

The images you deliver to our homes from Somalia, the former Yugoslavia, Cambodia and elsewhere, are a daily reminder that we have a long way to go before peace, order, freedom and respect for human rights become the rule rather than the exception.

As the Gulf War, the democratization of Cambodia, and the United Nations efforts in Bosnia demonstrate, the old divisions no longer stop the international community from responding to regional problems. We have an unprecedented opportunity to introduce order where there is chaos, peace where there is conflict, and relief where there is pain and suffering.

The challenge of our time is to match our abilities to that opportunity.

A large part of the answer lies in our multilateral institutions, especially the United Nations. While it was hobbled by the stalemate between the superpowers, we could blame the UN's failings on the lack of fundamental consensus. We cannot do so now, when ideological schisms are behind us.

We have won a vital part of the struggle. What is needed today is the will to reform and the determination to finish the job.

The UN remains the single most important instrument we have for promoting peace, democracy and freedom in the world. Surely no task is more important than to make it as effective as possible.

Let me talk first about how we can strengthen the UN's vital role in keeping the peace.

We all share in the benefits of peace. We all must share the responsibility for building and maintaining it. The two go hand-in-hand.

No single state can or should be expected to serve as the world's policeman. The United States certainly should provide both moral leadership and material resources for peacekeeping. It has an indispensable role in revitalizing and strengthening the United Nations, as well as regional institutions, to prevent conflicts, to deal with them when they break out, to provide humanitarian relief, and to promote freedom and human rights.

In the long and troubled era since the end of World War II, America has accepted the burden of defending peace and freedom without succumbing to the temptation to once again turn inward into isolationism.

Nor does it do so now, even when the greatest challenges to its global leadership are no longer military, but economic and social, and are often domestic instead of foreign.