

economy into the global economic system based on markets is a very sound thing.

We had great, long talks about what could be done and what kind of assistance the United States and others could provide to recognize that there are certain dislocations which come from these changes, so that the people of Russia will know that there is an effort being made to deal with those problems. But I also have to tell you that I believe that the people will begin to benefit in ways that they could not see perhaps last year, in the coming year when we have more trade and more investment. And as people around the world and in the United States, in particular, see that the President is serious about this, I think the benefits will begin to flow.

That, plus constructing the kind of social support system in job retraining, unemployment, all of those things that just have to be put together and are not easy to put together when you don't have one, I think these things will help a lot.

The other point I'd like to make to you, sir, is that from my point of view, President Yeltsin has been unfairly criticized in some quarters for his relationship with the United States. The implication that somehow we have tried to direct the course of Russian policy is just not accurate and not true. The people of Russia have to define their own future. All I have tried to do is to say that as long as we share the same values and the same vision, as long as we share a dream of political freedom and economic freedom and respect for our neighbors, I want to be an equal partner, because I believe this is a very great nation and that the world, the whole world, and particularly Europe has a real interest in seeing Russia succeed, in seeing this reform movement succeed.

So I think our relationships in that sense have been quite correct all along, and some have sought to mischaracterize them in a way that I think is not accurate. I come here as a friend and a partner, not—we have our problems at home, too—every country does. The United States has no interest in charting Russia's future; that's for Russia to do. But we can be partners, and we should be.

Denuclearization Agreement

Q. My question—and I refer it to both Presidents—during the Brussels visit, the Russian party requested the United States and NATO

to make a greater influence on Ukraine concerning strategic arms. Have your expectations come true, given the agreements you've signed in Moscow?

President Yeltsin. Our expectations came perfectly true, promptly. We've signed an agreement with Ukraine to eliminate all of Ukraine's nuclear weapons. Their nuclear weapons will be shipped to Russia for destruction. And of course, with respect to uranium, we need to provide some compensation. Instead of weapons-grade uranium, we need to provide them with fuel-grade uranium. And we are in agreement.

We will continue to process—with U.S. assistance—we will continue to process weapons-grade uranium into fuel uranium. And since we've signed an agreement on uranium today, it appears to me that today our agreement with—the three-party agreement with Ukraine signed by the three Presidents is a history-making decision. And I believe that there is a great role that has been played by Russia and the United States and personally by the U.S. President Bill Clinton.

President Clinton. I am fully satisfied with the agreement. I want to compliment again President Kravchuk for seeing what I believe are the real security interests of his country. I think his country is stronger for signing this agreement. It will certainly be more economically powerful in the years to come as more investors are more interested in supporting the decision to be non-nuclear.

And I want to support and compliment President Yeltsin. The United States, I believe, played a very valuable role in this, but it was President Yeltsin's suggestion to me that we set up this trilateral process. I have enjoyed working in it. I worked hard on this. Vice President Gore worked hard on this, and of course, the rest of our team did. And I assure you that I intend to maintain an intense personal involvement in this whole area.

I think, by the way, a strong and an independent Ukraine is critical to this whole development of an integrated Europe that we are working on in our partnership here.

Russian Reform

Q. A question for both Presidents. President Yeltsin, you have made a commitment today and President Clinton has agreed and has urged you to continue the commitment to the economic reforms. It will take a while, though, to create