

I'm very proud and pleased that President Yeltsin decided to participate in the Partnership For Peace and work for an integrated Europe, that he signed the historic accord with President Kravchuk and with me today to eliminate over 1,800 nuclear warheads. These are hopeful signs and, I believe, signs that indicate you can make a future that is different from the past.

Yours is a history of heroism and of persistent hope. The question now is, can we make the economic decisions, the political decisions that foster hope? You will have to decide these things. I'm amused when I come here in the spirit of genuine partnership and respect and some people say, "Well, the United States is trying to dictate our course." Nothing could be further from the truth. Believe me, my friends, it's all we can do to deal with our own problems. We don't have time to try to dictate your course. But the course you take will affect us, and so we want you to make decisions that are best for you.

And I will close as I began: Will you define your future greatness in terms that were relevant to the past or terms that will shape the future? This is a crossroad and a difficult one. But the younger generations of Russians will look back on this time with either gratitude or regret, depending on how those questions are answered, the economic, the political, the military questions.

I believe you will choose the future. After all, Russia did not get to this point by making all that many wrong decisions in the past. And every nation makes a few mistakes. There are few people anywhere that have more knowledge of history, both positive and negative, that have more reason to hope for the future than you do. I know the present is difficult, but if you make the right decisions, if you choose hope over fear, then the future will reward your courage and your vision.

Thank you very much.

[At this point, the television station took a commercial break.]

*The President.* Now we're going to take some questions from the audience. And what I will do is, we have also some remote sites, so I'll take one from the right, one from the left, I'll do the screen and come back, okay? I can't see so well, so—

Q. Do I need to speak Russian or English?

*The President.* Speak English. And then they can listen to the translation, and I'll listen to you.

Q. I am a student of Moscow University. Mr. Clinton, what do you think about the future education in Russia, what it needs to be, how it needs to be done, and what changes are needed?

*The President.* Well, I'm not an expert in your education system, although I have spent a little time trying to find out about it, because in my career in the U.S., my major area of interest was education. I think first you have a very strong basic system. Virtually all your people are literate. An enormous number of your people speak more than one language. And you have very strong technical programs.

I would say you need to develop some of your educational programs for the professions that manage market economies. Do you have enough people who can run things in a very rapidly changing world? I think there are some gaps here, in other words, in the kinds of training you have for the kind of economy you're trying to develop. And I think some studies should be done about that, and you should provide those education programs. But you're actually quite fortunate in having a very literate society and a very strong background in the arts, the humanities, and in science and technology.

Keep in mind one other thing. In most modern market economies, the average person, even if he or she stays with the same employer, will change the nature of their work seven or eight times in a lifetime. So it's impossible to give someone even a university degree that answers all the questions they will face in the workplace forever. So you have to develop systems of learning for a lifetime. And the most important thing is that you just get a good basic foundation that enables you to think well, to solve problems and to change, to learn as new things come along.

Q. I am a first-year student at the department of foreign languages at Moscow University. First, I'd like to—

*The President.* Well, I'd say you're a successful student. No accent. [Laughter]

Q. I'd like to thank you for what you think about our future in economics and in democracy. But I'd like to remind you that—how I see tomorrow of our country is the spiritual power. Some astrologists say that Russia will soon become the center of everything because