

Administration of Barack Obama, 2011

Remarks Following a Meeting With President Dmitry A. Medvedev of Russia in Deauville, France

May 26, 2011

President Obama. Let me just make a brief statement. It is good once again to see my friend and partner Dmitry Medvedev. Over the past 2 years, I think that we have built an outstanding relationship, and as a consequence, we've been able to reset relations between the United States and Russia in a way that is good for the security and the prosperity of both of our countries.

We're implementing the new START Treaty. We're cooperating on nonproliferation, on nuclear security, on intelligence and counterterrorism. We're enforcing strong sanctions on Iran. And we're cooperating on Afghanistan, where Russia has been very helpful in establishing supply lines for our troops there.

But our cooperation has extended beyond the security areas, and much of our discussion today revolved around economics. We're pleased that we've established working groups around issues of rule of law and innovation, both of which are key priorities of President Medvedev as he continues to modernize the Russian economy. And our teams have been working intensively around the issue of Russian accession to the WTO.

We think that Russian accession to the WTO will be good for the Russian economy, will be good for the U.S. economy, will be good for the world economy. And we are confident that we can get this done. And it will be a key building block in expanding trade and commerce that create jobs and benefit both countries.

We also discussed the situation in the Middle East and North Africa and shared our ideas about how we can manage the transition process that's taking place throughout the region in a way that enhances prosperity and opportunity for people there and ensures stability and resolves conflicts in a peaceful way.

And finally, we continued our discussions around the issue of missile defense. And we committed to working together so that we can find an approach and configuration that is consistent with the security needs of both countries, that maintains the strategic balance, and deals with potential threats that we both share.

We look forward to obviously additional discussions with the Russian President in the G-8 context around the world economy, world finances, issues like nuclear security. But I just want to emphasize that my interactions with President Medvedev have always been excellent. I think that he is doing fine work in moving Russia forward on a whole range of issues. And I appreciate the excellent cooperation that's been established between our governments.

And so, Dmitry, it's good to see you again. And I look forward to our work over the next day and a half.

President Medvedev. My counterpart and political partner Barack Obama has just precisely covered the issues discussed by us during the meeting, but I would like to also emphasize that I am satisfied with our personal relationship that helps us advance the relations between our two countries.

Well, over the last several years, we have done a lot to make our relations different from what they used to be, and we stand high chances to continue this positive trend and develop it further on.

But requires a lot of effort and requires continuing in the same vein, full of trust—with relations full of trust between the two Presidents. It does not mean that we have common views and coinciding views on all the issues. It's impossible, and I believe that it's not worth trying. Each and every country is sure to have its own national priorities and interests. But a lot depends on our relations. It's about the maintaining the strategic balance of forces on our planet. We have been able to keep this balance in place, and after the new START Treaty, it has improved, I believe.

Today we talked about how to keep and further develop these achievements and how to develop our relations in, well, quite sensitive issues including antimissile defense. I have told my counterpart Barack Obama that this issue will be finally solved in future, like, for example, in the year 2020, but we, at present, might lay foundation for other politicians' activities. And this would be a sound foundation for cooperation between our two countries in future. We will, of course, pursue this track, but political impetus are necessary.

We have talked of Middle East and North Africa. We'll continue the discussions, especially in the framework of G–20. We have dealt with settling the Iran issue. We have also talked of the necessity and we have emphasized the necessity of improving economic cooperation between our countries and stepping up Russia's WTO accession. I hope we'll be able to conclude this process finally. But we need motivation and impetus for that. And we have agreed as a result of these talks to instruct respectively our teams.

Let me once again emphasize that I'm quite happy about the way our personal relationship develops. I hope it will have a positive impact on our bilaterals. We have a lot to do together.

President Obama. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:59 p.m. at the Hotel Royal Barriere. President Medvedev spoke in Russian, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Categories: Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials : Russia, President Medvedev.

Locations: Deauville, France.

Names: Medvedev, Dmitry A.

Subjects: Arms and munitions : Nuclear weapons and material :: Nonproliferation efforts; Arms and munitions : Nuclear weapons and material :: Security; Arms and munitions : Nuclear weapons and material :: Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) with Russia, expansion; Commerce, international : Group of Eight (G–8) nations; Defense and national security : Missile defense; France : President Obama's visit; Iran : U.N. Security Council sanctions; Middle East : Democracy efforts; North Africa : Democracy efforts; Russia : Afghanistan, role; Russia : Counterterrorism efforts, cooperation with U.S.; Russia : President; Russia : Relations with U.S.; Russia : Security cooperation with U.S.; Russia : Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) with U.S., expansion; Russia : Trade with U.S.; Russia : World Trade Organization, membership bid; World Trade Organization.

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