

the people of Germany are whole again, united, and free.

No two places follow the same path, but this much is true: The currents of history cannot be held back forever. The deep longing for freedom and dignity will not go away. So too on this divided peninsula, the day all Koreans yearn for will not come easily or without great sacrifice. But make no mistake, it will come. And when it does, change will unfold that once seemed impossible. And checkpoints will open, and watchtowers will stand empty, and families long separated will finally be reunited. And the Korean people, at long last, will be whole and free.

Like our vision of a world without nuclear weapons, our vision of a Korea that stands as one may not be reached quickly. But from this

day until then, and all the days that follow, we take comfort in knowing that the security we seek, the peace we want, is closer at hand because of the great alliance between the United States and the Republic of Korea and because we stand for the dignity and freedom of all Koreans. And no matter the test, no matter the trial, we stand together. We work together. We go together. *Katchi kapshida!*

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:32 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Park Chul, president, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies; President Lee Myung-bak of South Korea; and Prime Minister Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia, in his capacity as President-elect of Russia.

Remarks Following a Meeting With President Dmitry Anatolyevich Medvedev of Russia in Seoul

March 26, 2012

President Medvedev. So I would like to start by saying, once again, that together with my friend and colleague Barack Obama, we had a very substantial discussion of different issues of our agenda of bilateral cooperation between the United States and Russia.

I told Barack that despite the fact that reset that has been largely debated over the past 3 years get different assessments, I still believe that it was an extremely useful exercise, and we probably enjoyed the best level of relations between the United States and Russia during those 3 years than ever during the previous decades. And we managed to achieve a lot in various areas. First and foremost, that was the New START Treaty that was signed. And we also managed to establish close cooperation on the most sensitive international issues.

And I would like to especially thank the U.S. President for his huge work and huge support in Russia's accession to the WTO. In my view, that was an extremely important topic, and I hope that we will be able to achieve similar successes in resolving remaining issues, such as the revoke of Jackson-Vanik amendment.

Lots remains to be done, of course, in terms of trade and economic relations. We need to bring them to the new level through increasing the volume of trade and raising the general level and pace of cooperation. And I believe that it would serve the interests of the U.S. companies and the U.S. citizens, especially now that the global economy is experiencing the turbulent times.

We, of course, as usual, discussed various international issues, including the most difficult ones, such as Syria. Yesterday I had a very good meeting with the Special Envoy of the U.N. Secretary General, Mr. Annan, and like I told the U.S. President, we believe that his mission is very good, and we hope that he will be able to reach good results and to somewhat appease, at least initially, the situation, and would help to establish communication because—between various public groups and forces that exist in Syria. And yesterday I expressed my every support to Mr. Annan.

Anyways, we need to make sure that we not end up in greater problems that we already have and that the threat of the civil war is

averted, that it does not become reality, and that this mission would lead to dialogue between all the groups that exist in the country and government authorities.

Of course, we also spoke about the situation in the Middle East. We touched upon the Iranian nuclear program, the North Korean nuclear program, other sensitive issues, Afghanistan cooperation. So I guess we touched upon all main issues and gave all main positions.

Of course, we also spoke about the missile defense. I believe we still have time; time hasn't run out. And now we need to discuss and cooperate on various aspects on European missile defense. I believe such discussion could be more active. Now, in my view, time has come for discussions between technical aspects, and of course, we remain at our own positions, both the United States and Russian Federation. But I believe we still have time to agree on a balanced solution, and I believe that the good experience Barack and myself have gained while working on the START Treaty will help us and be very useful when finding solution to this very difficult problem.

And of course, Barack, I would like to take the opportunity to say how much I enjoyed the cooperation we had with you. And I believe that it really was the highlight of the previous years. And due to the high level of cooperation, we managed to resolve various complicated issues bilaterally—international agenda. And I hope that the same high level of our relations will remain between the United States of Russia—the United States of America and the Russian Federation when the new President starts—steps in office.

And I would like to—I already invited you to visit Russia. I understand that this year will be difficult for you since it's an election year. But still, I hope that you will be able to come. I already invited you to my hometown, St. Petersburg, so I would like to take the occasion to reiterate my invitation on behalf of myself and President-elect Vladimir Putin.

President Obama. Thank you. Well, first of all, let me just say that the last 3 years of my work with President Medvedev has been extremely productive. And he listed some of the

achievements that has resulted from this work. The New START Treaty reduces our nuclear stockpiles in ways that can help create greater peace and security not just for our countries, but for the world and is consistent with our obligations under the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Russia's ascension into the WTO can open up trade and commerce between our two countries that can create jobs and economic growth for both Russians and Americans. And as Dmitry mentioned, we think it's going to be very important for us to address Jackson-Vanik so that American businesses can fully take advantage of an open and liberalized Russian market.

It is true that there have been times where we have had to manage tensions between our countries, and that's to be expected. Obviously, there are always tensions between countries, and that's certainly true given the long history of the cold war between our two countries. But what I think we've been able to do is to ensure that rather than look backwards, we've been looking forwards.

Sorry, translator, I forgot you were there. [Laughter] I got on a roll.

Moving forward, we've got more work to do between our two countries. Dmitry identified some areas of continued friction, missile defense being an example. And what we've agreed to is to make sure that our teams, at a technical level, are in discussions about how some of these issues can be resolved.

The bilateral Presidential Commission that was chaired by Foreign Minister Lavrov and Secretary of State Clinton will be working actively around a number of the trade and commercial issues, not only with respect to WTO, but how we can more vigorously expand the kind of investment and the kind of cooperation on the economic front that can benefit both Russia and the United States.

On the international front, we agreed that, as two of the world's leading powers, it's absolutely critical that we communicate effectively and coordinate effectively in responding to a wide range of situations that threaten world peace and security.

So, on Syria, although there had been some differences over the last several months, we both agreed that we should be supportive of Kofi Annan's efforts to try to end some of the bloodshed that's taking place within Syria and move towards a mechanism that would allow for the Syrian people ultimately to have a representative and legitimate government that serves their interest.

On Iran, we agreed that the P-5-plus-1 talks with Iran that should be announced soon offer us an opportunity to resolve diplomatically the critical issue of ensuring that Iran is abiding by its international obligations that will allow it to rejoin the community of nations and have peaceful uses of nuclear energy while not developing nuclear weapons.

And with respect to North Korea, we are going to be both sending messages to North Korea that they should not go forward with this missile launch, which would violate existing U.N. Security Council resolutions. And our hope is, is that we can resolve these issues diplomatically.

So let me just say that at a time of great challenges around the world, cooperation between the United States and Russia is absolutely critical to world peace and stability. And I have to say that I could not have asked for a better partner in forging that strong relationship than Dmitry. I am confident that in his new role he is going to continue to have an outstanding influence in world affairs and help to continue to deepen and improve the relationship between our two countries.

I wish him all the best. And I would love to visit St. Petersburg. He is absolutely right that my next visit to Russia will undoubtedly be after my election. [*Laughter*]

Good luck, my friend.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:01 p.m. at the Millennium Seoul Hilton hotel. In his remarks, he referred to former Secretary-General Kofi A. Annan of the United Nations, in his capacity as Joint U.N.-Arab League Special Envoy for Syria. President Medvedev spoke in Russian, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan in Seoul

March 26, 2012

President Obama. Well, it is wonderful to see, once again, President Nazarbayev from Kazakhstan. And I want to first of all congratulate him on his leadership for the issues that are going to be discussed over the next 2 days.

Twenty years ago, Kazakhstan made a decision not to have nuclear weapons. And not only has that led to growth and prosperity in his own country, but he has been a model in efforts around the world to eliminate nuclear materials that could fall into the wrong hands. So I very much appreciate his leadership.

In fact, one of the major deliverables that will take place at this summit is a outstanding effort to deal with nuclear materials that were a carryover over from the Soviet era. Working with Russia and the United States, Kazakhstan has been able to secure those materials, and that makes us all safer.

I know that we'll have an opportunity during this bilateral meeting to also discuss some of the other efforts that Kazakhstan has made when it comes to highly enriched uranium, plutonium, their efforts at helping to develop a international fuel bank that can lessen the need for countries to pursue their own enrichment capabilities.

And so across the board, Kazakhstan has been a key leader on these issues and is appropriately going to be featured during the next 2 days at this nuclear security summit.

The close relationship between our two countries extends beyond just the nuclear security issue, so this meeting will give us an opportunity to discuss the cooperation that we have built over the last several years with respect to Afghanistan and the help we've