

The President's News Conference With President Boris Yeltsin of Russia
in Hyde Park, New York
October 23, 1995

President Clinton. We don't have prepared statements, but we will each make a very brief statement, and then we'll take a couple of questions.

This was our eighth visit as heads of state. It was a good and productive one which emphasized the stability and the strength of the partnership between the United States and Russia.

We spent the vast majority of our time discussing Bosnia, and we reached complete agreement about how we would work together for peace there. We reached agreement on the importance of the involvement of Russia and the other Contact Group partners in the peace process. On the question of what our roles would be in the implementation of a peace agreement, we made some progress, and we agreed that our representatives, Secretary Perry and Minister Grachev, would continue to work on this in the coming days, literally in just a matter of days.

We discussed a number of other issues. I think I should mention three very briefly. First, we agreed that we would both push hard for the ratification of START II. Second, we agreed that we would continue our close cooperation on nuclear security, and we have a statement that we have already agreed on prepared by our experts which will be released today. And finally, we agreed—and this is very, very important—that we would work together to succeed in getting a zero-yield comprehensive test ban treaty next year. This is a major, major step, and it dramatically increases the chances of our success for a sweeping comprehensive test ban treaty in 1996. And I want to thank President Yeltsin for that.

Mr. President.

President Yeltsin. Dear ladies and gentlemen, dear journalists: I want to say, first of all, that when I came here to the United States for this visit at the invitation of the President of the United States, Bill Clinton, I did not at that time have the degree of optimism with which I now am departing.

And this is all due to you because, coming from my statement yesterday in the United Nations, and if you looked at the press reports,

one could see that what you were writing was that today's meeting with President Bill Clinton was going to be a disaster. [Laughter] Well, now for the first time, I can tell you that you're a disaster. [Laughter]

President Clinton. Be sure you get the right attribution there. [Laughter]

President Yeltsin. This proves that our partnership is not calculated for one year or for 5 years but for years and years to come—tens of years, for a century; that we're friends, and that it's only together, together we're going to be trying to solve not only our joint bilateral issues but issues affecting the whole world.

How many journalists' brains are used to constantly try to figure out what kinds of different versions and options the two Presidents are going to try to come up with regarding Bosnia? I can't say that your brains turned out to be useless—[laughter]—of course, you also helped us, and we are grateful. And so you did help us because when Bill and I sat down to look at the different options, we used even some of your seemingly most unbelievable options. [Laughter]

Bill said also that we agreed on nuclear disarmament. We agreed on a whole host of issues, not just those that affect our two countries but that affect all the countries of the world. Bill neglected to say we also came to terms on the flank limits that have been placed. And I want to say a big, big thank you to Bill for supporting us so strongly on this score.

I want to say a big, big thank you, Bill, for inviting me here to this most magnificent site. If all of you look around you, look behind you—the most incredible scenery—you will find this a most lovely place to host such a meeting. I want to thank Bill from the bottom of my heart, to bow my head before all of the people, the people who work here, who support this wonderful museum, the staff who made this visit so wonderful, all of you who support not only the museum but also the persona, the personality of President Roosevelt, the one who was a personality not only for the United States but for all the peoples of the world for all time.

I do want to bow my head and thank all of you for this wonderful occasion.

So with this, I want to stop with my introductory remarks. We'll have just a couple of questions. And as soon as we start we're going to finish, so very short. First question to the President of the United States.

Bosnia

Q. Mr. President, could you tell us what progress—

Q. Could you tell us—

Q. Could you tell us, Mr. President—President Yeltsin, are Russians now willing to work under the command and control of NATO in a peacekeeping mission in Bosnia? And then a followup for President Clinton.

President Clinton. I understand that, but let me just say first, we agreed that it was important for Russia to participate in the implementation of the agreement. We discussed some specifics on which we were in accord and some on which we agreed that we had to let our defense experts work. And we decided that we would say nothing here which would make their work any harder than it already is.

Russia-U.S. Relations

Q. Mr. Clinton, as the Russian press, we'd like to ask you the following question. You were saying that not only has it not caved in, our partnership has not caved in but it has become stronger and better. Does that indicate that Russia and the United States will be for the future generations the guarantor of peace, that there will be no wars?

President Yeltsin. With the faith of two big Presidents like us, our faith is getting stronger. And with this faith, it means that we have decided that there shall be no disagreement between our two countries, that our partnership will in fact be strengthened, and having this faith means that we will move into the future toward peace, either with no war or a minimum of war.

Bosnia

Q. Could we get the answer to President Yeltsin's original question, and that is whether or not he could ever accept the idea of Russian forces being under a NATO command? And for those of us in this country who've followed this dispute, it is difficult to understand how you could have made progress given how dif-

ferent your positions have been in the past, and especially after what you said at the United Nations yesterday.

President Yeltsin. We agreed today that Russian armed forces will participate in these operations. But how they go about doing it is the affair of the military; it is not a question for us two Presidents. We have done our task.

Russia-U.S. Relations

Q. How would you characterize, President Yeltsin, the way the talks went today, as a whole, in general?

President Yeltsin. When I came here I thought we were going to have very, very tough meetings. I was not looking forward to the very difficult, complicated discussions. I had a lot of apprehensions. However, on my way here, I flew into Paris, had detailed talks with Jacques Chirac. On the phone I had discussions with Helmut Kohl. I met also very actively with other leaders. President Bill Clinton was very active in meeting with world leaders.

And in spite of the forecasts that said that this would be a breakdown, that this would not be a success, this turns out to be today the friendliest meeting, the best meeting, the most understandable meeting, not only for each other but for all the people of the world.

And we discussed individual positions; then we arrived at common positions. And I must say that this kind of meeting is not an official summit, it is a working meeting. But this most successful working meeting is worthy of meetings that would last hundreds of days, and these big issues, global issues that affect the lives of all the peoples on this planet.

President Clinton. I'll take one more question, but I'd like to say something about your question as well. If I could speak directly to the Russian people, I would say that the United States and Russia have established an important partnership. It's a partnership of mutual respect based on a shared commitment to democracy, a shared commitment to working for the prosperity of the Russian people, and ultimately a partnership which helps us both economically and, perhaps most important, working together to make the 21st century a time of greater peace and greater freedom and greater prosperity for all the people of the world.

That is the larger truth in which all these issues should be seen. That is why we have made such remarkable progress in dealing with

the nuclear issues. There is no relationship between two human beings, much less two countries, with their own unique histories, their own unique aspirations, their own unique fears and understandings, that does not have occasional differences of opinion. That would happen in any friendship, in any marriage, in any business; certainly it will happen between two countries. But if we keep the larger truth in mind, we will be able to work together and sustain this partnership. And it is very important for our people and for the people of the world that we do so.

Interpreter. Thank you very much.

President Clinton. They cut it, sorry.

President Yeltsin. Thank you.

President Clinton. Well, I promised him one more. Go ahead. Boris—President Yeltsin insisted that an American have the last question, so go ahead.

Bosnia

Q. Mr. President, members of your administration said coming into this meeting that a Bosnia peacekeeping operation in which Russian forces were not under NATO command and control or there was some type of dual key arrangement wouldn't work. Is that still the U.S. position?

President Clinton. Our position is that we're going to have an operation that works. We want Russia to be involved in it. We made some

progress today consistent with both of our objectives, with neither side giving up the things that were most important to it. We made some progress today on that. And we recognized that some of the things that needed to be decided neither of us could in good conscience decide without giving our military leaders the chance to work through that. So we agreed that this week, this week, our military leaders would keep working.

That is all I can tell you; the more we say about it, the worse it will be. We are moving toward peace. The first and most important thing is, make peace in Bosnia. That has not been done yet. If that happens—and we hope it will, and we've agreed on that completely, how we will approach it—then we have the responsibility to work together to make the peace work. And we will do that.

President Yeltsin. I want to add, you are underestimating the Presidents of two such great powers. Maybe something didn't quite reach you. Maybe you can't quite figure out how we can solve it, but it came to us; it reached us.

NOTE: The President's 104th news conference began at 3:44 p.m. on the front steps of the Franklin D. Roosevelt home. In his remarks, he referred to Russian Minister of Defense Pavel Grachev. President Yeltsin spoke in Russian, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Joint Statement With President Yeltsin on Nuclear Materials Security *October 23, 1995*

Presidents Clinton and Yeltsin noted the importance they attach to ensuring the security of nuclear weapons and nuclear materials, maintaining effective control over them, and combating illegal trafficking in nuclear materials. They underscored their strong support for the efforts underway in the Russian Federation and the United States to achieve these objectives, including the rapidly growing range of cooperative activities being pursued jointly by US and Russian experts. The Presidents noted with satisfaction that bilateral and multilateral cooperation in these areas has grown rapidly over the past year and includes joint activities on law enforcement, customs, intelligence liaison and on-the-

ground cooperation to improve nuclear materials security at ten sites, protecting tons of nuclear material. The Presidents also welcomed cooperative efforts to improve the security of nuclear weapons in transport or storage in connection with their dismantlement.

The two Presidents welcomed the joint report on steps that have been accomplished and additional steps that should be taken to ensure the security of nuclear materials, prepared by the Gore-Chernomyrdin Commission in implementation of the May 10 summit declaration on nonproliferation. This report outlines current and planned U.S.-Russian programs of bilateral cooperation that will result in broad improve-