GATT agreement will create millions of jobs worldwide. Peace in the Middle East can help unleash the region's great economic potential and calm a perpetual source of tension in global affairs. And the growing economic power of China—coupled to greater political openness—could bring great benefits to Asia and to the world.

We must help our publics understand this distinction: domestic renewal is an overdue tonic; but isolationism and protectionism are poison. We must inspire our peoples to look beyond their immediate fears toward a broader horizon.

Let me start by being clear about where my own nation stands. The United States occupies a unique position in world affairs: we recognize and welcome that. Yet with the Cold War over, I know many people ask whether the U.S. plans to retreat or remain active in the world; and if active, they ask, to what end.

Let me answer as plainly as I can. The United States intends to remain engaged and to lead. We cannot solve every problem. But the United States must and will serve as a fulcrum for change and a pivot point for peace.

In a new era of peril and opportunity, our overriding purpose is to expand and strengthen [the] world's community of market-based democracies. During the Cold War, we sought to contain a threat to the survival of free institutions; now we will seek to enlarge the circle of nations that live under those free institutions.

For our dream is of a day when the opinions and energies of every human being will be given full expression, in a world of thriving democracies that cooperate with each other in peace.

With this statement, I do not mean to announce some crusade to force our way of life on others or replicate our institutions. But throughout the world, from Poland to Eritrea, and from Guatemala to South Korea, we see a great yearning among people who wish to be the masters of their own economic and political lives. Where it matters most and where we can make the greatest difference, we will patiently align ourselves with that yearning.

Today, there are still those who claim that democracy is not applicable to some cultures and that its recent expansion is an aberration. But as Franklin Roosevelt once said "The democratic aspiration is no mere recent phase of human history. It *is* human history."

We will work to strengthen the free market democracies by revitalizing our economy at home, by opening world trade through the GATT, the North American Free Trade Agreement, and other accords, and by updating our shared institutions.

We will support the consolidation of market democracy where it is taking new root, as in the states of the former Soviet Union and Latin America, and seek to foster the practices of good government that distribute the benefits of democracy and economic growth.

We will work to reduce the threat from regimes that are hostile to democracy and to support liberalization of non-democratic states that are willing to live in peace. As a country that has over 150 racial, ethnic, and religious groups within our borders, our policy is and must be rooted in respect for all the world's religions and cultures. But we will everywhere oppose extremism that produces terrorism and hate.

And we will pursue our humanitarian goals of reducing suffering, fostering sustainable development, and improving the health and living conditions, particularly for the world's children.

On efforts from export controls to trade agreements to peacekeeping, we will often work in partnership with others and through multilateral institutions such as the UN. It is in our national interest to do so. But we will not hesitate to act unilaterally when there is a threat to our core interests or those of our allies.

The United States believes that an expanding community of market democracies not only serves our own security interests, it also advances the goals enshrined in this body's Charter and its Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

For broadly based prosperity is the strongest form of preventive diplomacy. And the habits of democracy are the habits of peace. Democracy is rooted in compromise, not conquest. It rewards tolerance over hatred. Democracies seldom wage war on one another. They make more reliable partners in trade, diplomacy, and the stewardship of our environment. And democracies, with the rule of law and respect for political, religious, and cultural minorities, are more responsible to their people and the protection of their rights.

But as we work toward this animating vision, we must confront the storm clouds that may overwhelm our work and darken the march toward freedom.

If we do not stem the proliferation of the world's deadliest weapons, no democracy can feel secure.

If we do not strengthen our capacity to resolve conflicts among and within nations, those conflicts will smother the birth of free institutions and threaten the development of entire regions.

If we do not nurture our people and our planet through sustainable development, we will deepen conflict and waste the very wonders that make freedom worth having.

Let me talk more about what we must do in each of these three areas: non-proliferation, conflict resolution, and sustainable development.

One of our most urgent priorities must be attacking the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction—nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons—and the ballistic missiles that can rain them down on populations hundreds of miles away.

We know that this is not an idle problem. We are all still haunted by the pictures of Kurdish women and children cut down by poison gas. We saw SCUD missiles drop during the Gulf War that would have had far graver consequences if they had carried nuclear weapons. And we know that many nations believe it is in their interests to develop weapons of mass destruction or to sell them to others.

More than a score of nations likely possess such weapons and their number threatens to grow. These weapons destabilize entire regions. They could turn a local conflict into a global human and environmental catastrophe. We must find ways to control these weapons and reduce the number of states that possess them.

I have made nonproliferation one of our nation's highest priorities. We intend to weave it more deeply into the fabric of our relationships with the world's nations and institutions. We

seek to build a world of increasing pressure on outlaw states—but increasingly open trade and technology for those states that live by accepted international rules.

Today, let me describe several new policies my government will pursue to stem proliferation.

We will pursue new steps to control the materials for nuclear weapons. Growing global stockpiles of plutonium and highly-enriched uranium are raising the danger of nuclear terrorism for all countries. We will press for an international agreement that would ban production of these materials for weapons forever.

As we reduce our nuclear stockpiles, the U.S. also has begun negotiations toward a comprehensive ban on nuclear testing. This summer I declared that to facilitate these negotiations, our nation would suspend our testing if all other nuclear states did the same. Today, in the face of disturbing signs, I renew my call on them to abide by that moratorium as we negotiate to stop nuclear testing for all time.

I also am proposing new efforts to fight the proliferation of biological and chemical weapons. Today, only a handful of nations has ratified the Chemical Weapons Convention; I call on all nations—including my own—to ratify this accord quickly so that it may enter into force by January 13, 1995. We also will seek to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention by making every nation's biological activities and facilities more open to international scrutiny.

I am proposing as well new steps to thwart the proliferation of ballistic missiles. Recently, working with Russia, Argentina, Hungary and South Africa, we have made significant progress toward that goal. Now we seek to strengthen the principles of the Missile Technology Control Regime by transforming it from an agreement on technology transfer among 23 nations into a set of rules that can command universal adherence.

We also will reform our system of export controls to reflect the post-Cold War world, where we seek to enlist the support of our former adversaries in the battle against proliferation. At the same time that we stop deadly technologies from falling into the wrong hands, we will work with our partners to remove outdated controls that unfairly burden legitimate commerce and unduly restrain growth and opportunity.

As we work to keep the world's most destructive weapons out of conflicts, we must also strengthen the international community's ability to address those conflicts themselves. For as we all know, the end of the Cold War did not bring us to the Millennium. Indeed, it removed the lid from many cauldrons of ethnic, religious, and territorial animosity.

The philosopher Isaiah Berlin has said that a wounded nationalism, "is like a bent twig, forced down so severely that when released, it lashes back with fury." The world today is thick with both bent and recoiling twigs of wounded communal identities.

This surge of bitter conflicts has placed high demands on this body's peacekeeping forces. Frequently, the blue helmets have worked wonders. In Namibia, El Salvador, the Golan Heights, and elsewhere, UN peacekeeping helped stop the fighting, restored civil authority, or enabled free elections. In Bosnia, UN peacekeepers, against the danger and frustration of that continuing tragedy, have maintained a valiant humanitarian relief effort. And if the parties to that conflict take the hard steps needed to make a real peace, the international community—including the United States—must be ready to help in its effective implementation.

In Somalia, the U.S. and the UN worked together to achieve a stunning humanitarian rescue, saving hundreds of thousands of lives. UN Peacekeepers from over two dozen nations remain in Somalia today—and some, including brave Americans, have lost their lives—to ensure that as we complete our missions, anarchy and starvation do not just as quickly return.

Those who would denigrate UN peacekeeping should talk to the people in Cambodia, when the UN's operations helped turn the killing fields into fertile soil for reconciliation. Last May's elections in Cambodia marked a proud accomplishment for that war-weary nation and for the UN. And I am pleased to announce that the U.S. has recognized Cambodia's new government.

UN peacekeeping holds new promise to resolve many of this era's conflicts. But my nation believes it can never be a substitute for our own defense. The reason we have supported such missions is not to sub-contract our foreign policy, but to strengthen our security, protect our interests, and to share among nations the cost and effort of pursuing peace.

Today there is wide recognition that the UN's peacekeeping capabilities have not kept pace with its rising responsibilities. Just six years ago, about 10,000 UN peacekeepers were stationed around the world. Today the UN has some 80,000 deployed in 17 operations on four continents. Yet until recently, if a peacekeeping commander called in from across the globe when it was nighttime here in New York, there was no one in the peacekeeping office to answer the call. When lives are on the line, we cannot let the reach of the UN exceed its grasp.

As the Secretary General and others have argued, if UN peacekeeping is to be a sound security investment for our nation and other UN members, it must adapt to new times. Together, we must prepare UN peacekeeping for the 21st Century.

We need to begin by bringing the rigors of military and political analysis to every UN peace mission. In recent weeks in the Security Council our nation has begun asking harder questions about proposals for new peacekeeping missions. Is there a real threat to international peace? Does the proposed mission have clear objectives? Can an end point to UN participation be identified? How much will the mission cost? From now on the UN should address these and other questions for every proposed mission—*before* we vote, and *before* the mission begins.

The United Nations simply cannot become engaged in every one of the world's conflicts. If the American people are to say "yes" to UN peacekeeping, the United Nations must know when to say "no."

The UN also must have the technical means to run modern, world-class peacekeeping operations. We support the creation of a genuine UN Peacekeeping Headquarters with a planning staff; access to timely intelligence; a logistics unit that can be deployed on a moment's notice; and a modern operations center with global communications.

And the UN's operations must not only be adequately funded—but also equitably funded. Within the next few weeks, the U.S. will be current on our peacekeeping bills. I will work with the Congress to ensure we continue paying our peacekeeping bills in full. But I am also committed to work with the UN to reduce our nation's assessment for these missions. The basic assessment system has not been changed since 1973. I believe our assessment rate should be reduced to reflect the rise of other nations that now can bear more of the financial burden.

Changes in the UN's peacekeeping operations must be part of an even broader program of UN reforms. I say that, not to denigrate the UN, but to help improve it. As U.S. Ambassador [Madeleine K.] Albright has suggested, the United States has always played a twin role to the UN: "First Friend and First Critic."

Today, corporations around the world are finding ways to move from the industrial age into the information age—improving service, reducing bureaucracy, and cutting costs. Here in the U.S., Vice President Gore and I have launched an effort literally to re-invent how our government operates. Now the time has come to re-invent the United Nations as well.

I applaud the initial steps the Secretary General has taken to reduce and reform the UN bureaucracy. Now we must do even more to root out waste. Before this General Assembly is over, let us establish a strong mandate for an Office of Inspector General so that it can attain a reputation for toughness, integrity, and zeal. Let us build a new confidence among our people that the United Nations is changing with the needs of our times.

Ultimately, the key to reforming the UN, as in reforming our own government, is to remember why we are here and whom we serve. We should recall that the first words of the UN Charter are not “We the governments,” but “We the *peoples* of the United Nations.” That means teachers, factory workers, farmers, professionals, fathers, mothers, and children from the most remote village to the greatest metropolis—they are why we gather in this great hall; it is their futures that are at risk when we act or fail to act; and it is they who must pay the bills.

As we dream new dreams in this age when miracles seem possible, let us focus on their lives—and especially on the children, who will inherit this world. Let us work with new urgency, and let us imagine what kind of world we could create for them over the coming generation.

Let us work with new energy to protect the world’s people from torture and repression. As Secretary Christopher stressed at the recent Vienna Conference, human rights are not something conditional, bounded by culture, but rather something universal, granted by God. Today I call on this General Assembly to create, at long last, a High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Let us also work far more ambitiously to fulfill our obligations as custodians of this planet. Not only to improve the quality of life for our citizens and the quality of our air, water, and the earth itself. But also because the roots of conflict are so often entangled with the roots of environmental neglect and the calamities of famine and disease.

During the course of our campaign last year, Vice President Gore and I promised the American people major changes in our nation’s policy toward the global environment. These were promises to keep, and we are doing so. Today we are working with other nations to build on the promising work of the UN’s Commission on Sustainable Development. We are working to make sure that all nations meet their commitments under the Global Climate Convention. We are seeking to complete negotiations on an accord to prevent the world’s deserts from expanding. And we seek to strengthen the World Health Organization’s efforts to combat the plague of AIDS, which is not only killing millions, but also exhausting the resources of the nations that can least afford it.

And let us make a new commitment to the world’s children. It is tragic enough that over one million children died as a result of wars over the past decade. But it is unforgivable that during that period 40 million died from diseases wholly preventable with simple vaccinations or medicines. Every day—this day—over 30,000 of the world’s children will die of malnutrition and disease. As UNICEF Director, Jim Grant, has reminded me, “each of [these children] has a name and a nationality, a family and a future, a personality, and a potential.”

We are compelled to do better by the world’s children. Just as our own nation has launched new reforms to ensure that every child in America has adequate health care, we must do more to

get basic vaccines and other treatments for curable diseases to children around the world. It's the best investment we'll ever make. We can find new ways to ensure that every child grows up with clean drinkable water—that most precious commodity of life itself. And the UN can work even harder to ensure that each child has at least a full primary education—and I mean girls as well as boys.

And to ensure a healthier and more abundant world for them, we must slow the world's explosive growth in population. We cannot afford to see the human race double by the middle of the next century. Our nation has renewed its commitment to work with the United Nations to expand the availability of the world's family planning education and services. We must ensure that there is a place at the table for every one of the world's children

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At the birth of this organization, 47 years ago—a time of both victory and danger—a generation of gifted leaders in many nations stepped forward to organize the world's efforts on behalf of security and prosperity. One American leader during that period said this: "It is time we steered by the stars rather than by the light of each passing ship." And the stars his generation picked—peace, human dignity and freedom—remain the highest in our firmament.

Now history has granted this generation a moment of even greater opportunity, when old dangers are ebbing and old walls are crumbling. Future generations will judge us, above all, by what we make of this moment. Let us resolve that we will dream larger and work harder so that they can conclude we were not merely turning walls to rubble, but laying the foundations for greater things to come.

Let us ensure that the tide of freedom and democracy is not pushed back by the fierce winds of ethnic hatreds. Let us ensure that the world's most dangerous weapons are safely reduced and denied to dangerous hands. Let us ensure that the world we pass to our children is healthier, safer, and more abundant than the one we inhabit today. I believe—I know—that together, we can extend this moment of miracles into an age of great works and new wonders.