



THE WHITE HOUSE
PRESIDENT
GEORGE W. BUSH

 [CLICK HERE TO PRINT](#)

For Immediate Release
Office of the Press Secretary
June 1, 2003

President Bush, Russian President Putin Sign Treaty of Moscow

Press Availability with President Bush and President Putin - St. Petersburg, Russia

Konstantin Palace

St. Petersburg, Russia

10:07 A.M. (Local)

PRESIDENT PUTIN: We've just signed and exchanged instruments of ratification of the Russian-U.S. treaty on strategic reductions. The treaty has come into force. Yet again, we've demonstrated that the United States and Russia are two champions of the mutually advantageous cooperation on the basis of partnership, openness, and transparency.

Such a declaration is also conducive to greater strategic stability and international security. Having committed themselves to reduce their strategic capabilities by a factor of three, our two countries reiterated that they continue on the course of strategic reduction and improvement of stability.

The strategic reduction treaty also improves the regime of nonproliferation. And this is all the more appropriate in the context of the fight against international terrorism, the terrorists who are trying to acquire all kinds of weapons security, including weapons of mass destruction, to pursue their goals. We now must work on the implementation of that treaty.

The bilateral implementation commission will be established. The already existing bilateral mechanism between Russia and the United States will continue their work on the widest possible agenda of interaction, including strategic weapons, nonproliferation and missile defense. The role of instructions have been made to our experts of the two countries in accordance with the joint statements reached between the two countries on new

	VIDEO Multimedia
	President's Remarks
	 view  listen



and continued strategic partnership.

Our meeting between the President of the United States and myself is taking place at a very crucial juncture of the development of the world, where very dangerous and complex events develop. This current summit meeting yet again confirmed the fact that there is no alternative for the cooperation between Russia and the United States, both in terms of ensuring our domestic national agendas and in terms of cooperation for the sake of enhanced international strategic stability.

We agreed with the President to continue our efforts in terms of enhancing international stability, fight against terrorism, and ensuring better strategic stability. We also agreed to continue our bilateral cooperation in the area of economy and other fields.

Of course, we are aware of the questions being raised as to whether the relations between the United States and Russia will withstand the test of time. Today, we reiterated, together with President Bush, our resolve to continue with our strategic partnership for the benefit of our nations and the entire world. I must say that the fundamentals between the United States and Russia turned out to be stronger than the forces and events that tested it.

President Bush and I formulated instructions that cover the specific and practical aspects of furtherance of the dialogue in all areas of our comprehensive agenda. We agreed to expand our communication channels, including through our presidential administrations and other agencies. We also discussed economic issues. Our experts are in contact while discussing these issues and we will facilitate such contacts and discussions.

The task here is quite clear. What we want is to create a solid economic basis for the continued political dialogue and cooperation. We discussed the need to improve and establish an appropriate investment climate, and improve our cooperation in the international organizations, including economic organizations. Space remains the vital part of our cooperation, and we have confirmed this fact in our joint statement.

Summing up, I would like to stress that the relations between the United States and Russia is not an isolated, but global political event and phenomenon. It is important that this cooperation serves bringing together the world community in the face of global threats. And in conclusion, I would like to say that the nature of our conversation was quite frank and quite informative and comprehensive.

I would like to thank President Bush for coming to Russia and to St. Petersburg, especially in these festive days in St. Petersburg. For me, personally, this is a special sign and I am very appreciative of that. Thank you.

PRESIDENT BUSH: I'm honored to be here, Mr. President, and I'm honored to be with my good friend,



Vladimir Putin. This is the third time I've been to this beautiful city, and I want to congratulate you on a successful 300th anniversary celebration.

Last night's celebrations were fantastic. It was a beautiful evening. Today we mark an important achievement in the relations between the United States and Russia. President Putin and I have just exchanged instruments of the ratification for the Treaty of Moscow, which will reduce both our nuclear arsenals to the lowest level in decades. This treaty reflects the new strategic relationship that is emerging between our nations.

This treaty was founded on mutual respect and a common commitment to a more secure world. We are working closely to confront the challenges of our time. Both of our countries have suffered greatly at the hands of terror, and our governments are taking actions against this threat.

We are going to win the war on terror by cooperation, as well as providing security and hope for innocent people. That's why I support the goals of ending the fighting and suffering in Chechnya and reaching a lasting political settlement in that region.

The United States and Russia are also determined to meet the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction and the means to deliver them. We strongly urge North Korea to visibly, verifiably and irreversibly dismantle its nuclear weapons program. We are concerned about Iran's advanced nuclear program and urge Iran to comply in full with its obligations under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.



President Putin and I intend to strengthen our own cooperation on missile defense, which is essential to the security of both our nations. The United States appreciates Russia's recent support for lifting U.N. sanctions on Iraq, and we both agreed that the United Nations must play a vital role in Iraq's reconstruction. We discussed ways we can work together to help build a better future for the people of Iraq.

President Putin and I also discussed the growing economic relationship between our countries. And these ties will expand significantly as Russia opens to the world economy and qualifies for membership in the World Trade Organization. I assured the President that I will continue to work with Congress and firmly committed to remove Russia from the provisions of the Jackson-Vanik amendment. The United States and Russia are working together to ensure that Russia's energy sector can fulfill its potential in world energy markets.

Our relationship is broad. We greatly appreciate Russia's support of the International Space Station following the loss of our space shuttle Columbia. We are committed to continue to work together for the good of the world.

President Putin and I have agreed to expand and strengthen high-level contacts and communications

between our two governments. I invited the President to come to the United States for a visit in September to visit at Camp David.

In a recent address to the Russian Duma, President Putin committed to working for a sustainable democracy in Russia where human, political, and civil rights will be fully ensured. That is the vision of a strong leader. With that vision, there's no question in my mind that Russia will fulfill its potential for greatness. And as you do so, Mr. President, you'll have the friendship of the United States. Thank you.

MODERATOR: Two questions on each side. The first question goes to the U.S. side.

Q Thank you. Mr. President, are there any new developments in the search for weapons of mass destruction in Iraq? Have any actual weapons been found? And to both of you leaders, can you say, do you see eye-to-eye on Iraq now, and its oil?

PRESIDENT BUSH: The first part of your question is that -- is whether or not the weapons of mass destruction question. Here's what -- we've discovered a weapons system, biological labs, that Iraq denied she had, and labs that were prohibited under the U.N. resolutions.

Vladimir can speak to the issue of the future of Iraq, at least his opinion of the future. But my opinion is, is that we must work together to improve the lives of the Iraqi citizens, that we must cooperate closely to make sure that the Iraqi infrastructure is in place so that the Iraqi citizens can leave decently.

And as to the energy sector, the Iraqi people will make the decision which is in their best interest. Russia has had a long history of involvement in Iraq, and the Iraqi authorities, when they are firmly in place, will make the decision based upon that experience and based upon their country's best interests.

PRESIDENT PUTIN: As you are aware, Russia has voted in favor of the latest U.N. resolution on Iraq. It didn't abstain, it didn't vote against it. We view it as a serious step forward in working and practical terms on these issues, including within the United Nations, and also, of course, together with the United States.

I must admit, our experts worked quite well and arrived at a solution acceptable to all. I do believe that the cooperation will continue to expand and develop, including in the area of disarmament. But we also believe that we must go on in our relationship. And we must also continue thinking in these terms, also including as regards Iraq. I am in absolute solidarity with what President Bush has said in terms of letting the people of Iraq decide their own destiny and assisting them in achieving better and more honorable conditions of living.

Incidentally, the resolution also contains language devoted to the future development within Iraq. Indeed, Russian companies have a wealth of experience operating in Iraq. And we intend to continue our cooperation in this area, with Iraq and in Iraq, and including with international community, making available to the international community all our expertise, experience and resources. We cannot exclude that our companies will be operational in Iraq; it will all depend on its internal development, including within the framework of oil-for-food program.

As for the future and the future development of investment projects, well, indeed, this is a matter for the future and for our future cooperation with all the international community, with our U.S. friends and, of course, with the future authorities in Iraq.

Q First question is for two Presidents. Did the difference between Russia and United States weaken the relationship and cooperation between the two countries? And the question to President Bush is whether the United States will continue to act in such a manner as it acted in Iraq, by going around the United Nations?

PRESIDENT BUSH: Well, first of all, I don't think we went around the United Nations. I remind you we had what's called Resolution 1441. We worked through the United Nations. As a matter of fact, I think this experience will make our relationship stronger, not weaker. As we go forward, we will show the world that friends can disagree, move beyond disagreement and work in a very constructive and important way to maintain the peace.

PRESIDENT PUTIN: Strange and it may sound, but during despite all the differences between our two countries around Iraq, we did not only manage to preserve and maintain our personal relationship, but also to preserve our mutual cooperation and interaction between our two countries, and even strengthen it.

Given all the difficulty of the situation, we were trying to tread very carefully and to cherish and preserve both international aspect to our cooperation and personal aspect to our interaction and contacts. I saw it done by President Bush in a very extremely professional manner with great respect of the opinion of the others. I was trying to do the same. And today's meeting is a proof of the fact that we have succeeded in that.

Q Mr. President, you mentioned the Iranian nuclear program. Were you able to persuade President Putin to stop assistance to Iran's nuclear program, and how big a threat is Iran?

PRESIDENT BUSH: Russia and the United States have mutual concerns about the advanced Iranian nuclear program. We understand the consequences of Iran having a nuclear weapon. And therefore, we want to work together, as well as with the IAEA, to insist that they not have a nuclear weapon. And I appreciate Vladimir Putin's understanding of the issue and his willingness to work with me and others to solve this potential problem.

PRESIDENT PUTIN: I'll add a few words if I may.

PRESIDENT BUSH: Sure.

PRESIDENT PUTIN: The positions of Russia and the United States on the issue are much closer than they seem. We need no convincing about the fact that the weapons of mass destruction proliferation should be checked and prevented throughout the world. It is true not only with regard to Iran, but also with regard to other regions of the world. We have full understanding on this with President Bush, similar to our mutual understanding of many other international development problems.

We have many points of coincidence of our views on many issues. And it is precisely these things that enable me to call President Bush my friend, not only personally because personally I do like him a lot but as my counterpart and the President of a friendly nation.

To repeat, we have many points on which we see eye-to-eye on many aspects of international development. As for Iran and I repeated that during today's meeting and discussion -- we are against using the pretext of nuclear weapon program of Iran as a leverage in as an instrument of unfair competition against us. And we will continue working together with all, including the United States, with the view to preventing proliferation of the weapons of mass destruction anywhere in the world, including, of course, in Iran.

Q First of all, this is a question directed to President Putin. Do you believe that there are any questions that remain that are irresolvable? And what can we do more together, more cooperatively, in international way, to combat terrorism?

PRESIDENT PUTIN: I don't even think that we have ever had any insurmountable problems that cannot be overcome. There are always problems. They become more or less visible or obvious; much depends on us as to how we address those problems and issues. The most important thing is the presence or absence of a will to address those. President Bush and I do have such a will. And we will do our best to achieve such a state where the points of coincidence would grow in number, and we will have fewer points of divergence and problems and issues of content. And this trend will become even more efficient and effective should we have assistance and a helping hand from the mass media.
(Laughter.)

Thank you.

END 10:40 A.M. (L)

Return to this article at:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/06/20030601-2.html>



CLICK HERE TO PRINT