

sador's residence, Spaso House, and we had a lot of the leaders of Parliament, a lot of the leaders of the regional political groups, a lot of people from the private sector, some of whom are from different political groups, there to meet me. Because now democracy is three things, it's the elected President, the constitution, and the Parliament, plus people who have been elected in various ways throughout the country, plus people who are in free associations, like labor movements.

Now, one thing democracy is, beyond majority rule, is respect for minority rights, for individual freedoms, like the freedom of speech and the right to vote, even if you don't vote the way people like. So when you said, how far would I go to protect Russian democracy, I want an equal partnership here. I don't want to have any dictatorial or control in Russia. I just want to be an equal partner with a strong partner. And I will be an equal partner as long as there is democracy, which is, majority rule under the constitution, and respect for minority rights and minority interests.

Q. Mr. President, what do you think is the main difference between Russia and the United States?

*The President.* I think the main difference between Russia and the United States today is that we are the oldest, now the longest lasting continuous democracy on the face of the Earth, and you are one of the youngest. We have now been a free democracy for over 200 years. And that affects the way we are and the way we deal with things.

On the other hand, we have a lot of problems in common, and we have a lot of good things in common. We are much more—our people have deep roots in the soil. We're much more likely to be much more sort of open and friendly and gregarious in a certain way than many people in other countries. We also, unfortunately, have a lot of the same problems. You are now dealing with a crime problem, and my country has one of the worst crime problems in the world.

So we have a lot in common, our two peoples do. And we have always pretty much gotten along, except for the tensions caused when we had different political systems before and after World War II. But I would say the biggest difference flows out of the fact that we have had the benefit of being a democracy for 200 years, and you are one of the youngest.

Q. We had just one question. Right next to me is a teacher. She is running student exchange programs.

Q. I've been doing this for long, but usually these are one-sided exchanges. Does Mr. President think that American students would have something to learn from Russia, as well?

*The President.* Absolutely. Yes. First of all, I'm glad you have a sister city relationship with Philadelphia. It is a wonderful, wonderful city. They also voted for me for President. But the answer to your question is, definitely. I came here in the first week of 1970 as a student, on my own when I was living in England because I wanted to learn about this country and because I believed that we ought to be friends and because I was so worried about what then seemed to be the differences between our two nations and the fact that we could blow up the world almost by accident. So yes, I think we should send large numbers of American students here. I think we have a lot to learn.

Keep in mind, if we were having this—if Boris Yeltsin came to the United States and did what I'm doing here, very few of the students could stand up and speak to him in Russian as you are speaking to me in English. We have a lot to learn from you, and I would like more of our students to come here.

Yes. Yes. This is our youngest questioner so far. How old are you, young man?

Q. I'm 13 years old.

*The President.* Thirteen, not 30. [Laughter]

Q. I saw your picture shaking hands with President Kennedy, and I'd like to ask you how old were you and when you got your idea to become a President of the United States?

*The President.* Come here. Come up here. Come shake hands with me, and maybe you'll be President of Russia some day.

I was 16 when I shook hands with President Kennedy, and it was about that time that I knew I wanted to go into public service. But of course, at that time I had no idea that I could ever be elected President or that I would ever have a chance to. But sometime when I was a fairly young man, I decided that I would work hard and that if I ever got an opportunity that I would try to become President.

Probably our greatest President was Abraham Lincoln, who was the President of the United States during the Civil War in the mid-1800's. And when he was a young man, Abraham Lincoln wrote in his diary, "I will work and get