President Yeltsin. My response would be negative, of course. But we will discuss this issue with the President of the United States.

Q. Mr. President, do you want to comment? Do you want to comment on what you think can be accomplished?

President Clinton. Well, as you know, the—at least for the moment, this may be a largely academic discussion for two reasons. One is, the legislation now pending commits me to pursue a multinational, multilateral lifting of the embargo through the U.N., and we received word just in the last couple of days from the Bosnian Government that they may be interested in deferring any action on that for 4 to 6 months. It's something they brought to us, so we're all working through that.

I think the most important thing is we have to keep pressing the Bosnian Serbs to end the conflict, to accept the Contact Group's proposal. And I want to emphasize that the United States and Russia have worked very closely together on Bosnia to this point. We have been together every step of the way. We're going to do our best to stay together.

Q. Haven't they stopped you from further air strikes? Haven't they opposed some of your policies?

President Yeltsin. Very impressive. [*Laughter*]

President Clinton. That's very impressive, right?

Q. It's my job.

President Clinton. She does it well. She does it well. [*Laughter*]

[*At this point, one group of reporters left the room, and another group entered.*]

President Yeltsin's First Visit

Q. Mr. President, do you remember your first meeting with President Yeltsin 2 years ago in Blair House here in Washington?

President Clinton. Yes, I do. I remember it well. We had a fine visit. It was more than 2 years ago, I think, wasn't it?

Q. Yes, it was in June.

President Clinton. Yes, that was before I had even been nominated for President formally. I remember it well. He was very kind to receive me. You know, then as I remember, I was running third in the polls, and no one thought I would be elected President. So I was very pleased that he saw me. And we got off to a good start.

Russia-U.S. Partnership

Q. You say that the main task is unification of the West and Russia, and at the same time you want to be closer—you want to broaden NATO. Don't you see that there's a contradiction in that?

President Clinton. We're going to discuss all those things. We've made a remarkable partnership, and I think it's been based on real mutual respect for the interests of each other and for our shared goals in the world. And I believe we can continue that partnership. We're going to work at it.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks Honoring Russian and American Veterans of World War II
September 27, 1994

President Yeltsin, Mrs. Yeltsin, members of the Russian and American delegations. We say a special word of welcome to the Red Star Red Army Band that has come all the way from Russia to be with our Marine Band today. To the Members of Congress who are here, honored veterans, distinguished guests: We welcome you all to the White House.

We gather to celebrate the bonds between the Russian people and the American people forged during World War II. And we gather to pledge that the opportunity we lost five decades ago to build a better world will not be lost again.

A half century ago, half a world away, brave men and women from our nations fought as allies for a common cause and an uncommon sacrifice. In April 1945, as the greatest war of this century drew to a close, they embraced on the banks of the Elbe River. Their meeting

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held the promise not only of the war's end but also of an enduring peace that sadly was deferred for decades. Today we honor the Russian and American veterans who risked their lives, and sometimes gave their lives, to defeat that tyranny. We are deeply honored to have some of those veterans here with us at the White House. Theirs was a partnership on land, air, and sea but also in heart, mind, and spirit.

To our children, their stories sound like the stuff of novels and movies, but they are real. Some American heroes helped win the war not by fighting on the front lines but by ferrying tons of supplies to Russia, everything from boots to locomotives. It was very dangerous work. Fifty years ago this week, the Liberty ship S.S. *Edward H. Crockett,* carrying 68 members of the merchant marine and the naval armed guard, left the Russian port of Archangel to return home. Fifty years ago to the day on Thursday, it was torpedoed by the enemy and sank in the icy Bering Sea. Miraculously, most of the crew survived. Six of those survivors are here with us today, and we welcome them. [*Applause*]

In the deserts of Iran, thousands of American soldiers delivered gasoline and munitions to Russian units. Many, like Robert Patterson, drove in heat so intense that the steering wheels of their trucks burned their bare hands. And American nurses, like Anna Connelly Wilson, tended to the wounded in primitive field hospitals with no blankets or running water.

In 1944, Joseph Beyrle parachuted into France with the 101st Airborne Division, only to be captured and taken to a prison camp in Germany. But he escaped, joined advancing Russian troops, and fought as a member of a Russian army unit as it drove toward Berlin. While manning a Russian tank gun, Joseph Beyrle was wounded, but Russian doctors saved his life. I'm especially grateful to them because Joseph survived the war and went on to have a son. His son, John Beyrle, works here at the White House as one of my advisers on Russian affairs. I'd like to ask them both to stand and be recognized here: the Beyrles. Thank you, Mr. Beyrle, thank you. [*Applause*]

We're also joined today by Russian veterans of the war, including Alexsandr Olshansky. Then a young corporal, he was one of the Russians who went, who met American troops at the Elbe River. Now, he is a major general in the Russian Army. In a few minutes, I will be honored to present to Major General Olshansky, as the Russian veterans' representative, a medal commemorating our wartime partnership.

Let us now pause for a moment to applaud all the Russian and American veterans of World War II who are here today. [*Applause*] Each of their stories, in different ways, teaches the same lesson. Once before, Russians and Americans shared a just cause and prevailed. Today, we are partners in peace, not war. Now we have a responsibility to work together for our own good and for the good of the world beyond our borders.

Two men symbolize the renewed bond between Russians and Americans: Ambassador Malcolm Toon and General Dimitri Volkogonov. World War II veterans both, they are the co-chairmen of the U.S.-Russian Joint Commission on POW's/MIA's. They spent the last 2½ years on a mission to account for U.S. servicemen missing from the Second World War, the cold war, and the conflicts in Korea and Vietnam and for Russian soldiers missing in Afghanistan.

President Yeltsin, you first proposed this Commission. It has become an important part of our bilateral relationship. The recent repatriation of the remains of U.S. Air Force Captain John Dunham is an example of your commitment to this Commission's work.

Our feelings today are perhaps best expressed by the great Russian poet Yevtushenko. He wrote with great emotion in words that many Russian citizens know by heart, "We remember those who joined us in battle, who embraced us at the Elbe River. And we are faithful to this memory."

To the veterans of our two great nations, we say thank you for the inspiration of your example. We will learn from it, from your courage and your sacrifice. And we vow, finally, to redeem the promise of that embrace at the Elbe.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:26 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House.