

Remarks on Signing the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty With President Dmitry A. Medvedev of Russia and an Exchange With Reporters in Prague, Czech Republic

April 8, 2010

President Obama. Good afternoon, everyone. I am honored to be back here in the Czech Republic with President Medvedev and our Czech hosts to mark this historic completion of the new START Treaty.

Let me begin by saying how happy I am to be back in the beautiful city of Prague. The Czech Republic, of course, is a close friend and ally of the United States, and I have great admiration and affection for the Czech people. Their bonds with the American people are deep and enduring, and Czechs have made great contributions to the United States over many decades, including in my hometown of Chicago. I want to thank the President and all those involved in helping to host this extraordinary event.

I want to thank my friend and partner, Dmitry Medvedev. Without his personal efforts and strong leadership, we would not be here today. We've met and spoken by phone many times throughout the negotiations of this treaty, and as a consequence, we've developed a very effective working relationship built on candor, cooperation, and mutual respect.

One year ago this week, I came here to Prague and gave a speech outlining America's comprehensive commitment to stopping the spread of nuclear weapons and seeking the ultimate goal of a world without them. I said then, and I will repeat now, that this is a long-term goal, one that may not even be achieved in my lifetime. But I believed then, as I do now, that the pursuit of that goal will move us further beyond the cold war, strengthen the global non-proliferation regime, and make the United States and the world safer and more secure. One of the steps that I called for last year was the realization of this treaty, so it's very gratifying to be back in Prague today.

I also came to office committed to resetting relations between the United States and Russia, and I know that President Medvedev shared that commitment. As he said at our first meeting in London, our relationship had started to drift, making it difficult to cooperate on issues

of common interest to our people. And when the United States and Russia are not able to work together on big issues, it's not good for either of our nations, nor is it good for the world.

Together, we've stopped that drift and proven the benefits of cooperation. Today is an important milestone for nuclear security and non-proliferation and for U.S.-Russia relations. It fulfills our common objective to negotiate a new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty. It includes significant reductions in the nuclear weapons that we will deploy. It cuts our delivery vehicles by roughly half. It includes a comprehensive verification regime, which allows us to further build trust. It enables both sides the flexibility to protect our security, as well as America's unwavering commitment to the security of our European allies. And I look forward to working with the United States Senate to achieve ratification for this important treaty later this year.

Finally, this day demonstrates the determination of the United States and Russia—the two nations that hold over 90 percent of the world's nuclear weapons—to pursue responsible global leadership. Together, we are keeping our commitments under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which must be the foundation for global nonproliferation.

While the new START Treaty is an important first step forward, it is just one step on a longer journey. As I said last year in Prague, this treaty will set the stage for further cuts. And going forward, we hope to pursue discussions with Russia on reducing both our strategic and tactical weapons, including nondeployed weapons.

President Medvedev and I have also agreed to expand our discussions on missile defense. This will include regular exchanges of information about our threat assessments, as well as the completion of a joint assessment of emerging ballistic missiles. And as these assessments are completed, I look forward to launching a serious dialogue about Russian-American cooperation on missile defense.

But nuclear weapons are not simply an issue for the United States and Russia, they threaten the common security of all nations. A nuclear weapon in the hands of a terrorist is a danger to people everywhere, from Moscow to New York, from the cities of Europe to South Asia. So next week, 47 nations will come together in Washington to discuss concrete steps that can be taken to secure all vulnerable nuclear materials around the world in 4 years.

And the spread of nuclear weapons to more states is also an unacceptable risk to global security, raising the specter of arms races from the Middle East to East Asia. Earlier this week, the United States formally changed our policy to make it clear that those nuclear [non-nuclear]^{*} weapons states that are in compliance with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and their nonproliferation obligations will not be threatened by America's nuclear arsenal. This demonstrates once more America's commitment to the NPT as a cornerstone of our security strategy. Those nations that follow the rules will find greater security and opportunity. Those nations that refuse to meet their obligations will be isolated and denied the opportunity that comes with international recognition.

That includes accountability for those that break the rules. Otherwise, the NPT is just words on a page. That's why the United States and Russia are part of a coalition of nations insisting that the Islamic Republic of Iran face consequences, because they have continued—continually failed to meet their obligations. We are working together at the United Nations Security Council to pass strong sanctions on Iran. And we will not tolerate actions that flout the NPT, risk an arms race in a vital region, and threaten the credibility of the international community and our collective security.

While these issues are a top priority, they are only one part of the U.S.-Russia relationship. Today I again expressed my deepest condolences for the terrible loss of Russian life in recent terrorist attacks, and we will remain steadfast partners in combating violent ex-

tremism. We also discussed the potential to expand our cooperation on behalf of economic growth, trade, and investment, as well as technological innovation, and I look forward to discussing these issues further when President Medvedev visits the United States later this year, because there is much we can do on behalf of our security and prosperity if we continue to work together.

When one surveys the many challenges that we face around the world, it's easy to grow complacent or to abandon the notion that progress can be shared. But I want to repeat what I said last year in Prague: When nations and peoples allow themselves to be defined by their differences, the gulf between them widens. When we fail to pursue peace, then it stays forever beyond our grasp.

This majestic city of Prague is in many ways a monument to human progress. And this ceremony is a testament to the truth that old adversaries can forge new partnerships. I could not help but be struck the other day by the words of Arkady Brish, who helped build the Soviet Union's first atom bomb. At the age of 92, having lived to see the horrors of a World War and the divisions of a cold war, he said, and I quote, "We hope humanity will reach the moment when there is no need for nuclear weapons, when there is peace and calm in the world."

It's easy to dismiss those voices, but doing so risks repeating the horrors of the past, while ignoring the history of human progress. The pursuit of peace and calm and cooperation among nations is the work of both leaders and peoples in the 21st century, for we must be as persistent and passionate in our pursuit of progress as any who would stand in our way.

Once again, President Medvedev, thank you for your extraordinary leadership.

President Medvedev. Dear colleagues, dear members of the media, I fully agree with the assessment that have just been made by my colleague, President Obama, concerning the fact that here in this room, a truly historic event took place: A new Russia-U.S. treaty has been signed on measures for the further re-

^{*} White House correction.

duction and limitation of strategic offensive arms. This treaty has a 10-year duration. It will supersede the START Treaty, which has expired, as well as another existing treaty—Russia-U.S. treaty—on the reduction of strategic offensive capabilities.

And first of all, I'd like to thank my colleague, President of the United States of America, for the successful cooperation in this very complex matter and for the reasonable compromises that have been achieved, thanks to the work of our two teams. We have already thanked them, but let me do it once again in the presence of the media and the public. We thank them for their excellent work.

And I would also like to thank the leadership of the Czech Republic—Mr. President, you—for the invitation to hold this signing ceremony here in this beautiful city, in this beautiful springtime, thereby creating a good atmosphere for the future. And I believe that this signature will open a new page for cooperation between our two countries—between—among our countries—and will create safer conditions for life here and throughout the world.

One word: We aimed at the quality of the treaty. And indeed, the negotiating process has not been simple, but again, our negotiation teams have been working in a highly professional, constructive way that has been nonstop work, and very often they worked 24 hours a day. And that enabled us to do something that just a couple of months looked like mission impossible. Within a short span of time, we prepared a full-fledged treaty and signed it.

As a result, we obtained a document that in full measure maintains the balance of interest of Russia and the United States of America. What matters most is that this is a win-win situation. No one stands to lose from this agreement. I believe that this is a typical feature of our cooperation—both parties have won. And taking into account this victory of ours, the entire world community has won.

This agreement enhances strategic stability, and at the same time, enables us to rise to a higher level for cooperation between Russia and the United States. And although the contents of the treaty have been—are already known, let me point out once again what we

have achieved, because this is very important thing: 1,550 developed weapons, which is about one-third below the current level; 700 deployed ICBMs—intercontinental ballistic missile—and sea-launched ballistic missiles and heavy bombers, and this represents more than twofold reduction below the current levels; and 800 deployed and nondeployed launchers for such missiles, as well as deployed and nondeployed heavy bombers, which again represents a twofold reduction below the level that existed prior to the signature of this treaty.

And at the same time, each party can use its own depression—discretion to determine the makeup and structure of its strategic offensive potentials.

The treaty also includes provisions concerning data exchange. We are quite experienced now in this too—matters with my colleague, and we are great experts on these matters—perhaps the greatest experts in the world. And the treaty also includes provisions concerning conversion and elimination, inspection provisions and verification provisions, as well as confidence-building measures.

The verification mechanism has been significantly simplified and much less costly, as compared with the previous START Treaty. But at the same time, it ensures the proper verification, irreversibility, and transparency of the entire process of reducing strategic offensive arms.

We believe—and our American partners are well aware of that this is our open position—we believe that the treaty can be viable and can operate only provided there is no qualitative or quantitative increase in the ABM capabilities, something that could, in the final analysis, jeopardize the strategic offensive weaponry of the Russian side. This is the gist of the statement made by the Russian Federation in connection with the signature of this treaty.

The main task on the post-signature period we regard as achieving the ratification of the treaty, as mentioned by my colleague, Mr. President of the United States, and it is also important to synchronize the ratification process. Our American partners, as I understand, intend to proceed quickly to present this document to the Senate for ratification. We also will be working

with our Federal Assembly to maintain the necessary dynamics of the ratification process.

By and large, we are satisfied with the work done. The result we have obtained is good. But today, of course, we have discussed not only the fact of signing this treaty; we have also discussed a whole range of important key issues of concern to all the countries. Of course, we could not omit the Iranian nuclear problem. Regrettably, Iran is not responding to the many constructive proposals that have been made, and we cannot turn a blind eye to this. Therefore, I do not rule out the possibility that the Security Council of the United Nations will have to review this issue once again.

Our position is well known. Let me briefly outline it now. Of course, sanctions by themselves seldom obtain some specific results, although it's difficult to do without them in certain situations. But in any case, those situation—those sanctions should be smart and aimed not only at nonproliferation, but also to resolve other issues, rather than to produce a humanitarian catastrophe for the Iranian people. We—

[At this point, the audio feed from the interpreter dropped. President Medvedev continued to speak in Russian, but no translation was provided. The translation later continued as follows.]

—predictability. In that respect, the treaty we have concluded helps us to embark on a new avenue. And I cannot but say this once again: We have established very good personal relationship, and we have established a well—good personal chemistry, as they say, and I think this helped us to come to this agreement.

But—*[inaudible]*—should not only be between the Presidents. It is, of course, important by itself, but presidents do not address all the issues that have to be tackled by executive structures. Therefore, contacts on working level should be maintained on all levels, and we have very functional bilateral intergovernmental commission, and the leaders of that commission—Secretary of State and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russian Federation—have presented their report—*[inaudible]*—work of

this commission. All the—almost—all the 16 subgroups have—

[The audio feed dropped.]

—agreed upon with my partner. I am convinced that all that has been done so far is just the beginning of a long way—long way ahead. And I wouldn't like to see the relations between Russian Federation and the United States be narrowed down to just limiting strategic offensive arms. To be sure, we shoulder specific responsibility—a special responsibility—in that respect, and we—

[The audio feed dropped.]

—and let me once again thank President Barack Obama for our—*[inaudible]*—cooperation in this area.

Thank you.

Moderator. Christi Parsons from the Chicago Tribune.

Treaty Negotiations/Antimissile Defense

Q. Thank you for taking my question, Mr. President. How will the two sides get around your differences on missile defense to work out a follow-on treaty, since that seems to be the biggest impediment to further arsenal reductions, and can the two sides resolve this issue by working out a cooperative agreement on missile defense? Thank you.

President Obama. You know, one of the things that we discussed when we first met in Moscow was the relationship between offensive and defensive capabilities. And what I made clear was that our missile defense systems were not directed at changing the strategic balance between the United States and Russia, but were instead directed at protecting the American people from potentially new attacks from missiles launched from third countries. We recognize, however, that Russia has a significant interest in this issue, and what we've committed to doing is to engaging in a significant discussion not only bilaterally, but also having discussions with our European allies and others about a framework in which we can potentially cooperate on issues of missile

defense in a way that preserves U.S. national security interests, preserves Russia's national security interests, and allows us to guard against a rogue missile from any source.

So I'm actually optimistic that having completed this treaty, which signals our strong commitment to a reduction in overall nuclear weapons, and that I believe is going to strengthen the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty regime, that sends a signal around the world that the United States and Russia are prepared to once again take leadership in moving in the direction of reducing reliance on nuclear weapons and preventing the spread of nuclear weapons as well as nuclear materials; that we will have built the kind of trust not only between Presidents, but also between Governments and between peoples that allows us to move forward in a constructive way.

I've repeatedly said that we will not do anything that endangers or limits my ability as Commander in Chief to protect the American people. And we think that missile defense can be an important component of that. But we also want to make clear that the approach that we've taken in no way is intended to change the strategic balance between the United States and Russia. And I'm actually confident that moving forward, as we have these discussions, it will be part of a broader set of discussions about, for example, how we can take tactical nuclear weapons out of theater, the possibilities of us making more significant cuts not only in deployed, but also nondeployed missiles. There are a whole range of issues that I think that we can make significant progress on. I'm confident that this is an important first step in that direction.

President Medvedev. I would like to say a few words on the issue. Doubtless, interrelation between missile defense and START was one of the most difficult topics to discuss. No one tries to reject it. But at present, the language that has been in the treaty we signed satisfies both parties, and we proceed from the fact that on that basis, we will implement the newly signed treaty. We—it matters to us what will happen to missile defense. It is related to the configuration of our potential and our capacities, and we will watch how these processes develop. And

the preamble has a language that, to a certain extent, replicates a legal principle according—of the unchangeability of circumstances that were basis for the treaty. But this is a flexible process, and we are interested in close cooperation over it with our American partners.

We have appreciated the steps by the current U.S. administration in terms of their decisions in the area of antimissile defense of the previous administration, and this has led to progress. It doesn't mean that we'll have no digressions in understanding, but it means that we'll have will and wish to address these issues.

We offered it to the United States that we help them establish the global antimissile defense system, and we should think about this, given the vulnerability of our world, the terror—the terrorist challenges, and the possibility of using nuclear arms by terrorists existing in this world.

And I am an optimist, as well as my American colleague, and I believe that we will be able to reach compromise on these issues.

Limiting Global Nuclear Weapon Stockpiles/ Russia-U.S. Relations

Moderator. Vladimir Solovyov, *Kommer-sant*, a newspaper.

Q. I have two questions, to each of the Presidents. One, Moscow and Washington—the first is to Mr. Obama—Moscow and Washington, not for the first time, agree on a reduction of strategic offensive arms. But as you have mentioned, Russia and the United States are not the only countries having nuclear weapons. So how, specifically, can the document achieve—well, similar to the—today's document on limitation of nuclear arms—how—well, how soon we will see others sign this document? And will you move along this track together with Russia?

And to the President of the Russian Federation, you have mentioned the fact that sometimes there's an impression that Moscow and Washington are unable to agree on anything else but a mutual reduction of arms. So do—will we see any counter—any things that will counter such a statement? And what will the agreements be?

President Obama. Well, first of all, as I mentioned in my opening remarks, the United

States and Russia account for 90 percent of the world's nuclear weapons. And given this legacy of the cold war, it is critical for us to show significant leadership. That, I think, is what we've begun to do with this follow-on START Treaty.

Other countries are going to have to be making a series of decisions about how they approach the issue of their nuclear weapons stockpiles. And as I've repeatedly said—and I'm sure Dmitry feels the same way with respect to his country—we are going to preserve our nuclear deterrent so long as other countries have nuclear weapons, and we are going to make sure that that stockpile is safe and secure and effective.

But I do believe that as we look out into the 21st century, that more and more countries will come to recognize that the most important factors in providing security and peace to their citizens will depend on their economic growth, will depend on the capacity of the international community to resolve conflicts. It will depend on having a strong conventional military that can protect a nation's borders and that nuclear weapons, increasingly, in an interdependent world, will make less and less sense as the cornerstone of security policy.

But that's going to take some time, and I think each country is going to have to make its own determinations. The key is for the United States and Russia to show leadership on this front because we are so far ahead of every nation with respect to possession of nuclear weapons.

The primary concerns that we identified in a recent Nuclear Posture Review—essentially a declaratory statement of U.S. policy with respect to nuclear weapons—said that our biggest concerns right now are actually the issues of nuclear terrorism and nuclear proliferation: more countries obtaining nuclear weapons; those weapons being less controllable, less secure; nuclear materials floating around the globe. And that's going to be a major topic of the discussion that we have in Washington on Monday.

The United States and Russia have a history already—a decade-long history—of locking down loose nuclear materials. I believe that our

ability to move forward already on sanctions with respect to North Korea, the intense discussions that we're having with respect to Iran, will increasingly send a signal to countries that are not abiding by their Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty obligations that they will be isolated. All those things will go toward sending a general message that we need to move in a new direction. And I think leadership on that front is important.

Last point I'll make—I will just anticipate or poach the question about other areas of cooperation. Our respective foreign ministers—Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Foreign Minister Lavrov—have been heading a bilateral commission that has been working intensively on a whole range of issues. And President Medvedev and myself identified a series of key areas on the economic front, in trade relations, the potential for joint cooperation on various industries, how we can work on innovation and sparking economic growth. We've already worked together closely in the G-20; I think we can build on that bilaterally.

There are issues of counterterrorism that are absolutely critical to both of us, and I just want to repeat how horrified all of America was at the recent attacks in Moscow. We recognize that that's a problem that can happen anywhere at any time, and it's important for Russia and the United States to work closely on those issues.

And then there are people-to-people contacts and figuring out how we can make sure that there's more interaction and exchange between our two countries on a whole range of issues within civil society.

So I'm very optimistic that we're going to continue to make progress on all of these fronts. But I think we should take pride in this particular accomplishment, because it speaks not only to the security of our two nations, but also the security of the world as a whole.

President Medvedev. It's always good to answer second. First of all, you know what your partner has said, and secondly, you can comment upon what has been said by your interlocutor. As a matter of fact, I will say a couple of words on the first part of the question that was meant for my colleague.

Yes, we have the—90 percent of all the stockpiles, which is the heritage of the cold war—the legacy—and we'll do all that we have agreed upon. Take in mind special mission of Russia and the U.S. on this issue, and we do care about what is going on with nuclear arms in other countries of the world. And we can't imagine a situation when the Russian Federation and the United States take efforts to disarm and the world would move towards a different—principled different direction away—in charge of our peoples and the situation in the world—[inaudible].

So all the issues related to the implementation of the treaty and nonproliferation and the threat of nuclear terrorism should be analyzed by us in a complex way, an integrated way. And I'd like this signing to be—not to be regarded by other countries as their—well, stepping aside from the issue. On the contrary, they should be involved to the full and take an active participation in it. They should be aware what is going on.

So we welcome the initiative that has been proposed by the President of the United States to convene a relevant conference in Washington, and I will take part in it, which will be a good platform to discuss nonproliferation issues.

As far as our linkages—but where the nuclear arms are concerned—in this world we have a lot that brings us together, and with the United States as well. And today we have had a very good talk that has started not with the discussion of the documents to be signed—they were coordinated—and not with discussing Iran, North Korea, Middle East, and other pressing issues of foreign affairs, but we started with economic issues.

I have said that there is a gap in our economic cooperation. I have looked at the figures, how the cumulative investment of the United States in Russia is quite small—nearly \$7 billion—and the figure has decreased a bit, thanks to—as a result of the crisis. In terms of Russian investment into the U.S., well, it's nearly the same, which testifies to a parity of interests. It's not with all countries that we have such volume of investment, but if we compare the figures with the figures of foreign investors present in the

American economy—I mean other countries, including states that can be compared with Russia in terms of volume of their economy—so it's the difference of 20 or 30 times. So we have a field to work upon.

And—to say nothing about the projects we talked about today: modernization, high-tech economy establishment—and in the Russian Federation, we are open for cooperation and would like to use American experience to employ it. These also include issues of energy, cooperation in transport. And I have suggested some time ago returning to the issue of creating a big cargo plane as such a unique experience only two countries have, the U.S. and Russia. Issues of nuclear cooperation are important.

So there can be a lot of economic projects. It's not the business of presidents to deal with each of them, but some key issues are to be controlled by us, as the relations between business, relations between those who would like to develop active ties depend on it—business ties. And humanitarian contacts—people-to-people contacts—are important. And it's significant that we do our best so that our citizens respect each other, understand each other better, so that they are guided by the best practices of American-Russian culture and not perceive each other through the lens of information that sometimes is provided by mass media.

So we should more attentively, more thoughtfully—well, have a more thoughtful attitude towards each other. And I count on this.

Iran/Adherence to Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Obligations

Moderator. Jonathan Weisman. [Wall Street Journal]

Q. Thank you, Presidents Medvedev and President Obama. For President Obama first: Could you elaborate on how the yearlong negotiations over the new START Treaty have advanced U.S. cooperation with Russia on Iran and give us a sense of when you will pursue, move forward, in the United Nations and next week with sanctions discussions, and what those sanctions might look like?

And for President Medvedev: Could you address whether Russia could accept sanctions

against Iran, specifically dealing with its energy industry and energy sector? Thank you.

President Obama. Discussions about sanctions on Iran have been moving forward over the last several weeks. In fact, they've been moving forward over the last several months. We're going to start seeing some ramped-up negotiations taking place in New York in the coming weeks. And my expectation is that we are going to be able to secure strong, tough sanctions on Iran this spring.

Now, I think there are two ways in which these START negotiations have advanced, or at least influenced, Russia-U.S. discussions around Iran. The first is, obviously, that President Medvedev and I have been able to build up a level of trust and our teams have been able to work together in such a way that we can be frank, we can be clear. And that helped to facilitate, then, our ability, for example, to work together jointly to present to Iran reasonable options that would allow it to clearly distance itself from nuclear weapons and pursue a path of peaceful nuclear energy.

That wasn't just an approach that was taken by the United States and Russia, but it was an approach taken by the P-5-plus-1, as well as the International Atomic Energy Agency, the IAEA.

So what we've seen from the start is that a host of countries—but led by countries like the United States and Russia—have said to Iran, we are willing to work through diplomatic channels to resolve this issue. And unfortunately, Iran has consistently rebuffed our approach. And I think that Russia has been a very strong partner in saying that it has no interest in bringing down Iranian society or the Iranian Government, but it does have an interest, as we all do, in making sure that each country is following its international obligations.

The second way in which I think the START Treaty has influenced our discussions about Iran is, it's sent a strong signal that the United States and Iran—the United States and Russia are following our own obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and that our interest in Iran or North Korea or any other country following the NPT is not

based on singling out any one country, but rather sends a strong signal that all of us have an obligation, each country has an obligation to follow the rules of the road internationally to ensure a more secure future for our children and our grandchildren.

And so I think the fact that we are signing this treaty, the fact that we are willing, as the two leading nuclear powers, to continually work on reducing our own arsenals, I think should indicate the fact that we are willing to be bound by our obligations, and we're not asking any other countries to do anything different, but simply to follow the rules of the road that have been set forth and have helped to maintain a—at least a lack of the use of nuclear weapons over the last several decades, despite, obviously, the cold war.

And the concern that I have in particular, a concern that I think is the most profound security threat to the United States, is that with further proliferation of nuclear weapons, with states obtaining nuclear weapons and potentially using them to blackmail other countries or potentially not securing them effectively or passing them on to terrorist organizations, that we could find ourselves in a world in which not only state actors, but also potentially nonstate actors are in possession of nuclear weapons, and even if they don't use them, would then be in a position to terrorize the world community.

That's why this issue is so important, and that's why we are going to be pushing very hard to make sure that both smart and strong sanctions end up being in place soon to send a signal to Iran and other countries that this is an issue that the international community takes seriously.

President Medvedev. Let's ask ourselves a question: What do we need sanctions for? Do we need them to enjoy the very fact of reprisal—imposing reprisals against another state, or is the objective another one? I am confident that all those present here will say that sanctions—we need sanctions in order to prompt one or another individual or state to behave properly, behave within the framework of international law, while complying with the obligations assumed.

Therefore, when we are speaking about sanctions, I cannot disagree with the—with what has just been said. And this has been the position of the Russian Federation from the very outset. If we are to speak about sanctions, although they are not always successful, those sanctions should be smart sanctions that are capable of producing proper behavior on the part of the relevant sides.

And what sort of sanctions should we need? Today we have had a very openminded, frank, and straightforward manner discussed what can be done and what cannot be done. And let me put it straightforward: I have outlined our limits for such sanctions, our understanding of these sanctions, and I said that in making decisions like that, I, as President of the Russian Federation, will proceed from two premises. First, we need to prompt Iran to behave properly; and secondly, least but not least, aim to maintain the national interests of our countries.

So smart sanctions should be able to motivate certain parties to behave properly, and I'm confident that our teams that will be engaged in consultations will continue discussing this issue.

Ratification of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty

Moderator. Vladimir Kondratyev, NTV.

Q. Now, everyone is concerned whether the treaty will be ratified by the parliaments. You have mentioned that you will be working with the parliamentarians to achieve such ratification. Let me ask you what difficulty you see along this road, and what do you—how do you assess the chances for success? The question is addressed to both Presidents.

President Medvedev. Well, by all appearances, Barack believes that we might have more problems with ratification. Perhaps that's true, but let me say what I think about this question.

Of course, such agreements of major importance, international agreements, under our Constitution and under our legislation are subject to ratification by our parliaments. And of course, for our part, we intend to proceed promptly and to do all the necessary procedures to ensure that our Parliament, our State Duma,

starts reviewing this treaty, discussing this treaty.

I will proceed from the following: I believe that we have to ensure the synchronization of this ratification process so that neither party feels in one way or another compromised. Earlier, we had periods when one state ratified while another party said, sorry, the situation has changed; therefore, we cannot do it.

So this is something we have to avoid. That's why I say we have to proceed simultaneously in the conditions of an openminded and straightforward discussion, with subsequent ratification by our parliaments. That's what we need. And we will not be found amiss in that regard.

President Obama. You know, the United States Senate has the obligation of reviewing any treaty and, ultimately, ratifying it. Fortunately, there is a strong history of bipartisanship when it comes to the evaluation of international treaties, particularly arms control treaties.

And so I have already engaged in consultation with the chairmen of the relevant committees in the United States Senate. We are going to broaden that consultation now that this treaty has been signed. My understanding is, is that both in Russia and the United States, it's going to be posted on the Internet, appropriate to a 21st-century treaty. And so people not only within Government, but also the general public will be able to review, in an open and transparent fashion, what it is that we've agreed to.

I think what they will discover is that this is a well-crafted treaty that meets the interests of both countries, that meets the interests of the world in the United States and Russia reducing its nuclear arsenals and setting the stage for potentially further reductions in the future.

And so I'm actually quite confident that Democrats and Republicans in the United States Senate, having reviewed this, will see that the United States has preserved its core national security interests, that it is maintaining a safe and secure and effective nuclear deterrent, but that we are beginning to once again move forward, leaving the cold war behind, to address new challenges in new ways. And I think the START Treaty represents an important first

step in that direction, and I feel confident that we are going to be able to get it ratified.

All right? Thank you very much, everybody.

President Medvedev. Thank you. See you next time.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 12:37 p.m. at Prague Castle. In his remarks,

the President referred to President Vaclav Klaus of the Czech Republic; and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey V. Lavrov of Russia. President Medvedev and two reporters spoke in Russian, and their remarks were translated by an interpreter. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of a portion of these remarks.

Remarks at a Lunch With President Vaclav Klaus of the Czech Republic and President Dmitry A. Medvedev of Russia in Prague

April 8, 2010

Thank you very much, everybody. President Klaus, and to the people of the Czech Republic, thank you for your extraordinary hospitality.

To President Medvedev, Dmitry, we have learned to work together, and I'm extraordinarily grateful for your leadership and your clarity. And I think it has served us extraordinarily well during the course of these negotiations.

And to our teams, on both the Russian and the American side, I could not be prouder of the diligence and meticulousness and the degree of effort that all of you poured into crafting what I think is an extraordinarily important document that not only has helped to reset in a very concrete and tangible way U.S.-Russian relations, but I think is going to help lay the foundation for a safer world for generations to come.

We gather today in a magnificent castle, surrounded by history and the relics of thousands of years, a castle that's seen empires rise and fall, that have witnessed great movements in the arts and music and culture, spires that have survived world wars and a cold war and that now grace a capital of a vibrant democracy.

And so I think it's an indication of how we are not just creatures of fate, we can determine our fates; and that when men and wom-

en of good will, regardless of previous differences, regardless of history, regardless of a past, determined that they want to seize a better future, they can do so.

I think the Czech Republic is a testament to that ability to seize the future. I think the direction that President Medvedev has moved the Russian Federation is a testimony to the impulse to seek a new future.

In the United States, we are constantly wanting to remake our economy and our politics and our culture in ways that look forward, even as it's grounded in the deep traditions of our past.

And so today what I'd like to do is to propose a toast not only to the extraordinary work that's been done by the men and the women in this room, but also a toast to the vision of a future in which we are defined not just by our differences, but increasingly defined by our common aims, our common goals, and our common hopes for our children and our grandchildren. And I think this treaty hopefully is one brick on that path towards a brighter future for all mankind.

So thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 2 p.m. at Prague Castle. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.