

Administration of Barack H. Obama, 2010

Remarks Following a Meeting With President Dmitry A. Medvedev of Russia in Yokohama, Japan

November 14, 2010

President Obama. Well, let me just say it is wonderful once again to meet with my friend Dmitry. I think we've built up an excellent relationship over the past 2 years, working on a whole range of issues. We had a very productive discussion here.

Obviously, the focus of APEC and our previous meeting in Seoul, the G-20, has been on international economic issues. And we stressed our interest in working with Russia on a range of bilateral and multilateral economic issues. I think that President Medvedev is doing an outstanding job trying to reform and move Russia forward on a whole range of economic issues, and we're working closely with them on Russia's interest in potentially joining the WTO.

In addition, we spoke about a range of security issues. I reiterated my commitment to get the START Treaty done during the lame duck session, and I've communicated to Congress that it is a top priority. We also discussed the fact that President Medvedev is personally going to be attending the NATO summit in Lisbon, and it allows us to restart the NATO-Russia Council and a host of consultations so that we can reduce tensions and increase cooperation on various security matters in the European theater.

I want to again thank President Medvedev on his cooperation with respect to Afghanistan. There has been excellent transit cooperation in recent months, and we think we can build on that in our discussions next week. And on a range of international issues and hotspots from Sudan to the Middle East, we think that Russia has been an excellent partner.

So we appreciate all the good work that President Medvedev and his team are doing, and I look forward to seeing him next week. Both he and I are racking up a lot of miles on our airplanes these days. But there's a lot of work to do. And I'm glad to have him as an excellent partner on a whole range of these issues.

President Medvedev. I would like also to say that it has been very pleasant for me to have this meeting and to discuss a whole range of bilateral and multilateral issues with my colleague, President of the United States of America Barack Obama.

Indeed, we have built on a very good relationship. We understand each other very well. It's very important to attain agreement on a whole range of issues. Those issues are always quite a few. We started with bilateral relations here. Of late, we have seriously moved forward the question of Russia WTO accession. And I perceive this as a tribute to the acumen—to the team in effect in the U.S. of America, which has fulfilled all the agreements reached during my visit to Washington, DC. And I hope this process will continue and promptly Russia will join WTO.

Now, as regards other issues at hand, indeed, we certainly discussed regional matters, international issues. One of the important topics for the coming days will be the meeting in Lisbon, which will take place very shortly, and where the U.S.—the Russia-NATO summit will be held. We stated the improvement of relations between Russia and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. And this is useful both to our countries and all parties involved.

And now we're discussing a whole range of issues involved, including the so-called European ABM. We have exchanged views as to what could be done here, and we have agreed to give instructions to our aides and ministers to pursue this work further. At the summit, certainly, we'll discuss this matter too.

Besides, we have been fruitfully cooperating in various regional fora such as G-20, which was to address international issues and to attain goals even if the situation in the economy of our countries still remains quite difficult. And I know that my friend Barack Obama has been involved in this 24 hours per day. I would like to wish him success in this area since the status of U.S. economy greatly affects the general state of the international economy.

And finally, we touched upon various international challenges which remain the same, and we agreed to coordinate our work in this field, and we'll work very actively and closely like we did recently.

Thank you.

President Obama. Okay. Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:45 a.m. at the InterContinental Yokohama Grand hotel. President Medvedev spoke in Russian, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the audio was incomplete.

Categories: Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials : Russia, President Medvedev.

Locations: Yokohama, Japan.

Names: Medvedev, Dmitry A.

Subjects: Arms and munitions : Nuclear weapons and material :: Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) with Russia, expansion; Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC); Commerce, international : Group of Twenty (G-20) nations; Japan : President Obama's visit; North Atlantic Treaty Organization; Russia : Afghanistan, role; Russia : NATO-Russia Council; Russia : President; Russia : Relations with U.S.; Russia : Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) with U.S., expansion; Russia : World Trade Organization, membership bid; World Trade Organization.

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