

**The President's News Conference
With President Boris Yeltsin of
Russia in Moscow**
September 2, 1998

President Yeltsin. Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, the official visit of the President of the United States, Bill Clinton, to Russia is coming to an end. We have had intensive, productive negotiations. We have managed to discuss a wide range of topical issues. I would like to emphasize the exchanges were sincere and keen. The dialog was marked by the spirit of mutual understanding.

Responsibility of our two countries for maintaining and strengthening peace and stability is obvious. That is why we have paid special attention to the discussion of the entire spectrum of security issues in the world.

The discussion has included the implementation of international and bilateral treaties and agreements concerning the weapons of mass destruction, as well as the elaboration of common approaches to dealing with the threat of nuclear weapons proliferation and their delivery means.

Unfortunately, this is not the only major task the humanity struggles to resolve. That is why President Clinton and I have discussed global threats and challenges. Our positions on this issue have coincided, and this closeness of approaches is reflected in the joint statement on common security changes on the threshold of the 21st century. I consider this document to be a significant step towards strengthening strategic partnership between Russia and the United States.

We have also had substantial talks on the most topical international issues. And there are quite a few such issues. I'll put it frankly: Here our approaches have not always completely coincided. Russia rejects the use of power methods as a matter of principle. Conflicts of today have no military solutions, be it in Kosovo or around Iraq or Afghanistan or others. Also we do not accept the NATO centrism idea for the new European security architecture. Nevertheless, our talks have been conducive to greater mutual understanding on these issues.

Of course, we could not do without discussing economy problems. Current dimen-

sions of our economic relations should be brought up to a qualitatively new level. We shall have to suffer through much blood, sweat, and tears before new forms of business cooperation worthy of our two great powers are found, reforms that would be able to withstand volatile circumstances. There exist quite a few opportunities for this. These are mentioned in our joint statement on economic issues.

In conclusion, I would like to say—and I hope Bill will agree with me—the summit was a success. This meeting, the 15th in a row, confirmed once again when Presidents of Russia and the United States join their efforts, no issue is too big for them.

Thank you for your kind attention.

President Clinton. Thank you very much, Mr. President, for your hospitality and for giving Hillary and me and our team the chance to come to Moscow again.

Over the past 5 years I have been in this great, historic city in times of bright hope and times of uncertainty. But throughout, I have witnessed the remarkable transformation of this nation to democracy and to a more open economy. We all know that this meeting comes at a challenging time for the Russian people. But I don't believe anyone could ever have doubted that there would be obstacles on Russia's road to a vibrant economy and a strong democracy. I don't also believe that anyone can seriously doubt the determination of the Russian people to build a brighter, better, stronger future.

Russia is important to America. Our economies are connected; we share values, interests, and friendship; we share security interests and heavy security responsibilities. In our discussions, President Yeltsin and I spoke about Russia's options for stabilizing its economy and restoring confidence. I reaffirmed America's strong view that Russia can move beyond today's crisis and create growth and good jobs but only if it carries forward with its transformation, with a strong and fair tax system, greater rule of law, dealing forthrightly with financial institutions, having regulation that protects against abuses, and yes, developing an appropriate safety net for people who are hurt during times of change.

President Yeltsin reaffirmed his commitment to reform, and I believe that is the right commitment. The answer to the present difficulties is to finish the job that has been begun, not to stop it in midstream or to reverse course. This is a view I will reaffirm when I meet today with leaders of the Duma and the Federation Council. America and the international community are, I am convinced, ready to offer further assistance if Russia stays with the path of reform.

We discussed also at length common security concerns. We've reached an important agreement to increase the safety of all our people, an arrangement under which our countries will give each other continuous information on worldwide launches of ballistic missiles or space-launch vehicles detected by our respective early warning systems. This will reduce the possibility of nuclear war by mistake or accident and give us information about missile activity by other countries.

We've also agreed to remove from each of our nuclear weapons programs approximately 50 tons of plutonium, enough to make literally thousands of nuclear devices. Once converted, this plutonium can never again be used to make weapons that become lethal in the wrong hands. Our experts will begin meeting right away to finalize an implementation plan by the end of this year.

I'd like to say in passing, I'm very grateful for the support this initiative received in our Congress. We have four Members of Congress here with us today, and I especially thank Senator Domenici for his interest in this issue.

Next let me say I look forward to and hope very much that the Russian Duma will approve START II, so that we can negotiate a START III agreement that would cut our levels of arsenals down to one-fifth of cold war levels. I think that would be good for our mutual security and good for the Russian economy.

In recent months Russia has taken important steps to tighten its export controls on weapons of mass destruction and the missiles to deliver them, and to penalize offenders. This week Russia barred three companies from transactions with Iran. Today we agreed to intensify our cooperation by creating seven working groups on export controls to further

strengthen Russia's ability to halt the spread of dangerous weapons. Also, we renewed our commitment to persuade India and Pakistan to reverse their arms race. And we pledged to accelerate international negotiations to establish a tough inspection regime for the Biological Weapons Convention. I don't believe it's possible to overstate the importance of this initiative for the next 20 years.

Russia and the United States share a commitment to combat terrorism. We agree that there is no possible justification for terrorism. It is murder, plain and simple. Today, we instructed our Foreign Ministers to develop a plan to deepen our cooperation against this danger to our own people and to innocent people around the world.

We agree on the importance of further strengthening the partnership between NATO and Russia through practical cooperation. We plan to accelerate talks on adapting the treaty that limits conventional military forces in Europe, the CFE, to reflect changes in Europe since the treaty was signed in 1990, with an aim to complete an adapted treaty by the 1999 summit of the OSCE.

Finally, we discussed our common foreign policy agenda, including, first and foremost, the need to continue to strengthen the peace in Bosnia and to look for a peaceful solution in Kosovo, where the humanitarian situation is now quite grave. We agreed that the Serbian Government must stop all repressive actions against civilian populations, allow relief organizations immediate and full access to those in need, and pursue an interim settlement.

President Yeltsin and I also agree that Iraq must comply fully with all relevant U.N. Security Council resolutions imposed after the gulf war and, in particular, must agree to allow the international weapons inspectors to again pursue their mission without obstruction or delay. Far from advancing the day sanctions are lifted, Iraq's most recent efforts to undermine the inspectors will perpetuate sanctions, prevent Iraq from acquiring the resources it needs to rebuild its military, and keep Iraq's economy under tight international control.

On energy and the environment, we reiterated our commitment to the emissions reductions targets and the market-based mechanisms established at Kyoto to slow the dangerous process of global warming. We agreed that multiple pipeline routes were essential to bring energy from the Caspian to international markets and to advance our common security and commercial interests.

This has been a full agenda, a productive summit. Again, let me say that I have great confidence that the people of this great nation can move through this present difficult moment to continue and complete the astonishing process of democratization and modernization that I have been privileged to witness at close hand over the last 5½ years.

Again, Mr. President, thank you for your hospitality. And I suppose we should answer a few questions.

Russian official. Now we will have a Q-and-A session, so the work will proceed in the way that the U.S. and Russian press corps could ask questions in turn. Using the privilege of the host, I will give the floor to the representatives of ORT television.

Summit Goals and Russia-U.S. Relations

Q. A question to both Presidents. Prior to meeting, many experts, politicians, and public at large believed that your meeting is futile, nobody needs it, no results will be produced due to the known difficulties both in Russia and America. I understand now you're trying to make the case it's the other way around, the situation is different. So what was the psychological atmosphere to your talks, bearing in mind this disbelief in the success, this skeptical approach?

And second, are we, Russia and U.S., partners right now or still contenders? And today, bidding farewell, Boris Yeltsin and Bill Clinton, are they still friends?

Thank you.

President Yeltsin. I will start with your last question. Yes, we stay friends and the atmosphere, since the beginning of the talks until the end, was a friendly one. I would say it was very considerate, and there were no discontents during the talks that we had.

And this brings my conclusion that since we did not have any differences, in my opinion, there will be no differences also in our

activities, in what we do bilaterally. Of course, that goes without saying. This is very logical.

Now, in response to those skeptical observers who alleged, and continue to do so, that they don't believe, I've been always saying no, on the contrary—we need to repeat it—we do believe we do that in order to remove the tension. And each time, having those meetings, we've been able to do something to alleviate the tension. This is what really matters. We've been doing that, removing that tension. And this time again we have removed part of the tension one more time.

President Clinton. Well, first of all, I think it's important to answer your question of what happened from the point of view of the Russian people and then from the point of view of the American people.

You ask if we're still friends. The answer to that is yes. You ask if Russia and the United States have a partnership. I think the plain answer to that is yes, even though we don't always agree on every issue. I can tell you from my point of view this was a successful meeting on the national security issues, because I think establishing this early warning information sharing is important and I know that the destruction of this huge volume of plutonium is important. And it also might be important to the Russian economy. It can be an economic plus as well as a national security plus.

Now, on the domestic economic issues, from the point of view of America, it was important to me to come here just to say to the President and to his team and to the Duma leaders I will see later and the Federation Council leaders that I know this is a difficult time, but there is no shortcut to developing a system that will have the confidence of investors around the world. These are not American rules or anybody else's rules. These are—in a global economy, you have to be able to get money in from outside your country and keep the money in your country invested in your country.

And if the reform process can be completed, then I for one would be strongly supportive of greater assistance to Russia from the United States and the other big economic powers, because I think we have a very strong

vested interest in seeing an economically successful Russia that is a full partner across the whole range of issues in the world. I also think it's good for preserving Russia's democracy and freedom.

So, from my point of view, saying that we support reform and saying we will support those who continue it was in itself a reason to come.

From Russia's point of view, I think knowing that the United States and others want to back this process and will do so, and at least having someone else say, "There is a light at the end of this tunnel; there is an end to this process; and it could come quickly if these laws are passed in the Duma and the things that the President has asked for already are done and the decisions are made well"—I think that is worth something apart from the specific agreements that we have made.

But my answer to you is that in foreign policy and security, this meeting produced something. Whether it produces real economic benefits for the people of Russia depends upon what happens now in Russia. But at least everyone knows that we're prepared to do our part and to support this process.

President Yeltsin. I would like to add just for one second, please, just two words here. We have put it on paper. We have decided to set up on the territory of Russia a joint center of control over the missile launches. For the first time this has been done. This is exceptionally important.

President Clinton. I agree with that.

Press Secretary Mike McCurry. Our tradition, questions from our wire services. Terence Hunt of the Associated Press.

Russian and American Economies

Q. President Yeltsin, yesterday President Clinton spoke of the painful steps that Russia will have to take and the need to play by the rules of international economics. What difficult steps are you prepared to take? And are you committed to play by these rules of international economics?

And to President Clinton, the world stock market seems very fragile right now. How can the United States withstand all these outside pressures?

President Clinton. Do you want me to go first?

I think the answer to your question about what we can do that's best for our economy is really twofold. The first thing we have to do is to do our very best to make the right decisions at home. You know, we have to stay with the path of discipline that has brought us this far in the last 5½ years, and we have to make the investments and decisions that we know will produce growth over the long run for the American economy. Whether it's in education or science and technology, we have to do the things that send the signal that we understand how the world economy works and we intend to do well in it. But the most important thing is sticking with sound economic policy.

Now, in addition to that, it is important that more and more Americans, without regard to party, understand that we are in a global economy, and it's been very good to the United States over the last 5½ years—about 30 percent of our growth has come from exports—but that we at this particular moment in history, because of our relative economic strength, have an extra obligation to try to build a system for the 21st century where every person in every country who is willing to work hard has a chance to get a just reward for it.

And that means that we have to—in my opinion, that means that we have to continue to contribute our fair share to the International Monetary Fund. It means that we have to do everything we can to support our friends in Russia who believe that we should continue to reform. It means that Secretary Rubin's upcoming meeting with the Finance Minister of Japan, former Prime Minister Miyazawa, is profoundly important. Unless Japan begins to grow again, it's going to be difficult for Russia and other countries to do what they need to do. It means, in short, that America must maintain a leadership role of active involvement in trying to build an economic system that rewards people who do the right thing. And that's in our best interest.

So I think this is a terribly important thing. The volatility in the world markets, including in our stock market, I think is to be expected under these circumstances. The right thing

to do is to try to restore growth in the economies of the world where there isn't enough growth now and to continually examine whether the institutions we have for dealing with problems are adequate to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow. And we are aggressively involved in both those activities.

President Yeltsin. Naturally, we face problems basically of our own. We have not been able to do many things over the past time when we started our reforms. And still we need to conclude our reforms, to bring them to completion, and consequently to get results.

We are not saying that we count solely on the support from outside. No. One more time, I will reiterate this: No. So let your mass media not spread the word to the effect that allegedly we would count solely on the support from the West, and to this end we have gathered together here—by no means. What we need from the United States is political support to the effect that the United States is in favor of reforms in Russia. This is what we really need, and then all the investors who would like to come to the Russian reformed market will do so, will come with their investments. And this is what we really need now. This is what is lacking, investments. This is first and foremost.

Certainly, we ought to fight our expenditures pattern and mismanagement. This is the second issue which, to us, is one of the most important issues. And we have been adopting, accordingly, the measures which need to be taken, like we have adopted the program of stabilization measures; in other words, those measures which will result in stabilization of our reforms. Stabilization—I believe that such measures and such a program will work, promptly; over the coming 2 years, it will produce results.

Russia-U.S. Relations

Q. I'd like to pose a question to the President of the United States, Mr. Clinton. One gets the impression that some politicians in the United States right now like to somehow frighten the people with Russia. On the other hand, we are aware of the fact that you are never afraid of Russia, yourself, and you did everything possible so that people in the U.S. would not be afraid of Russia. Now, on the

results of these talks, tell us please your belief—what is the basis of your belief that our country will get back to its feet and that Russian-U.S. relations have promising prospects?

Thank you.

President Clinton. Well, my belief that Russian-U.S. relations have promising prospects has been supported by the agreements we have made in the security and foreign policy areas. My belief that Russia will get back on its feet is based on my observation that in Russian history every time outsiders counted the Russian people out, they turned out to be wrong. And this is a very big challenge, but, I mean, a country that rebuffed Napoleon and Hitler can surely adjust to the realities of the global marketplace.

Now, what has to be done? The reason I wanted to come here—and, to be fair, let me back up and say, I don't think there are many people in America who are afraid of Russia anymore. I think there are some people in America who question whether I should come at this moment of great economic and political tension for the country, but I don't think it's because they want something bad to happen to Russia. I think, by and large, the American people wish Russia well and want things to go well for Russia and like the fact that we are partners in Bosnia and that we've reduced our nuclear arsenals so much and that we've reduced our defense establishment and that we've found other ways to cooperate, in space for example. I think most Americans like this very, very much.

So let me go back to the economic question. I believe whether you succeed and how long it takes you to succeed in restoring real growth to the Russian economy depends upon President Yeltsin's ability to persuade the Duma to support his formation of a Government which will pursue a path of reform with a genuine sensitivity to the personal dislocation of the people who have been hurt. And here's where I think the World Bank and other institutions can come in and perhaps help deal with some of the fallout, if you will, of the reform process.

But I think if other political forces in Russia try to force the President to abandon reform in midstream or even reverse it, what I think will happen is even less money will

come into Russia and even more economic hardship will result. I believe that because that is, it seems to me, the unwavering experience of every other country.

That does not mean you should not have a social safety net. It does not mean you have to make the same domestic decisions that the United States or Great Britain or France or Sweden or any other country has made. You have to form your own relationship with this new economic reality. But I still believe that unless there is a manifest commitment to reform, the economy will not get better.

So I support President Yeltsin's commitment in that regard. And I think—my conviction that it will get better is based on my reading of your history. How long it will take to get better depends a lot more on you and what happens here than anything else we outsiders can do, although if there is a clear movement toward reform, I'll do everything I can to accelerate outside support of all kinds.

Press Secretary McCurry. Lori Santos, United Press International.

President's Effectiveness

Q. Sir, you were just speaking of the challenges that we face as a nation. And what has the reaction since your admission of a relationship with Ms. Lewinsky caused you any—given you any cause for concern that you may not be as effective as you should be in leading the country?

President Clinton. No, I've actually been quite heartened by the reaction of the American people and leaders throughout the world about it. I have acknowledged that I made a mistake, said that I regretted it, asked to be forgiven, spent a lot of very valuable time with my family in the last couple of weeks, and said I was going back to work. I believe that's what the American people want me to do. And based on my conversations with leaders around the world, I think that's what they want me to do, and that is what I intend to do.

As you can see from what we're discussing here, there are very large issues that will affect the future of the American people in the short run and over the long run. There are large issues that have to be dealt with now in the world and at home. And so I have

been quite encouraged by what I think the message from the American people has been and what I know the message from leaders around the world has been. And I'm going to do my best to continue to go through this personal process in an appropriate way but to do my job, to do the job I was hired to do. And I think it very much needs to be done right now.

Russia and NATO Expansion

Q. Boris Nikolayevich, this question has to do with the relationship between Russia and NATO. I understand you had time to discuss this issue with the U.S. President. It's known that the next NATO summit will take place in Washington, where important decisions will be taken regarding the European security architecture. How do you think this relation should evolve in the future?

President Yeltsin. Yes, we have discussed with President Clinton the question concerning the relationship between Russia and NATO. We're not running away from the position which has been that we are against NATO expanding eastward. We believe this is a blunder, a big mistake, and one day this will be a historic error.

Therefore, at this point in time, what we necessarily would like to do is to improve relations so that there be no confrontation. Therefore, we have signed an agreement between Russia and NATO. And in accordance with that agreement we want to do our job. However, no way shall we allow anybody to transgress that agreement, bypass that agreement, or generally speaking, put aside it. No, this will not happen.

And naturally, we shall participate in the Warsaw meeting, and there we shall very closely follow the vector of NATO and what they intend to do in regards to, so to say, deploying their forces and their power.

We still are in favor of being cautious with regards to NATO. We don't have any intentions to move towards the west, ourselves. We don't intend to create additional forces. We're not doing that, and we're not planning to do that. This is what really matters.

President Clinton. I would like to say one word about that. We obviously, President Yeltsin and I, have a disagreement about whether it was appropriate for NATO to take

on new members or not. But I think there is a larger reality here where we are in agreement, and I would like to emphasize it.

Russia has made historic commitments in the last few years to essentially redefine its greatness, not in terms of the territorial dominance of its neighbors but, instead, of constructive leadership in the region and in the world. The expansion of NATO, therefore, should be seen primarily as nations interested in working together to deal with common security problems, not to be ready to repel expected invasions.

And if you look at what the NATO members will be discussing next year, they're talking about how they can deal with regional security challenges, like in Bosnia and Kosovo—both of which—one of which we would never—we would not have solved the Bosnia war, or ended it, had it not been for the leadership of Russia and the partnership between NATO and Russia. It simply would not have happened in the way it did, in a way that reinforced harmony in the region. Similarly, we have got to work together in Kosovo to prevent another Bosnia from occurring.

If we have problems with terrorism or with the spread of chemical or biological weapons, they will be problems we all have in common. That's why you have two dozen nations that are not NATO members a part of our Partnership For Peace, because they know that nation-states in the future are going to have common security problems and they will be stronger if they work together.

And that's why I was especially proud of the charter that Russia and NATO signed. I intend to honor it. I intend to build on it. And I hope that within a few years we'll see that this partnership is a good thing and continues to be a good thing and brings us closer together rather than driving us apart.

Press Secretary McCurry. Larry McQuillan, Reuters.

Russia's Political Situation/President's August 17 Address

Q. President Yeltsin, do you see any circumstance in which you could accept someone other than Mr. Chernomyrdin to be your Prime Minister? And if you can't accept that,

does that mean you're prepared to dissolve the Duma if they refuse to confirm him?

And Mr. President, another Lewinsky question. You know, there have been some who have expressed disappointment that you didn't offer a formal apology the other night when you spoke to the American people. Are you—do you feel you need to offer an apology? And in retrospect now, with some distance, do you have any feeling that perhaps the tone of your speech was something that didn't quite convey the feelings that you had, particularly your comments in regard to Mr. Starr?

President Yeltsin. Well, I must say, we will witness quite a few events for us to be able to achieve all those results. That's all. [Laughter]

President Clinton. That ought to be my answer, too. That was pretty good. [Laughter]

Well, to your second question, I think I can almost reiterate what I said in response to the first question. I think the question of the tone of the speech and people's reaction to it is really a function of—I can't comment on that. I read it the other day again, and I thought it was clear that I was expressing my profound regret to all who were hurt and to all who were involved, and my desire not to see any more people hurt by this process and caught up in it. And I was commenting that it seemed to be something that most reasonable people would think had consumed a disproportionate amount of America's time, money, and resources and attention and was now—continued to involve more and more people. And that's what I tried to say.

And all I wanted to say was I believe it's time for us to now go back to the work of the country and give the people their Government back and talk about and think about and work on things that will affect the American people today and in the future. That's all I meant to say, and that's what I believe, and that's what I intend to do.

NOTE: The President's 163d news conference began at 1:17 p.m. in the Catherine Hall at the Kremlin. President Yeltsin spoke in Russian, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter. In their remarks, the Presidents referred to Finance Minister Kiichi Miyazawa of Japan; Prime Minister-designate Viktor Chernomyrdin of Russia;

and the Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). A tape was not available for verification of the translation of President Yeltsin's remarks.

Joint Statement on the Situation in Kosovo

September 2, 1998

The Presidents of the United States and the Russian Federation noted with concern that the situation in Kosovo continues to deteriorate, causing growing alarm among the world public about the growing negative consequences for regional stability. Despite extensive attempts of the Contact Group, OSCE, and other international institutions, there has not yet been success in achieving an end to the armed clashes and senseless bloodshed and in initiating serious and meaningful negotiations between the authorities in Belgrade and leaders of Kosovo Albanians that would make it possible to agree promptly on measures to build confidence and security in the province as an interim step on the way to a final settlement of the Kosovo problem including the definition of the status of enhanced Kosovo self-government with strict respect for the territorial integrity of the FRY.

The escalation of tension in Kosovo inflicts heavy suffering on innocent civilians. Over 200,000 people were forced to leave their homes as the result of armed clashes. The situation is aggravated by large-scale destruction of houses, food shortages, and the risk of epidemic disease. The threat of humanitarian catastrophe is becoming ever more real.

Slobodan Milošević, as President of the FRY, must order a halt to all repressive actions against the civilian population in Kosovo. All violence by all Kosovo Albanian armed groups must cease immediately. President Milošević and the Kosovo Albanian leadership must intensify the negotiating process.

Urgent measures should be taken promptly to prevent humanitarian catastrophe in Kosovo. Necessary conditions should be created without delay for the refugees and displaced persons to return freely to the places of their permanent residence before the ad-

vent of winter. The scope and acuteness of the problem call for urgent joint actions of the authorities in Belgrade, the Kosovo Albanians, and international humanitarian organizations. Constant international monitoring in the field, accompanied both by progressive withdrawal of Serb security forces to their permanent locations, and the cessation of armed actions by the Kosovo Albanians, are needed to inspire confidence among people in their safety and prospects for restoring normal life. A mechanism for creating favorable conditions in the most heavily affected locations in the province—a series of “pilot projects”—should be set in motion immediately. The Serb authorities should implement in practice unimpeded access to all areas of the province for humanitarian organizations and diplomatic observers.

The cessation of violence and amelioration of the humanitarian situation would facilitate the creation of a favorable environment for progress in the negotiating process over the entire range of issues. President Milošević and all Kosovo Albanian leaders should engage actively in the negotiating process, with a view toward achieving a political solution to the crisis and a framework for durable peace in Kosovo.

Moscow
September 2, 1998

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

Joint Statement on a Protocol to the Convention on the Prohibition of Biological Weapons

September 2, 1998

The Presidents of the United States and the Russian Federation, recognizing the threat posed by biological weapons, express strong support for the aims and tasks of the Ad Hoc Group of States Parties to establish a regime to enhance the effective implementation of the 1972 Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction. We urge the further intensification and successful conclusion of those negotiations to