

her. So I thought I would introduce her, and I thank you for that.

Is someone going to ask a—St. Petersburg, do you have a question?

Q. Very recently, the political and economic assistance was very closely linked to human rights. And why, at the present time, does America help the Baltic States in spite of the repression against Russians in that country?

*The President.* Which country?

Q. Baltics.

*The President.* First of all—

Q. I'm talking about all three Baltic countries, Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia.

*The President.* Well, first of all, in Lithuania, your government, the Russian Government, withdrew the troops because it was satisfied with the relationship between the two countries.

There are still outstanding questions with Estonia and Latvia. An international group from the Council on Security and Cooperation in Europe, CSCE, is now in Latvia studying the situation. And we have made it clear—I have personally met with the leaders of all of the Baltic States, and I have said we were for the independence and the freedom of the Baltic nations, but we expect the Russian minorities to be protected. And if we have evidence that they are being abused, it will affect our policies toward them.

So I assure you, sir, that—I am waiting for the report right now on Latvia by the unbiased, sort of third-party source. And if there is evidence that they are abusing the rights of the Russian minorities, then I will act accordingly.

I don't think we can have a double standard. We can't have one standard for the United States and Russia and say if you're a smaller country you can do things that bigger countries shouldn't be permitted to do.

Q. Mr. President, will America give strong financial support to the businessman who would like to invest in the economy of Russia?

*The President.* We have—where is our support for them, is that what you said? We have some institutions, the Export-Import Bank and the office of private investment, which help private investors to invest in other countries. But the main thing we are trying to do now, we need much more—there should be much more American investment in Russia.

Two of my Cabinet members met with the American business community here yesterday morning. And in March the Secretary of Com-

merce is coming here with a large group of American businessmen to encourage them to invest. We have also taken all the duties, all the extra taxes off of nearly 5,000 Russian products which can now be sold without handicap into the United States.

So we are trying to figure out not only how we can invest more here but how we can buy more of your products. And in the end, that is much more important to your economic future than any direct Government aid, because in our economy there is so much more money in the private sector than in the Government sector. So we are working on that. And I hope in March when the American Investment and Trade Mission comes here, it gets a lot of publicity and that they get a chance to meet a lot of people and to learn a lot about how we can do that.

If they need help with the financing for investment, we actually have institutions to do that also to help them move—

Q. In your speech you mentioned about your intention to support, to protect full Russian democracy. Is it the same for you, Russian democracy and the President Boris Yeltsin? That's the first part of the question. And the second one: How far the United States is going to go to protect Russian democracy?

*The President.* The answer to your first question is that—is Russian democracy the same thing as Boris Yeltsin? No. Not now, because you also have a democratic constitution that the people have voted for and a democratically elected Parliament that the people have voted for. But before the last election, you only had one person who had ever been voted on in a free election by all of the people of Russia, the President.

Now, do I intend to work with President Yeltsin as long as he embodies Russian democracy and as long as he is the choice of the majority of the people of Russia to be the President? Of course; there is no other President. There may be some people in Russia who wish someone else were the President of the United States, but I'm the only U.S. President you have right now. You see? That's not the same thing as saying that I'm all there is to American democracy; I'm not.

So what we wish to do—yesterday evening, Ambassador Pickering, our American Ambassador, and Mrs. Pickering, who are both here, held a reception for me at the American Ambas-