

there are a lot of mechanisms to uphold the freedom of the press. And as far as the fact that there is some kind of friction between the media and the Government, there is an ongoing debate, an ongoing critical debate, going on. There is a lot of criticism coming from the media with respect to the Government. This is an manifestation of democracy. What you mentioned about the comments in the media of the actions of the Russian Government is testimony to the fact that we do have freedom of the press. Although we're being criticized often of that, this is not the case.

When we discuss these issues absolutely frankly, we, and I, in particular, do not think that this has to be pushed to the foreground, that new problems should be created from nothing. And I do not think that we should jeopardize the Russian-American relationship, because we're interested in the development of this relationship. We are paying close attention to all the comments of the press or opposing forces, but our responsibility is to—in spite of all these problems, of which there are plenty, our responsibility is to positively develop the Russian-American relationship.

I would like to thank the President of the United States for his constructive dialog that we've had today. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 5:50 p.m. in Constitution Hall at Bratislava Castle. In his remarks, he referred to Lyudmila Putin, wife of President Putin. President Putin spoke in Russian, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

**Joint Statement by President George W. Bush and President Vladimir V. Putin: Russia's Accession to the World Trade Organization**

*February 24, 2005*

The United States and Russia are committed to working together to complete our bilateral negotiations for Russia's accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2005. The results of the negotiations will enhance commercial opportunities between our two countries, support economic reforms that Russia has made a priority, and further

integrate Russia into the world economy. Our trade ministers have made progress in pursuing our bilateral negotiations, and we have instructed them to accelerate these efforts.

Russia and the United States will continue to work closely in bilateral and multilateral negotiations to resolve remaining issues in ways that benefit both countries. The rules-based system of the WTO will further strengthen our economic relationship in all areas, including agriculture, manufacturing, services, and the improved protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights.

We will work to identify areas for progress in our bilateral negotiations that will give momentum to Russia's accession to the WTO and to Russia's economic reform program.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

**Joint Statement by President George W. Bush and President Vladimir V. Putin: U.S.-Russian Energy Cooperation**

*February 24, 2005*

Cooperation on energy issues remains an area of great promise for U.S.-Russian relations. We will work further to realize the vision for our energy cooperation in all aspects described in our statement in May 2002, including through the mechanisms of the Commercial Energy Dialogue and the Energy Working Group. Accordingly, we have instructed our ministers to continue their energy dialogue, concentrating on ways to enhance energy security, diversify energy supplies, improve the transparency of the business and investment environment, reduce obstacles to increased commercial energy partnerships, and develop resources in an environmentally safe manner.

We call upon our Ministers of Energy and Commerce to develop recommendations, which we can support at one of our upcoming meetings, on how to further intensify and develop our energy dialogue. Those recommendations will focus on identifying barriers to energy trade and investment, promoting initiatives to remove them on the basis of predictability, fairness and law, and

suggesting specific proposals for cooperating in developing energy trade and investment.

We will promote the creation of transparent tax, legal, regulatory, and contractual conditions for our companies' cooperation, and support Russia's pipeline system development, which will create the preconditions for increasing deliveries of oil and gas export, including to the U.S. market.

We are interested in increasing U.S. commercial investment in Russia, so as to create additional capacity for liquefied natural gas (LNG) in Russia, and also with the aim of increasing LNG exports to U.S. markets. We would welcome increased Russian oil exports to the world market and an increased presence of imports from Russia in the United States. We would also welcome expanding mutual investments in the energy sectors of both countries.

The initiation of several concrete projects should be targeted for no later than 2008.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

**Joint Statement by President George W. Bush and President Vladimir V. Putin: Nuclear Security Cooperation**  
*February 24, 2005*

The United States and Russia will enhance cooperation to counter one of the gravest threats our two countries face, nuclear terrorism. We bear a special responsibility for the security of nuclear weapons and fissile material, in order to ensure that there is no possibility such weapons or materials would fall into terrorist hands. While the security of nuclear facilities in the U.S. and Russia meet current requirements, we stress that these requirements must be constantly enhanced to counter the evolving terrorist threats. Building on our earlier work, we announce today our intention to expand and deepen cooperation on nuclear security with the goal of enhancing the security of nuclear facilities in our two countries and, together with our friends and allies, around the globe.

To this end the United States and Russia will continue and expand their cooperation on emergency response capability to deal with the consequences of a nuclear/radio-

logical incident, including the development of additional technical methods to detect nuclear and radioactive materials that are, or may be, involved in the incident.

We will work together to help ensure full implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1540 and early adoption of an International Convention on Nuclear Terrorism and the amended Convention on Physical Protection of Nuclear Material.

U.S. and Russian experts will share "best practices" for the sake of improving security at nuclear facilities, and will jointly initiate security "best practices" consultations with other countries that have advanced nuclear programs. Our experts will convene in 2005 a senior-level bilateral nuclear security workshop to focus increased attention on the "security culture" in our countries including fostering disciplined, well-trained, and responsible custodians and protective forces, and fully utilized and well-maintained security systems.

The United States and Russia will continue to work jointly to develop low-enriched uranium fuel for use in any U.S.- and Russian-design research reactors in third countries now using high-enriched uranium fuel, and to return fresh and spent high-enriched uranium from U.S.- and Russian-design research reactors in third countries.

The United States and Russia will continue our cooperation on security upgrades of nuclear facilities and develop a plan of work through and beyond 2008 on joint projects. Recognizing that the terrorist threat is both long-term and constantly evolving, in 2008 our countries will assess the joint projects and identify avenues for future cooperation consistent with our increased attention to the security culture in both countries.

We have established a bilateral Senior Interagency Group chaired by Secretary of Energy Bodman and Rosatom Director Rumyantsev for cooperation on nuclear security to oversee implementation of these cooperative efforts. A progress report will be due on July 1, 2005, and thereafter on a regular basis.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.