

affecting the rights of citizens who benefit from such service. I am pleased to have signed the bill.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
June 19, 1997.

NOTE: S. 543, approved June 19, was assigned Public Law No. 105-19.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With President Boris Yeltsin of Russia in Denver

June 20, 1997

President Yeltsin. Thank you for your hospitality, for the wonderful hotel and accommodations.

Russian Support for the UN Resolution on Iraq

Q. President Yeltsin, if we may, we understand the United States and Britain are looking for help on a resolution on Iraq with the United Nations that's being discussed. Is Russia at least willing to promise not to veto the resolution?

President Yeltsin. I'm prepared to block my answer to your question. [*Laughter*]

Group of Eight and Russia

Q. Mr. President, will the United States support expansion of the G-7 to a G-8 to include Russia?

President Clinton. Well, Russia is fully included. This is the first time we've ever had a meeting where the Russians were here from the beginning to the end. And we also have another happy development today: When we were in Helsinki I pledged to President Yeltsin that I would do my best to see Russia be admitted into the Paris Club within the year, and Russia and the Paris Club have just completed their negotiations, which means that now Russia will be a partner with the other members in trying to help promote the global economic growth by relieving the burden of the debt on developing questions that—so what you see here is a sweeping—Russia into the major decision-making networks in the world in a way that is very positive for the rest of us.

And I must say, since—in the last 5 years, as Russian participation has steadily increased here, we have seen the agenda of this group broaden dramatically, and because Russia is a partner, we can talk about, for example, what we can do together to prevent the inappropriate spread of nuclear materials, and we can work together on a whole range of other options.

So I'm very positive about this and very pleased with this summit and pleased with the emergence of Russia as a leader in all these world institutions. It's a great tribute I think to President Yeltsin's leadership and to the commitment of the Russian people to democracy and reform.

Tobacco Agreement

Q. Mr. President, is there a tobacco settlement? Are you happy with it?

President Clinton. I don't believe it's been announced yet. I don't know that a settlement has been reached.

Q. But you've been briefed, sir?

President Clinton. Well, I've been generally briefed that they're approaching a settlement. But if a settlement, in fact, is announced today, then I'll make a statement about it. Until there is I don't want to make a statement.

Q. Would you intervene if there's a problem over regulation? What is your feelings—

President Clinton. Let's wait and see if they reach an agreement. If there is an agreement, I'll make a statement. I don't know that there is one.

[*At this point, one group of reporters left the room, and another group entered. When the second group of reporters had gathered, a question was asked and answered in Russian, and no translation was provided.*].

Group of Eight and Russia

President Clinton. Let me say that until you asked that question, no one had ever suggested to me that there would ever be a time when Russia would not be a full partner in this Group of Eight.

Let me just remind you that over the last few years, as the participation of Russia in this group has grown to this moment, when for the first time we are here together from

beginning to end and participating in only one press conference together and speaking with one voice—and as I'm sure you probably know, Russia has reached an agreement to join the Paris Club—it has enabled this body to go from a purely economic focus to deal with the common challenges that we have in the world we're about to enter and the one we face today.

For example, the work we're doing in nuclear cooperation would be impossible if Russia were not our partner here. And there are many other things that we're going to do together. So I think that this is a cause for celebration not only in Russia but in the other countries here.

Let me just say one final thing. I consider this day and all these things that are happening that are positive a tribute, first of all, to the support of the Russian people for democracy and reform and, second, to the unusual combination of vision and persistence that President Yeltsin has displayed over so many years. It's quite a hopeful moment for the world, I think, and I give him a lot of credit.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:03 p.m. at the Brown Palace Hotel. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Statement on the Tobacco Agreement

June 20, 1997

Less than one year ago, my administration announced an historic rule to protect children from the harm caused by tobacco products. Two months ago, a court in North Carolina issued a landmark ruling confirming my decision that the Food and Drug Administration has authority to regulate tobacco products to protect our children's health. These victories for the public health drove the tobacco companies to the bargaining table and extracted concessions from them that would have been unimaginable just a short time ago.

I commend the attorneys general and other people working with them, including children's health leaders, for their hard work in negotiating this agreement in a way that seeks to advance our struggle to protect the

health of children against the dangers of tobacco. They deserve our thanks for doing so.

We must now carefully consider whether approving this proposed settlement will protect the public health—and particularly our children's health—to the greatest extent possible. Until now, we have not had the opportunity to review the actual terms of the agreement, and we have not concluded whether it is in the best interests of the public health. Over the next several weeks, we will undertake a thorough public health review. I am asking Bruce Reed, my Domestic Policy Adviser—along with Donna Shalala, Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services—to engage in extensive consultations with the public health community and others to subject this agreement to the strictest scrutiny. They will report to me on whether this agreement represents the best means of protecting the Nation's public health interests.

In the meantime, we will fight as hard as ever to ensure that the FDA rule stands. Each day, 3,000 young people become regular smokers; 1,000 of them will have their lives cut short as a result. Protecting the health of the public and these children will be our measure of this proposed agreement.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

June 13¹

The President announced his intention to appoint Abraham H. Foxman, Jay Mazur, and Aletta Schaap to the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council.

¹ This release was not received in time for inclusion in the appropriate issue.