

Remarks by President Obama and President Putin of Russia After Bilateral Meeting

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PRESIDENT PUTIN: (As interpreted.) I've had detailed talks with the President of the United States on almost all the matters. We began with economy and we had detailed discussions. We've agreed to launch new mechanisms of cooperation in this domain, including at the levels of the Chairman of Government of the Russian Federation and the Vice President of the U.S.

We have spoken in detail about the matters of security -- of strategic security between the two countries and the world as such. I believe that we have an opportunity to move forward on most sensitive directions.

We also spoke about problem spots on the planet, including Syria. And, of course, our opinions do not coincide, but all of us have the intention to stop the violence in Syria, to stop the growth of victims, and to solve the situation peacefully, including by bringing the parties to the negotiations table in Geneva. We agreed to push the parties to the negotiations table.

I hope that after the elections in Iran there will be new opportunities to solve the Iranian nuclear problem. And we'll be trying to do that bilaterally and in the international negotiations process.

We also spoke about the problem of North Korea, and we agreed to emphasize our interaction on all the directions.

And I am very grateful to the U.S. President for the detailed discussion and for the frank exchange of opinions on these matters.

PRESIDENT OBAMA: Well, I had a very useful conversation with President Putin, and I began by thanking him again for the cooperation that they've provided in dealing with the tragedy of the bombing at the Boston Marathon. We have a shared interest in countering terrorist violence, and we are continuing to strengthen our cooperation on this issue, including as we welcome Russia hosting the Winter Olympics in Sochi.

As President Putin indicated, we had extensive discussions about how we can further deepen our economic and commercial relationships. With Russian accession to the WTO, the removal of Jackson-Vanick, I think we're poised to increase both trade and investment between our two countries. And that can create jobs and business opportunities, both for Russians and Americans.

Our discussions on North Korea and Iran were very productive, and we both agreed to consult closely on the North Korean issue. And in Iran, we both accept -- expressed cautious optimism that with a new election there, we may be able to move forward on a dialogue that allows us to resolve the problems with Iran's nuclear program.

And with respect to Syria, we do have differing perspectives on the problem, but we share an interest in reducing the violence; securing chemical weapons and ensuring that they're neither used nor are they subject to proliferation; and that we want to try to resolve the issue through political means, if possible. And so we have instructed our teams to continue to work on the potential of a Geneva follow-up to the first meeting.

And finally, we had a discussion about the fact as the two nuclear superpowers, we have a special obligation to try to continue to reduce tensions, to build on the work that we did with New START, and to lead the world in both nuclear security issues and proliferation issues.

And one of the concrete outcomes of this meeting is that we'll be signing here the continuation of the cooperation that was first established through the Nunn-Lugar program to counter potential threats of proliferation and to enhance nuclear security.

And this I think is an example of the kind of constructive, cooperative relationship that moves us out of a Cold War mindset into the realm where, by working together, we not only increase security and prosperity for the Russian and American people, but also help lead the world to a better place.

And finally, we compared notes on President Putin's expertise in judo and my declining skills in basketball. (Laughter.) And we both agreed that as you get older it takes more time to recover.

PRESIDENT PUTIN: (As interpreted.) The President wants to relax me with his statement of age. (Laughter.)

PRESIDENT OBAMA: Thank you. Thank you very much, everybody.

END

8:45 P.M. BST