

including the United Nations, Kofi Annan, and all interested parties in trying to find a resolution to this problem.

Mr. President, I look forward to visiting Russia again, and I look forward to hosting you in the United States.

Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:42 p.m. at the Esperanza Resort. 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 to Syria. He also referred to the Jackson-Vanik amendment to the Trade Act of 1974, which places restrictions on normalized trade relations between the U.S. and Russia and other countries of the former Soviet Union based on their economic structure and emigration policies. President Putin spoke in Russian, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Joint Statement by President Barack Obama and President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia

June 18, 2012

The United States of America and the Russian Federation confirm our commitment to strengthening close and cooperative relations for the benefit of the peoples of our countries, international peace, global prosperity, and security. In recent years, we have laid a solid foundation for expanding our bilateral interaction in a variety of areas. Today we agree to continue this work guided by the principles of the rule of law, respect for human rights, equality, and mutual respect.

One of the key tasks on our shared agenda is the expansion of trade and investment relations, which should foster mutual economic growth and prosperity. To this end, we have agreed to prioritize the expansion and diversification of our bilateral trade and investment through nondiscriminatory access to our markets based on international rules.

An important step in this direction is Russia's accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO), which has become possible thanks to our joint efforts. In order for WTO rules and mechanisms to apply to our bilateral trade, the Obama Administration is working closely with the U.S. Congress to terminate, as soon as possible, application of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment with respect to Russia and extend Permanent Normal Trade Relations to the Russian Federation. The United States has also welcomed and offered its support to Russia's pursuit of membership in the Organization for

Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

Nuclear arms control and non-proliferation remain a special responsibility for the United States and Russia as the two states with the world's largest nuclear weapons arsenals. We reiterate our strong support for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and our shared goal of universal adherence to and compliance with that Treaty and the International Atomic Energy Agency's comprehensive safeguards, consistent with the Treaty's Article III, and with the Additional Protocol. We recognize the achievements made through the Nuclear Security Summits, including the removal and elimination of nuclear materials, minimization of the civilian use of highly enriched uranium, and worldwide improvements in a nuclear security culture.

We are continuing research on the feasibility of converting research reactors in the United States and Russia to low-enriched uranium fuel. We agree to redouble bilateral efforts to improve nuclear security, counter nuclear smuggling, and combat nuclear terrorism, as well as to facilitate the beginning of negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament on a fissile material cutoff treaty that will halt production of fissile materials for use in nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices, within the framework of a balanced program of work at the Conference. We will strive for the

early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty.

As a priority, we intend to successfully implement the New START Treaty, and to continue our discussions on strategic stability. Despite differences in assessments, we have agreed to continue a joint search for solutions to challenges in the field of missile defense.

The pursuit of international peace and security remains a priority for the United States and Russia, recognizing how much we have to gain by working together to overcome the main challenges of this century. While recognizing Iran's right to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, we agree that Iran must undertake serious efforts aimed at restoring international confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of its nuclear program. To this end, Tehran must fully comply with its obligations under the relevant UN Security Council and IAEA Board of Governors resolutions, and cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency for the expedited resolution of all remaining issues. Our common goal remains a comprehensive negotiated settlement based on the principles of a step-by-step approach and reciprocity, and we look forward to constructive engagement with Iran through the P5+1 process, including the latest round of talks taking place in Moscow on June 18–19.

We urge North Korea to come into compliance with all the relevant directives of the UN Security Council and fulfill its commitments under the Joint Statement by China, the DPRK, the Republic of Korea, Russia, the U.S., and Japan of September 19, 2005. We count on the DPRK not to commit acts that would escalate tensions on the Korean peninsula. As partners in the Six-Party talks, we are prepared to continue the joint efforts to achieve verifiable denuclearization on the Korean peninsula in accordance with the Joint Statement of September 19, 2005.

We agree to cooperate bilaterally and multilaterally to solve regional conflicts. In order to stop the bloodshed in Syria, we call for an immediate cessation of all violence and express full support for the efforts of UN/League of Arab States Joint Special Envoy Kofi Annan,

including moving forward on political transition to a democratic, pluralistic political system that would be implemented by the Syrians themselves in the framework of Syria's sovereignty, independence, unity, and territorial integrity. We are united in the belief that the Syrian people should have the opportunity to independently and democratically choose their own future.

The need for a just, lasting, and comprehensive peace in the Middle East has never been more apparent, and we will continue working with our Quartet partners to advance peace efforts on the basis of the Quartet statements of September 23, 2011, and April 11, 2012, and to strengthen the Palestinian Authority's ability to meet the full range of civil and security needs of the Palestinian people, both now and in a future state.

The United States and Russia continue to face a common threat from al Qaeda and other terrorist groups operating in and around Afghanistan. We recognize that this is a pivotal time for international efforts to strengthen security and promote economic development in Afghanistan, as well as to counter the narcotics threat. With the successful implementation of bilateral and multilateral transit arrangements, Russia has made a significant contribution to international efforts to promote stability in Afghanistan.

We reiterate that the process leading to reconciliation must be truly Afghan-led and Afghan-implemented. Reconciliation must include, as integral parts, a commitment to a sovereign, stable, and unified Afghanistan, breaking ties to al Qaeda, ending violence, and accepting the Afghan Constitution, including its human rights provisions, notably the rights of women. We will explore opportunities to strengthen the Northern Distribution Network, to bolster regional security, and to expand cooperation as we fight terrorism and narcotics trafficking, taking advantage of the capabilities of the Collective Security Treaty Organization and the NATO-Russia Council to enhance law-enforcement training for the region.

The United States of America and the Russian Federation intend to increase cooperation in addressing the world drug problem, so as to radically reduce production and consumption of illicit drugs, as affirmed by resolutions of the UN General Assembly and the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs. We are ready to continue active support of efforts undertaken by the international community to counteract illicit production and illegal trafficking and consumption of drugs.

The United States of America and the Russian Federation are committed to furthering our multifaceted cooperation to counter terrorism. Both our nations face persistent and evolving domestic and transnational terrorist threats, including from terrorists based in North Africa, the Middle East, the Horn of Africa, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. Acknowledging the global character of these challenges, we reaffirm our readiness for further joint work to implement the UN's Global Counterterrorism Strategy, the UN Security Council resolutions and statements on terrorism, as well as to utilize other applicable international counterterrorism instruments, including counterterrorism sanctions regimes introduced by the UN Security Council with respect to al Qaeda and the Taliban.

The United States and Russia affirm our intent to work together to ensure the long-term success of the recently launched Global Counterterrorism Forum and continue to interact on various multilateral platforms, including the G-8 Roma/Lyon Group, the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Forum, the ASEAN Regional Forum, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). We will continue to work together to counter financial support for terrorism, disrupt the possible connections between terrorist networks and criminal groups, prevent the spread of violent extremism, and improve transporta-

tion security, including by concluding bilateral agreements in this field.

An important role in strengthening U.S.-Russian relations belongs to the Presidential Commission, created in July 2009, which coordinates our bilateral cooperation on the widest range of issues from strategic stability, energy and space, fighting terrorism and illegal drug trafficking and consumption—to public health, agriculture, the environment, civil society, and cultural and educational exchanges. We are pleased to announce a new Working Group on Military-Technical Cooperation. U.S.-Russian cooperation has been growing in the global fight against malaria.

This year we together celebrate the 200th anniversary of Fort Ross in California, which was founded by Russian settlers and underscores the historic ties between our countries. In order to give our bilateral relations a new quality, we intend to pay special attention to broadening contacts between our peoples and societies, including by liberalizing the visa regime. We welcome steps to bring into force the U.S.-Russian Agreement on Simplifying Visa Formalities, signed in 2011, which should make two-way travel by American and Russian tourist and business travelers easier. We also commit to work together to ensure the rights and protections of adopted children. This will be facilitated by bringing into force and implementing the bilateral adoptions agreement signed last year.

The United States of America and the Russian Federation will only be able to achieve positive new results by acting together for the purpose of strengthening the democracy, security, and prosperity of the American and Russian peoples, and by solving other complex challenges confronting our countries and the international community.

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