On January 21, 1990, over 300,000 Ukrainians joined hands to create a 300 mile human chain from Kiev to Lviv, in a show of unity and support for Ukrainian independence.

One year later, on August 24, 1991, Ukraine rose from under its Soviet yoke and declared its independence.

I stand here today to commemorate the 20th anniversary of Ukraine's independence and to commend them on their many democratic achievements over the last two decades.

Yet as we celebrate Ukraine's severing of its Soviet chains, we must be weary of new restraints.

For new shackles, in the form of press crack-downs and opposition intimidation, threaten to re-enchain and reverse their many hard-fought freedoms.

I have faith in the spirit of the Ukrainian people, and hope they will join hands again, as they did 20 years ago, and continue to stand strong for freedom and democracy, knowing America will always be standing beside them.

As they say in Ukraine -- Together we are many. We cannot be defeated.