

tion of Independence. It was well over a decade before we actually settled on a Constitution and got around to electing a President.

And the Russians are trying to undertake three fundamental changes at once: moving from a Communist to a market economy; moving from a tyrannical dictatorship to a democracy; and moving to an independent nation state away from having a great empire. And these are very difficult and unsettling times. But I think that the direction is clear, the direction that they ought to take, and I think we ought to support the direction. And I'm not troubled by the fact that I can't control that process or that I don't know the outcome of it. We just need to weigh in and do what we can to do what's right.

Q. Mr. President, why don't the majority of Americans think we should be sending more aid to Russia?

The President. I think there are probably two or three reasons. First of all, historically in our country, foreign aid has never been popular. And that's why I have gone out of my way to show that this is the establishment of a partnership which will be mutually beneficial. This is not in any way an act of charity that we are engaged in. It doesn't have anything to do with that.

Secondly, the American people are pre-occupied with their own problems. We've got one million fewer jobs in the private sector than

we had 3 years ago. Unemployment is high. Incomes have been stagnant for years. We have serious challenges at home, and they want to know that we're putting those first.

Then I think the third thing is the question that you asked in the beginning. They want to know that if we are going to do something, they want us at least to go to extra efforts to make sure that the money is well spent and is in the long-term benefit of both countries.

Yes.

Japan

Q. Are both of you confident that you can get Japan on side with some big bucks for this venture and to ignore the Northern Islands issue?

The President. Well, let me say this. I had a very good talk with Prime Minister Miyazawa last night. The Japanese have been very forthcoming as the leaders of the G-7. This is their year to lead, and they are leading. They are hosting this meeting of the finance and foreign ministers on the 14th and 15th, and I believe that they will fulfill their leadership role. I'm encouraged.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:39 a.m. at the Mackenzie House at the University of British Columbia.

Exchange With Reporters With President Boris Yeltsin of Russia in Vancouver

April 3, 1993

Russia-U.S. Relations

Q. President Yeltsin, will American aid make a difference to the political situation in Russia?

President Yeltsin. You know, it's always useful to help a friend, especially if a friend goes through a difficult period. And we are partners, and we are friends.

Q. Go ahead, Mr. President, you can talk.

President Clinton. I just was going to say, I don't view this as a—this is not a talk about aid; this is a talk about a long-term partnership. The United States has a great deal to gain from a strong, successful, democratic Russia. It is in

our interest. And I'm very encouraged by the things that President Yeltsin has stood for, and the fight that he's waging now.

President Yeltsin. And the rest of the world, too.

NOTE: The exchange began at 1:55 p.m. at the MacKenzie House at the University of British Columbia. 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.