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Just as no law prevents every crime, no treaty is foolproof. But the Chemical Weapons Convention will help make our citizens more secure. It will also help protect our soldiers by requiring member nations to destroy their chemical weapons, a step that we are already taking under U.S. law.

These overwhelming benefits explain why America's military leaders and Presidents of both parties have strongly supported the ratification of this treaty. As we remember the terrible toll that sarin gas took in Tokyo 2 years ago, I urge the Senate to help protect our citizens and soldiers and strengthen our fight against terror by ratifying the Chemical Weapons Convention now.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to a Dinner Hosted by President Martti Ahtisaari of Finland in Helsinki

March 20, 1997

Summit With President Boris Yeltsin of Russia

Q. President Clinton, what are the prospects for common ground on this NATO issue?

The President. I'm looking forward to the meeting. I think we'll work something out; I hope we will. We have had 11 meetings. We've worked hard together, and I'm glad to see President Yeltsin looking so fit and well.

Q. How are you doing, President Clinton?

The President. Great.

NOTE: The exchange began at 7:05 p.m. in the Yellow Room at the Presidential Palace. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Exchange With Reporters on Greeting President Boris Yeltsin of Russia and President Martti Ahtisaari of Finland in Helsinki

March 21, 1997

Helsinki Summit

Q. Mr. President, do you expect to be able to find a way to agree to disagree with President Yeltsin on NATO expansion?

President Clinton. I think we'll have a good meeting. And we'll have a press conference this afternoon to answer your questions.

Q. Do you expect any surprises?

President Yeltsin. During the discussions there may be some surprises, but I'm confident that we'll be able to find a way out, a solution out of these surprises. We have a good will to try to accommodate each other and remove all the disagreements that we still have today. And we grow convinced that our most ardent desire—and then we know that skeptics in the past have always proved that wrong, saying that it's not possible to reach agreement on an issue; in the final analysis we did come to agreement on most thorny issues. And the two Presidents, heads of the two great powers, are duty bound to act in this way. And I think Bill would agree with me that each of us will be prepared to cover his own part of the way.

NOTE: The exchange began at 9:38 a.m. at Mantyniemi, the residence of President Ahtisaari. President Yeltsin spoke in Russian, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.