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Exchange With Reporters Following Discussions With President Boris Yeltsin of Russia in Moscow

May 10, 1995

Q. Mr. President, have you reached any agreements?

President Clinton. We're not finished with our conversations, and we'll have a statement later. We're having a good meeting, and I would just say again what I have said repeatedly—President Yeltsin and I have worked hard for more than 2 years to improve the safety and security of the people of Russia and the people of the United States. We are dismantling nuclear weapons at a more rapid rate than our treaties require. And we are working hard to improve the securities of our people. And that's what we've been doing here this morning. We've had a very good meeting, and we'll have more to say about the conversations we've had and will continue to have when we do our press statement.

Q. [*Inaudible*]—solve—[*inaudible*]—problems—[*inaudible*]—any of the problems? Iran?

The President. No one will ever solve all the problems, but—[*inaudible*].

NOTE. The exchange began at approximately 11:30 a.m. at the Kremlin. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

The President's News Conference With President Boris Yeltsin of Russia in Moscow

May 10, 1995

President Yeltsin. Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, journalists: This is the seventh meeting of the Presidents of the U.S. and Russia. This visit by Bill Clinton to Russia is of particular importance. The participation of such a high guest in the 9th of May celebration is seen by us as a tribute to the people killed in our common struggle against fascism.

Before each Russian-U.S. summit, there is no shortage of all kinds of speculations about Russian and U.S. contradictions. Sometimes they even refer to crises in our relations. The results of the Moscow talks have yet again denied these speculations.

Of course, even after the summit, differences to a number of issues have not disappeared. The important thing is that we seek to address these problems while maintaining a balance of interests and without prejudice to each other's interests but, on the contrary, in assisting each other.

The agenda of this meeting was very busy and comprehensive. We addressed the key issues of international life, issues which are of top priority for both countries. I'm referring, above all, to the evolution of the European security structures, the START treaty and the ABM Treaty, strengthening the nonproliferation regime, economic cooperation, and terrorism.

It is of fundamental importance that the discussion which we had about the model for European security proceed at taking into account the new role of the Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe. Today, this organization is beginning to play a central role in maintaining stability on the European Continent.

We exchanged views on NATO issues. Today we better understand the interests and concerns of each other, and yet we still don't have answers to a number of questions. Our positions even remain unchanged.

I hope that our joint statement on matters related to strengthening European security will provide a starting point for further efforts because it provides for cooperation in the establishment of a single indivisible Europe looking into the future.

A serious document has been agreed on the problem of the ABM. We adopted a joint statement on the nonproliferation of nuclear weapons. I believe that that agreement will mark a major contribution to the adoption at the New York conference of a decision on an indefinite

and unconditional extension of the NPT treaty. The conference will probably end tomorrow.

At the negotiations, the question was raised about future Russian supplies of equipment to Iran. That is, of course, not a simple question, and of course, you are going to ask that question, and both Presidents will answer that question.

We discussed in detail the implementation of the economic charter we signed last year. As a result, we adopted a statement on the question of economic reform, trade, and investment. The U.S. President expressed his support for our reforms. We agreed to speed up the process of Russia's entry to the system of international economic institutions, above all, the COCOM.

Of course, we discussed the Chechen issue. This is an internal matter for Russia, but I also believe it does have an international aspect. Russia has accepted the presence at Grozny of the OSCE assistance group.

Terrorism knows no borders. Unfortunately, U.S. citizens recently were confronted with that barbarous phenomenon. I believe that everybody would agree that we should fight this evil jointly, and we have agreed upon that.

During the talks, we had a fruitful exchange of views on the meeting of the political eight in Halifax, and not of the political but also of the economic eight. We also discussed a number of other international issues.

Now I am ready to answer your questions. I give the floor to the President of the United States of America, Mr. William Clinton.

President Clinton. First of all, I'd like to thank President Yeltsin and the Russian people for making me and the rest of our American delegation and the others who came here for the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II feel so welcome. I was honored to play a part in that, and I think it was a very important day for our country and for our relationship.

Today we focused on the future. And if you ask me to summarize in a word or two what happened today, I would say that we advanced the security interests of the people of the United States and the people of Russia. We increased the safety of the future of our peoples, and we proved once again that this regular, disciplined, working relationship that we have established, rooted in Russia's commitment to democracy and in a mature and balanced dialog and a commitment to continue to work on the differences between us in the areas of common opportunity, we proved that this is a good relationship and that it is worth the investment and that we are approaching it in the proper way.

I characterize this as a success from a security point of view for several reasons. First of all, with regard to European security, while there was not an agreement between us on the details on the question of the expansion of NATO, Russia did agree to enter into the Partnership For Peace. And I committed myself in return at the meeting at the end of this month to encourage the beginning of the NATO-Russia dialog, which I think is very important. There must be a special relationship between NATO and Russia.

We agreed to continue to discuss this at Halifax, and again at the end of the year when we see each other. And I made it clear that I thought that anything done with NATO had to meet two criteria: Number one, it must advance the interests of all the Partners For Peace, the security interests of all of them, including Russia, and number two, it must advance the long-term goal of the United States, which I have articulated from the beginning of my Presidency, of an integrated Europe, which I believe is very important. And I think Russia shares both of those objectives.

Secondly, with regard to the nuclear sales to Iran, as you know, the United States opposes the sale of the reactor and the centrifuge. I want to say that I was deeply impressed that President Yeltsin told me that he had decided, in the interest of nonproliferation, not to supply the centrifuge and related equipment to Iran. I shared with him some of the intelligence from the United States on the question of whether Iran is trying to become a nuclear power. And we agreed in light of the questions of facts that need to be determined here and Russia's strong support for nonproliferation, to refer the question of the reactor itself to the Gore-Chernomyrdin commission for further work on resolution.

I was very pleased today that we were able to make progress on the outstanding issues relating to weapon sales which will permit Russia to be a founding member of the post-COCOM regime, something, again, which will make the world a safer place.

Fourthly, we agreed that both of us would work as hard as we could to get START II ratified this year, and then to go beyond that

to talk about what we could do further to support the denuclearization of the world and of our two arsenals.

Fifthly, we agreed that we should step up our efforts in combating terrorism and organized crime, a problem that affects not only our two nations but also many others in the world, as we have sadly seen. And we discussed some fairly specific things that we might do together to intensify our efforts.

As President Yeltsin said, we reaffirmed today in specific actions our support for the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and we look forward to its permanent extension. And we hope that the indefinite—excuse me, the indefinite extension will be adopted soon.

And finally, we were able to reach agreement on the ABM theater missile defenses issue, which is a very important one, and many of the Americans here know, important for our attempts to go forward on START II and other things back home.

We talked about our economic cooperation. We talked about the progress Russia is making. I expressed again the strong concern of the United States that the violence in Chechnya should be brought to an end. I urged the permanent extension of the cease-fire. I was encouraged that President Yeltsin, I believe, understands the gravity of this matter and also wants it concluded as quickly as possible.

So we are, I think, in a better position in our two countries today, and our people will be safer as a result of this meeting. It was an advance for security. There was significant progress made. And we still have work to do.

Press Secretary Sergey Medvedev. Now, dear colleagues, you have an opportunity to ask questions. I wish to remind you that we will give you the floor in sequence with my colleague, the Press Secretary of the U.S. President, Mr. McCurry.

The first question, please.

NATO Expansion and Russian Security

Q. Russian Public Television. Boris Nikolayevich, before the negotiations began, both sides were quite categoric on questions at issue. Are any concessions possible today on the NATO problem? Are there any linkages possible? I know that President Clinton insists on flank restrictions in the south of Russia. Well, if both sides do not concede, what will President Clinton bring back to the United States?

President Yeltsin. Well, I must tell you that we didn't have such a trading system in our talks. On the contrary, on the question of flank restrictions, Bill was the first to bring this matter up. And he said that he will surely support us on this difficult issue because it is true we are sort of in a trap with that issue.

Now, about NATO, we should look at this question in broader terms. What about general European security and NATO? I cannot say that after protracted discussions today on this subject—and by the way, we even had to change the schedule—we, in fact, had a never-ending meeting, and we were not able to dot the i's and cross all the t's. And we decided, first, if it is so difficult, let us not hurry, and then let us continue our consultations when we meet in Canada in Halifax.

We also believe that it may be we won't be able to agree in Halifax either. And we may need another meeting in November when the United Nations marks its 50th anniversary. We will meet in New York once again, and maybe at that time we may come to some final agreement.

President Clinton. I think this meeting was a win-win meeting. That is, I do not—I believe that both our countries advanced our interests and the interests of our people.

With regard to European security, the important thing for me was—not that Russia and the United States would agree today on the details of NATO expansion—indeed, it's important for all of you to understand, NATO has not agreed on that. NATO has not agreed on that.

This whole year, 1995, was to be devoted for the rationale for expanding NATO and then determining how it might be done, with no consideration whatever of who would be in the included membership and when that would be done. That was the plan. So not only has there—have we not agreed on that, as far as I know, there may be significant differences among the NATO partners themselves.

The important thing for me was that the President and I would agree that European unity, integration, is still our goal—we don't want a differently divided Europe—and that our NATO expansion plans should enhance the interests, the security interests of all of our partners, including Russia. Now, for my part, I haven't changed my position from the beginning on how this should be done.

The second thing I want to say is, the most important thing to me is that Russia has now agreed to proceed with participation in the Partnership For Peace, which is becoming very, very important in its own right and a significant force in increasing a sense of trust and understanding and working together in security within Europe.

With regard to the flank issue you mentioned, we have not worked out all the details of that. We've agreed to continue working on it. The problem is, of course, that the treaty becomes effective at a certain date. Its terms were negotiated in a previous time. Then there is a lag time for modifications of the treaty. We believe some modifications are in order. We are supporting the Russian position there. What we want to do is to figure out a way for us to preserve the integrity of the treaty and compliance with it, but, in the end respond to the legitimate security interests of Russia. And I believe we can get there.

Russia-Iran Nuclear Cooperation

Q. Mr. President, you made clear in advance on the Iran nuclear deal that you wouldn't be satisfied with anything short of an outright cancellation of that sale. Today you said that it's going to be referred to a lower level, that you weren't able to solve this question. I want to know, are there any repercussions? Are you disappointed that you weren't able to get this sale closed? And will you resist Republican threats to cut off foreign aid to Russia?

President Clinton. Well, first of all, this sale was in the pipeline, announced, and is legal under international law. I believe it is unwise. I think it should not go forward. We actually got more done today than I thought we would do, and we are ahead of where I thought we would be.

As I said, President Yeltsin made it clear to me that even though it would be some financial sacrifice to Russia, he did not believe they should proceed with the centrifuge and the related portions of the sale that could have a much more direct and immediate impact on weapons production. I gave him some of our intelligence and made the best arguments I could about why I thought the whole sale should not go forward. And we agreed that since some of this involves an evaluation of technical matters, it would be appropriate to refer to the Gore-Chernomyrdin commission where we have gotten a lot of useful work done between our two countries. So we are actually further down the road on that issue than I thought we would be.

Now, with response to the particular arguments about the cutoff of aid, I think what we should do is to look at the progress we have made today, look at the progress we have made in the last 2 years, ask ourselves whether the United States is safer and more secure as a result of these efforts. I think the answer is yes. We should keep working. We should treat this like a business relationship that is furthering the security of both countries, and we should do whatever is in our interest. And I believe that the programs that we presently have underway are clearly in our interest.

President Yeltsin. I would like to add to what President Bill Clinton just said. The point is that the contract was concluded legitimately and in accordance with international law, and no international treaties were violated in the process. But it is true that the contract do contain components of peaceful and military nuclear energy. Now we have agreed to separate those two.

Inasmuch as they relate to the military component and the possibility, the potential for creating weapons-grade fuel and other matters, the centrifuge, the construction of silos, and so on—we have decided to exclude those aspects from the contract, so the military component falls away, and what remains is just a peaceful nuclear power station on light water reactors, which is designed to provide heat and energy.

Any more questions?

Please, colleagues, it's our task.

Q. Boris Nikolayevich, could you clarify, if possible, the mechanism for decisionmaking regarding the Iranian contract? According to President Clinton, the materials will be referred to the Gore-Chernomyrdin commission; who will then decide? Will they report to the heads of state, or will some other mechanism be worked out?

President Yeltsin. After this question has been comprehensively considered by the Gore-Chernomyrdin commission, we, the two Presidents, will receive all the material and we will make the final decision.

Chechnya

Q. [*Inaudible*]—seem ironical to you that you have just celebrated the end of World War II and the killing goes on in Chechnya? And it

really has appalled the world, the killing of civilians. So what are you going to do about it, and how can you stop it?

President Yeltsin. Well, first, there are no hostilities underway in Chechnya right now. Therefore, that is—there is no irony there. Furthermore, the armed forces are not involved there. Today, the Ministry of the Interior simply seizes the weapons which are still in possession of some small armed criminal gangs. But most importantly, we are doing some creative work there. We are rehabilitating buildings, utilities, trade, we ensure the necessary financing.

The Chechen government has been set up, and it is headed by a Chechen, and it operates in accordance with the Russian Constitution. The dates for parliamentary elections are now being discussed. Therefore, creative work is being done, and I believe that soon we will have a normal situation there, the situation of a democratic republic, with all the ensuing rights for the citizens living in Chechnya.

Terrorism

Q. [*Inaudible*]—radio station. I have the following question: The people are very impressed with incidents of brutal terrorism. Boris Nikolayevich, you said that you discussed this and you agreed on some common actions. Could you elaborate on that? And I would be grateful if both Presidents could at least briefly address this question.

President Yeltsin. Well, first we convinced each other that without joint efforts, we will not be able to cope with this evil in the world. What we really need is joint efforts—joint efforts, not talk, not conferences, not meetings but actions. And as regards actions, of course we did not discuss the matter specifically, but we have instructed our governments to work out those actions and to proceed without delay to taking those actions.

President Clinton. He asked for an answer, I'd like—we talked; we did not agree on a number of specific actions, but we discussed some. And I think it might be helpful.

First of all, President Yeltsin and I and the leaders of many other countries in the world are quite concerned that the great security threat of the 21st century might not be all those we had been discussing, either explicitly or by implication here in the last few moments. They instead might be coming from often nongovernmental sources in terms of terrorism and organized crime and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, getting into the hands of terrorists and organized criminals. So we discussed how we could cooperate more with law enforcement and intelligence. I think you know that the Federal Bureau of Investigation is opening an office here in Moscow, and we have been working with Russia for sometime now.

We discussed how we could make sure we each were as technologically advanced as possible, because many of the adversaries we face are very advanced. And we discussed how we might work together to try to limit the destructive capacity of terrorists and organized criminals and limit their ability to proliferate the weapons, particularly in the biological and chemical area. It's a great concern to me, and both Russia and the United States probably have some resources there that we can bring to bear.

And I think in light of what happened in Japan, all advanced countries should be very, very concerned about the prospect of the merger of terrorism with weapons of mass destruction, biological, chemical, and small-scale nuclear weapons.

Chechnya

Q. President Clinton, you've just heard President Yeltsin describe the situation in Chechnya in a way that may be at odds with news dispatches coming from the part of the country describing a massacre. And I wondered if—what your reaction is to his description, whether you accept it, if not why not, and what impact these reports of terrible things there may be having on the countries eager to join NATO, and what you would have to say to him about that?

President Clinton. Well, I will say to you what I said to him personally already, and I think what he knows and Chancellor Kohl and other friends of Russia have said: The civilian casualties and the prolongation of the fighting have troubled the rest of the world greatly and have had an impact in Europe on the attitudes of many countries about what is going on here and about future relationships. I don't think anyone is unaware of that.

What I have urged President Yeltsin to do is to try to make a permanent cease-fire, to try to move rapidly with the cooperation of the OSCE to get a democratic government there and to bring this to a speedy resolution, because I do believe it is something that is very troubling

to the world, particularly in the dimensions of civilian casualties.

And I'm sure all the American journalists here know that we have a missing relief worker there ourselves. And I asked the President to help me find whatever could be found about Mr. Cuny, and he said that he would direct the Russian authorities there to try to help us. But this is a troubling thing for the world, and it's been a difficult thing for them as well.

President Yeltsin. Looking at my watch, shall we agree, Mr. McCurry, just one question on each side?

Economic Reform in Russia and Ukraine

Q. Boris Nikolayevich, we will have a meeting at Halifax with the eight. Do you intend to improve on the results of the similar meeting in Naples? Did you discuss anything like that this time with Bill Clinton? Did you agree that Bill Clinton will help you somewhere in some of Russia's aspirations?

And the question for the U.S. President—this is also a question from Ukraine—what are you bringing to Ukraine?

President Yeltsin. Whoever I met during these celebration days, of course, with everybody we discussed Halifax. I and Russia are, of course, concerned about our role in the G–7 or in the G–8. That is why this morning, at 9 a.m., I had a meeting with the Prime Minister of Canada, Mr. Chretien, who will act as cochairman. We discussed the U.N. views—we discussed his views on the problem. I discussed this with Bill Clinton, with Helmut Kohl, with François Mitterrand.

Well, generally speaking, everybody is optimistic on this subject, and they wish to support Russia. To give you an example, Mr. Chretien this morning said that Russia in Halifax will have 3 times more opportunities than last year in Naples. Well, that's not bad. The minimum we count on is as follows: The political eight, we believe, has now asserted itself; it is a fact of life; we are part of the political eight.

Now about economic matters. At Halifax, first they will address the economic matters of the G–7 and then they will address international matters pertinent to the whole world. As regards their internal business, well, we have no claims to that. They discuss specific issues and important issues related to trade and other economic matters. But as regards global strategic matters of importance to the entire world, Russia should participate in such discussions fully. So I think we can call this seven and a half.

President Clinton. [*Inaudible*]—specific questions. The United States, since I have been President, has supported two major aid packages to Russia to support the conversion to a market economy and to try to assist in developing all of the institutions necessary to make that successful, as well as to support our denuclearization efforts under the so-called Nunn-Lugar funds.

We were also very strongly supportive of the recent $6.8 billion standby loan that the International Monetary Fund granted to Russia as a result of the economic reforms initiated under President Yeltsin. So I think that your country has a great deal to be proud of in the economic progress that has been made.

I know you still are dealing with a lot of economic difficulties; all market economies do. And the markets don't solve all problems. So you have to work on trying to deal with those. But I believe that our partnership has been a good investment for the United States because we have a stronger, more democratic, more open, more free Russia, and we will continue to support that direction.

With Ukraine, I must say, they've made a remarkable amount of progress in the last year or so, and I think President Yeltsin feels the same way. I am encouraged by the balance and discipline coming out of the government in Ukraine, and I will continue to support the process of reform there.

Russia-Iran Nuclear Cooperation

Q. President Yeltsin, several U.S. officials, including the Secretary of State, have suggested that if you go along with the sale of the nuclear reactors to Iran, this would endanger Russia's becoming a full member of the G–7 and other international institutions. And several Republican leaders in the U.S. Congress have warned that if you go ahead with this sale, it would endanger continued U.S. assistance to Russia. Are these kinds of threats persuasive, or was the intelligence information that President Clinton showed you today of Iran's nuclear ambitions, was that the convincing element to you? Or are you still basically at a disagreement with the United States over Iran's nuclear ambitions?

President Yeltsin. We're not afraid of threats. We never react to threats. But as for your question, we have already told you, with the Presi-

dent, that technically we need to sort the question out. We need to sort out what relates to peaceful and to military purposes. And this has been entrusted to the Gore-Chernomyrdin commission. Once we get to signatures—once we get a document signed by two, we the Presidents will make the final decision.

President Clinton. This may be a fitting question to close this press conference.

I think it is important that the people of the United States and the people of Russia understand that from time to time, as with any sort of relationship, there will be differences of opinion. Occasionally, there will even be occasions where our interests are different. What we have been working on for over 2 years now are areas where our interests are not different, working through areas where our opinions might be.

Now, in the case of this Iranian matter, just to take one example, if the United States is right and Iran is attempting to develop the capacity to build nuclear weapons, that would be more of an immediate security threat to Russia than to the United States, because you are closer to the country.

So we don't really have different interests here. Both our countries are committed to the fight against terrorism. Both our countries are committed to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and its indefinite extension. Both our countries are dismantling our own nuclear arsenals at a more rapid rate than our treaties require.

Now, in playing this relationship out, there will come times when there will be differences. If we ultimately differ on something, I think that we all know there may be consequences to having different positions and different actions. But I think we should be quite careful in using the language of threats in a relationship that in the last 2 years has made the world a much safer place. We have seen Russia's democracy strengthened. We have seen Russia's transition toward a private economy go more rapidly than all experts predicted. We have seen discipline asserted in this economy to a greater degree than most experts predicted. And we have seen more progress on thorny difficulties, complex matters, than most experts predicted.

As a result, the people of the United States, the people of Russia, and the people of the world are safer today than they were 2 years ago and than they were before this last meeting between us occurred. That is the fundamental story. We will have differences. They will have consequences. But we should stay away from big words like "threats" when we're managing matters which can be managed in a relationship that is quite good for the world and that has made us all safer.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President's 95th news conference began at 2:40 p.m. in the Press Conference Hall in the Kremlin. In his remarks, he referred to Frederick Cuny, an American relief worker in Chechnya who disappeared in April. President Yeltsin spoke in Russian, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Russia-United States Joint Statement on Missile Systems
May 10, 1995

The President of the United States of America and the President of the Russian Federation, taking into account the threat posed by worldwide proliferation of missiles and missile technology and the necessity of counteracting this threat, agreed on the following basic principles to serve as a basis for further discussions in order to reach agreement in the field of demarcation between ABM systems and theater missile defense systems.

The United States and Russia are each committed to the ABM Treaty, a cornerstone of strategic stability.

Both sides must have the option to establish and to deploy effective theater missile defense systems. Such activity must not lead to violation or circumvention of the ABM Treaty.

Theater missile defense systems may be deployed by each side which (1) will not pose a realistic threat to the strategic nuclear force