

there are common governmental institutions; there's a common currency. After the economy was completely destroyed, it's been growing at about 40 percent a year since then. I realize it's got a long way to go because it was at nothing. The shared institutions have functioned in many ways. So I do not believe that we have made no progress. I think the biggest problem with the Dayton agreement is we still have 1.2 million refugees who haven't come back. And the return of refugees in areas where they are minorities is still very slow.

But if you look at the leadership of Mr. Dodik in the Republic of Srpska, for example, I think he's been quite a progressive, cooperative person. I met with both Prime Ministers today, as well as the three Presidents.

So what I draw from watching what has and what hasn't happened since Dayton is that we need more help to this whole in governance, that is, what kind of legal changes do you have to make to get people to put their money in your country and put your people to work? How do you fight, more effectively, crime?

But the crime problems in the Balkans—you know, that we have organized crime all over the world now—it's not just here. So it's just really a question of do you have the capacity to fight it. You shouldn't feel that there's something wrong, intrinsically wrong with your region because you have this organized crime problem. It's everywhere in the world. So the real issue is, do you have the capacity to fight it? We have to build that. So I think that's important.

Now, in addition to that, the reason I'm optimistic about the Stability Pact is that I think that the experience of Kosovo, coming after the experience of Bosnia, was very sobering for me and for the European leaders. And I think we saw clearly that if we didn't want another Balkan war, we had not only to take a strong stance against Mr. Milosevic and against ethnic cleansing; we had to offer a better future for all the people of the region. There had to be a way to bring people together around a common economic and political future within the region, and then a way to bring the region closer together with

the rest of Europe and to keep us involved in a positive way.

So that's why I'm optimistic. I think that all these people who came here today, I think they understand that. I don't think they're kidding. I think they really know that—well, let me make one other point—backup, if I might.

In 1993, when I became President, I realized that we had fought two World Wars in Europe; that we had had this long cold war with communism in Europe; that before the 20th century, Europe for hundreds of years had been afflicted by wars as people sought advantage of land; and that for the first time ever, we now had a chance to build a Europe that was democratic everywhere, that was drawing together in a common political and economic union and that was at peace; and the biggest threat were the religious and ethnic conflicts of the Balkans.

I think now, after all this work of the last 6 years, we now know that unless we build a common economic future and a common political future, we're going to have—there will someday be another Balkan war. And that's why I'm optimistic, because I think we have learned our lessons, and I think we are ready to make this common commitment.

One more. Yes, let him ask one more, and then we've got to go.

Corruption in Southeast Europe

Q. With new power, we have new problem, corruption. Does the international community intend to fight against our corruption?

The President. Yes, but a lot of it is you have to do it yourself, and we have to help you fight against it because—and you see this everywhere. Again, a lot of former socialist states convert to democratic states and privatize property, but when we privatize—when we have private property in America, we also have strong economic institutions to preserve the integrity of the economy, to keep dishonesty out. We have strong, sophisticated law enforcement institutions, and even we still have problems. Everybody has problems.

So, I think you should—you shouldn't feel that there's something wrong with your country because this vulnerability is everywhere.