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Press Statements following Meeting with President of the United States Barack Obama

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA BARACK OBAMA: Let me just make a brief comment. I am very grateful to President Medvedev for taking the time to visit with me today. I'm particularly gratified because prior to the meeting our respective teams had worked together and had developed a series of approaches to areas of common interest that I think present great promise.

As I've said in the past, I think that over the last several years the relationship between our two countries has been allowed to drift. And what I believe we've begun today is a very constructive dialogue that will allow us to work on issues of mutual interest, like the reduction of nuclear weapons and the strengthening of our nonproliferation treaties; our mutual interest in dealing with terrorism and extremism that threatens both countries; our mutual interest in economic stability and restoring growth around the world; our mutual interest in promoting peace and stability in areas like the Middle East.

So I am very encouraged by the leadership of the President. I'm very grateful that he has taken the time to visit. I am especially excited about the fact that the President extended an invitation for me to visit Moscow to build on some of the areas that we discussed on today. And I have agreed to visit Moscow in July, which we both agreed was a better time than January to visit.

And my hope is that given the constructive conversations that we've had today, the joint statements that we will be issuing both on reductions of nuclear arsenals, as well as a range of other areas of interest, that what we're seeing today is the beginning of new progress in the U.S.-Russian relations. And I think that President Medvedev's leadership is -- has been critical in allowing that progress to take place.

So thank you very much.

PRESIDENT OF RUSSIA DMITRY MEDVEDEV: I would like to thank President Obama most sincerely for this chance to meet, get to know each other, share our views on the current situation in the world, talk about the values that unite us, and discuss how we see the future of Russian-American relations.

I cannot but agree that over these last years, unfortunately, our relations have encountered difficulties and, as the U.S. President just said, they were drifting in the wrong direction. Our relations were worsening, and this was not in the interests of the United States of America, nor the Russian Federation, nor indeed of the planet as a whole.

We have agreed to try to reset our relations and open a new page in our ties. This is important given our joint responsibility for the processes taking place.

Today, we discussed practically all of the issues of concern to our countries: non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, strategic offensive arms reductions, counter-terrorism issues, and the question of building a more stable global economic order, and this demonstrates just how important it is for us to talk, and just how important are the decisions we reach.

This is only the start of our discussions, but I think that today's meeting has already shown that there are far more issues that unite us than issues that take us in different directions.
I agree with President Obama that our teams have done some good work. The two declarations that we adopted today show progress in the areas we have been talking about. The declaration on strategic offensive weapons and the declaration on the general framework for Russian-U.S. relations reflect our current positions, and it is important that they have been approved.

I will be very pleased to see the U.S. President and his team in Russia this July. July is the warmest month, and I hope that this warmth will extend to the talks that we will have. We have agreed on a number of specific matters that we could work on in preparation for this meeting, and I hope that we will not lose time now and will indeed get this work underway as was discussed today.

We will continue our contacts, all the more so as we discussed today not just important international issues but also bilateral matters. We even talked a bit about legal education, not perhaps everyone’s favourite subject, but it can actually make a very useful contribution to developing our bilateral relations, for it turns out that in our time we studied the same books.

I have an optimistic view of the future of Russian-U.S. relations after this meeting. I would like to thank once again my colleague, President Obama.