

changed my mind, in some cases they didn't. And that's okay, because we're not going to agree on everything. But I know this: Their voices and their views and their criticism ultimately will make my decisions better. They will make me ask tougher questions and ask my staffs tougher questions. And we'll find out: Are there ways of doing what we need to do that conform to our deepest held values and our ideals and that are sustainable over the long term? That makes our country stronger in the long term, and I wouldn't want it any other way.

So this summit reminds us: The fresh starts have to be between more than just two Presidents. They have to be between our two peoples, our two societies. They have to be more than just common security, the cold war weapons we dismantle. It must be about our common opportunity, the future of progress and prosperity that we build together.

And I think that the leadership here in Russia, both civil and governmental, understand this. I had lunch with President Medvedev this afternoon, and we started talking about health issues and the continuing high mortality rate among Russian men in particular. And we talked about alcoholism, and we talked about smoking. And we talked about the fact that government programs can be initiated, but to the extent that there's been success in the United States around reducing smoking levels,

it's not only a matter of changing laws, it's also been changing attitudes, so that people feel that they need to change. And they internalize these different attitudes. That's something that civic society can do in a way that government never can. I then met the leader of the Russian Orthodox Church, and he talked about how, you know, government exchanges are useful, but religious organizations, they can help melt away the suspicions and mistrust that have built between people over time.

So just in those two conversations, in the span of 15 minutes, essentially what I heard was a call for action from you. Confidence that what you are doing matters, even when sometimes it seems hard and it seems as if nobody is listening. That's what our work here on Earth must be about, what Tolstoy called the "sole meaning of life . . . to serve humanity." Now, thank you for making that cause the meaning of your lives. And good luck to all of you.

Spasibo.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:38 p.m. at the Metropole Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Calvin L. Holmes, executive director, Chicago Community Loan Fund; Yuri Dzhibladze, president, Center for the Development of Democracy and Human Rights; President Dmitry A. Medvedev of Russia; and His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia.

Statement on Health Care Reform

July 7, 2009

I am pleased by the progress we're making on health care reform and still believe, as I've said before, that one of the best ways to bring down costs, provide more choices, and assure

quality is a public option that will force the insurance companies to compete and keep them honest. I look forward to a final product that achieves these very important goals.

Remarks During a Meeting With Opposition Leaders in Moscow

July 7, 2009

[*The President's remarks were joined in progress.*]

—not simply tolerate dissenting voices but also to respect and recognize dissenting

voices. This is one of the elements, along with an independent media and adherence to the rule of law, that has helped to solidify our own Government during some very difficult times. I said in my remarks recently that the fact that

I sit before you as President of the United States is a testimony to the power of dissent in the United States over time in creating a different reality. And it's also an important tool for fighting corruption.

So I think it's very important that I come before you with some humility. I think in the past there's been a tendency for the United States to lecture rather than to listen. And we, obviously, still have much work to do with our own democracy in the United States, but nevertheless, I think we share some common values and interest in building a strong, democratic culture in Russia as well as the United States.

And I want to say that this is, by the way, something I do in every country I visit. So whether I visit—travel to Turkey or I travel to England, wherever I go, I think it's always important for me to recognize that the particular

head of state that I'm meeting with is the head of the government, but that the society itself represents a larger spectrum of views.

So I again am grateful to all of you for taking the time. And rather than spend all the time talking, what I'd like to do is listen to you and find out your perspectives, your views, and we can go in any direction that you prefer. We can talk about policy and specific concerns or questions you may have for me. Or we can talk more generally about how democracy is progressing—

[At this point, the remarks continued, and no transcript was provided.]

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:14 p.m. at the Ritz Carlton hotel. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Joint Understanding by President Barack H. Obama and President Dmitry A. Medvedev on the START Follow-on Treaty July 6, 2009

The President of the United States of America and the President of the Russian Federation have decided on further reductions and limitations of their nations' strategic offensive arms and on concluding at an early date a new legally binding agreement to replace the current START Treaty, and directed that the new treaty contain, *inter alia*, the following elements:

1. A provision to the effect that each Party will reduce and limit its strategic offensive arms so that seven years after entry into force of the treaty and thereafter, the limits will be in the range of 500–1100 for strategic delivery vehicles, and in the range of 1500–1675 for their associated warheads. The specific numbers to be recorded in the treaty for these limits will be agreed through further negotiations.
2. Provisions for calculating these limits.
3. Provisions on definitions, data exchanges, notifications, eliminations, inspections and verification procedures, as well as confidence building and transparency measures, as adapted, simplified, and made less costly, as appropriate, in comparison to the START Treaty.
4. A provision to the effect that each Party will determine for itself the composition and structure of its strategic offensive arms.
5. A provision on the interrelationship of strategic offensive and strategic defensive arms.
6. A provision on the impact of intercontinental ballistic missiles and submarine-launched ballistic missiles in a non-nuclear configuration on strategic stability.
7. A provision on basing strategic offensive arms exclusively on the national territory of each Party.
8. Establishment of an implementation body to resolve questions related to treaty implementation.