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Joint Statement by the Presidents of the Russian Federation and the United States of America

April 25, 2005, marks the 60th anniversary of the meeting of Soviet and U.S. troops at the River Elbe. Our nations will always remember the handshake that made history at the Elbe, which became one of the most vivid symbols that our countries were comrades-in-arms in fighting together against Nazi tyranny, oppression, and aggression. We admire the courage and gallant deeds of the soldiers from the countries of the anti-Hitler coalition. We will never forget their sacrifice for our common victory. The past 60 years have witnessed reconciliation in Europe, the overcoming of the Cold War legacy, the fall of barriers that divided peoples and nations, the growth of prosperity, and the advancement of freedom and democracy. In the new century, new threats to the security of our countries have arisen, including terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. But there are also increased opportunities for building a lasting peace based on law and the common values of freedom and democracy. While Russia and the United States are building a closer partnership, the meeting at the Elbe reminds us of the enormous advantages that we can provide for both our countries and for the rest of the world when we are united in dealing with global challenges and take advantage of the opportunities before us for progress and cooperation.

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