

Mr. Brilev. The G-20 shall indeed substitute the G-8?

The President. Well, my belief is, is that there's going to be a transition period, but that the G-20 represents the economic framework of the future.

Adoption of Russian Children

Mr. Brilev. Lastly, so lucky to be in front of the U.S. President, but still I have to ask one last question: the adoption issue. Well, I do not support those who say, "Well, Americans killing Russian children." This is not the case. Absolute majority of the children adopted from Russia have their lives here. Even more important is the fact that more and more Russians are adopting Russian children in Russia. In fact, there are more Russians than Americans these days doing such things. But then, still, 17 kids have been killed—or, well, died in this country. It is an issue, especially after this American woman sent Artem Saveliev to Russia. What's to be done?

The President. Well, first of all, obviously, what happened with the small number of children who have been adversely affected is terrible. And we can't minimize what's happened. As you point out, there have been tens of thousands of Russian children adopted by U.S. families. The overwhelming majority are leading happy, healthy lives. But ultimately, the policy has to be what's best for children, whether they're living in Russia or they're living in the United States.

What we've done is to set up a bilateral discussion between our State Department and counterparts in Russian to find out how do we create an agreement in which children are protected. And I think that's ultimately the goal. And as the father of two children, obviously, it breaks my heart to think about children who have been vulnerable, have probably already gone through difficult situations and then are subjected to even more difficult situations in the past. But as you point out, I think it's also important to recognize that in the overwhelming majority of cases, adoptions are the absolute best thing for the child. And we want to make sure that we preserve the best of the system while eliminating these abuses.

Mr. Brilev. Mr. President, thanks so much, indeed.

The President. I enjoyed it. Thank you.

NOTE: The interview began at 1:50 p.m. in the Diplomatic Reception Room at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to his great uncle Charles Payne; and U.S. Ambassador to Russia John R. Beyrle. Mr. Brilev referred to President Mahmud Ahmadi-nejad of Iran; and Artem Saveliev, an 8-year-old Russian boy who was sent back to Russia by his American adoptive mother Torry Ann Hansen. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 8. A portion of this interview could not be verified because the audio was incomplete.

Statement on Russia's Commemoration of the 65th Anniversary of the End of World War II May 8, 2010

On May 9, the Russian Federation will host a commemoration of one of the most important events in human history, the defeat of fascism in World War II. This achievement was won only by the extraordinary sacrifices made by many people, including Americans and Russians, and those sacrifices will be honored by the presence of troops from the many nations that came together to defend our common security and human dignity in an hour of maximum peril. In

marking this occasion, President Medvedev has shown remarkable leadership in honoring the sacrifices of those who came before us and in speaking so candidly about the Soviet Union's suppression of "elementary rights and freedoms." His words remind us that we must all work together on behalf of a world in which the fundamental human rights that all people deserve are protected.

Commencement Address at Hampton University in Hampton, Virginia May 9, 2010

The President. Thank you, Hampton. Thank you, class of 2010. Please, everybody, please have a seat.

Audience member. I love you, Obama!

The President. I love you back. That's why I'm here. I love you guys.

Good morning, everybody.

Audience members. Good morning.

The President. To all the mothers in the house: As somebody who is surrounded by women in the White House—[laughter]—grew up surrounded by women, let me take a moment just to say thank you for all that you put up with each and every day. We are so grateful to you, and it is fitting to have such a beautiful day when we celebrate all our mothers.

Thank you to Hampton for allowing me to share this special occasion. To all the dignitaries who are here, the trustees, the alumni, parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins—

Audience member. Woo!

The President. That's a cousin over there. [Laughter]

Now, before we get started, I just want to say, I'm excited the battle of the real HU will be taking place in Washington this year. [Laughter] You know I am not going to pick sides. [Laughter] But my understanding is it's been 13 years since the Pirates lost. As one Hampton alum on my staff put it, the last time Howard beat Hampton, the Fugees were still together. [Laughter]

Let me also say a word about President Harvey, a man who bleeds Hampton blue. In a single generation, Hampton has transformed from a small Black college into a world-class research institution. And that transformation has come through the efforts of many people, but it has come through President Harvey's efforts in particular, and I want to commend him for his outstanding leadership as well as his great friendship to me.

Most of all, I want to congratulate all of you, the class of 2010. I gather that none of you walked across Ogden Circle. [Laughter]

Audience members. We did!

The President. You did? Okay. [Laughter]

You know, we meet here today, as graduating classes have met for generations, not far from where it all began, near that old oak tree off Emancipation Drive. I know my University 101. [Laughter] There, beneath its branches, by what was then a Union garrison, about 20 students gathered on September 17, 1861. Taught by a free citizen, in defiance of Virginia law, the students were escaped slaves from nearby plantations who had fled to the fort seeking asylum.

And after the war's end, a retired Union general sought to enshrine that legacy of learning. So with a collection from church groups, Civil War veterans, and a choir that toured Europe, Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute was founded here, by the Chesapeake, a home by the sea.

Now, that story is no doubt familiar to many of you. But it's worth reflecting on why it happened, why so many people went to such trouble to found Hampton and all our Historically Black Colleges and Universities. The founders of these institutions knew, of course, that inequality would persist long into the future. They were not naive. They recognized that barriers in our laws and in our hearts wouldn't vanish overnight.

But they also recognized the larger truth, a distinctly American truth. They recognized, class of 2010, that the right education might allow those barriers to be overcome, might allow our God-given potential to be fulfilled. They recognized, as Frederick Douglass once put it, that "education . . . means emancipation." They recognized that education is how America and its people might fulfill our promise. That recognition, that truth—that an education can fortify us to rise above any barrier, to meet any test—is reflected again and again throughout our history.

In the midst of civil war, we set aside land grants for schools like Hampton to teach farmers and factory workers the skills of an industrializing nation. At the close of World War II, we made it possible for returning GIs to at-