

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 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 Alexandr 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 cochairmen 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.

Proclamation 6726—Placing Into Full Force and Effect the Compact of Free Association With the Republic of Palau

September 27, 1994

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Since July 18, 1947, the United States has administered the United Nations Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands ("Trust Territory"), which has included the Northern Mariana Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, and Palau.

On November 3, 1986, a Covenant between the United States and the Northern Mariana Islands came into force. This Covenant established the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands as a self-governing

Commonwealth in political union with and under the sovereignty of the United States.

On October 21, 1986, in the case of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and on November 3, 1986, in the case of the Federated States of Micronesia, Compacts of Free Association with the United States became effective. Under the Compacts, the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands became self-governing sovereign states, in free association with the United States. Following the changes in political status of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Marshall Islands, and the Federated States of Micronesia, the Trusteeship Agreement ceased to be applicable to those entities and only Palau remained as the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands.

On January 10, 1986, the Government of the United States and the Government of Palau concluded a Compact of Free Association similar to those that the United States entered into with the Republic of the Marshall Islands and with the Federated States of Micronesia. As in those instances, it was specified that the Compact with Palau would come into effect upon (1) mutual agreement between the Government of the United States, acting in fulfillment of its responsibilities as Administering Authority of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, and the Government of Palau; (2) the approval of the Compact by the two Governments, in accordance with their constitutional processes; and (3) the approval of the Compact by plebiscite in Palau.

In Palau the Compact has been approved by the Government in accordance with its constitutional processes and by a United Nations-observed plebiscite on November 9, 1993, a sovereign act of self-determination. In the United States the Compact was approved by Public Law 99-658 of November 14, 1986, and Public Law 101-219 of December 12, 1989.

On May 25, 1994, the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations concluded that the Government of the United States had satisfactorily discharged its obligations as the Administering Authority under the terms of the Trusteeship Agreement and that the people of Palau had freely exercised their right to self-determination and considered that it was