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Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With President Yeltsin in Helsinki

March 21, 1997

Russia and NATO

Q. President Yeltsin, do you consider NATO a threat to Russia, or are you convinced otherwise by now?

President Yeltsin. Well, I'm not convinced otherwise.

President Clinton. We'll have a press conference later, guys.

Q. You guys always give us a surprise when you meet, Mr. President. Do you expect any surprises today?

President Yeltsin. Perhaps through the course of the discussions we may have some surprises. We won't have any surprises at the end of the discussions.

NOTE: The exchange began at 9:43 a.m. at the President's Residence. 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.

Russia-United States Joint Statement on Parameters on Future Reduction in Nuclear Forces

March 21, 1997

Presidents Clinton and Yeltsin underscore that, with the end of the Cold War, major progress has been achieved with regard to strengthening strategic stability and nuclear security. Both the United States and Russia are significantly reducing their nuclear forces. Important steps have been taken to detarget strategic missiles. The START I Treaty has entered into force, and its implementation is ahead of schedule. Belarus, Kazakstan, and Ukraine are nuclear-weapon free. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty was indefinitely extended on May 11, 1995 and the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty was signed by both the United States and Russia on September 24, 1996.

In another historic step to promote international peace and security, President Clinton and President Yeltsin hereby reaffirm their commitment to take further concrete steps to reduce the nuclear danger and strengthen strategic stability and nuclear security. The Presidents have reached an understanding on further reductions in and limitations on strategic offensive arms that will substantially reduce the roles and risks of nuclear weapons as we move forward into the next century. Recognizing the fundamental significance of the ABM Treaty for these objectives, the Presidents have, in a separate joint statement, given instructions on demarcation between ABM systems and theater missile defense systems, which will allow for deployment of effective theater missile defense and prevent circumvention of the ABM Treaty.

With the foregoing in mind, President Clinton and President Yeltsin have reached the following understandings.

Once START II enters into force, the United States and Russia will immediately begin negotiations on a START III agreement, which will include, among other things, the following basic components:

- Establishment, by December 31, 2007, of lower aggregate levels of 2,000–2,500 strategic nuclear warheads for each of the parties.
- Measures relating to the transparency of strategic nuclear warhead inventories and the destruction of strategic nuclear warheads and any other jointly agreed technical and organizational measures, to promote the irreversibility of deep reductions including prevention of a rapid increase in the number of warheads.
- Resolving issues related to the goal of making the current START treaties unlimited in duration.
- Placement in a deactivated status of all strategic nuclear delivery vehicles which will be eliminated under START II by December 31, 2003, by removing their nuclear warheads or taking other jointly agreed steps. The United States is providing assistance through the Nunn-Lugar program to facilitate early deactivation.

The Presidents have reached an understanding that the deadline for the elimination of strategic nuclear delivery vehicles under the START II Treaty will be extended to December 31, 2007. The sides will agree on specific language to be submitted to the Duma

and, following Duma approval of START II, to be submitted to the United States Senate.

In this context, the Presidents underscore the importance of prompt ratification of the START II Treaty by the State Duma of the Russian Federation.

The Presidents also agreed that in the context of START III negotiations their experts will explore, as separate issues, possible measures relating to nuclear long-range sea-launched cruise missiles and tactical nuclear systems, to include appropriate confidence-building and transparency measures.

Taking into account all the understandings outlined above, and recalling their statement of May 10, 1995, the Presidents agreed the sides will also consider the issues related to transparency in nuclear materials.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Russia-United States Joint Statement Concerning the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty

March 21, 1997

President Clinton and President Yeltsin, expressing their commitment to strengthening strategic stability and international security, emphasizing the importance of further reductions in strategic offensive arms, and recognizing the fundamental significance of the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty for these objectives as well as the necessity for effective theater missile defense (TMD) systems, consider it their common task to preserve the ABM Treaty, prevent circumvention of it, and enhance its viability.

The Presidents reaffirm the principles of their May 10, 1995 Joint Statement, which will serve as a basis for reaching agreement on demarcation between ARM systems and theater missile defense systems, including:

—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 of the other side and (2) will not be tested to give such systems that capability.

—Theater missile defense systems will not be deployed by the sides for use against each other.

—The scale of deployment—in number and geographic scope—of theater missile defense systems by either side will be consistent with theater ballistic missile programs confronting that side.

In this connection, the United States and Russia have recently devoted special attention to developing measures aimed at assuring confidence of the Parties that their ballistic missile defense activities will not lead to circumvention of the ABM Treaty, to which the Parties have repeatedly reaffirmed their adherence.

The efforts undertaken by the Parties in this regard are reflected in the Joint Statement of the Presidents of the United States and Russia issued on September 28, 1994, as well as in that of May 10, 1995. Important decisions were made at the United States-Russia summit meeting on April 23, 1996.

In order to fulfill one of the primary obligations under the ABM Treaty—the obligation not to give non-ABM systems capabilities to counter strategic ballistic missiles and not to test them in an ABM mode—the Presidents have instructed their respective delegations to complete the preparation of an agreement to ensure fulfillment of this requirement.

In Standing Consultative Commission (SCC) negotiations on the problem of demarcation between TMD systems and ABM systems, the United States and Russia, together with Belarus, Kazakstan and Ukraine, successfully finished negotiations on demarcation with respect to lower-velocity TMD systems. The Presidents note that agreements were also reached in 1996 with respect to confidence-building measures and ABM Treaty succession. The Presidents have instructed their experts to complete an agreement as soon as possible for prompt signature on higher-velocity TMD systems.