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Speech of Russian Federation President V. V. Putin to Representatives of the American Public and U.S. Politicians, November 13, 2001, Russian Embassy in Washington⁸

It is of fundamental importance that our countries' collaboration in combatting terrorism not remain merely an episode in the history of Russian-U.S. relations, but become the start of long-term partnership and cooperation. Today we must once more look back at the history of our relations. "History," said our great thinker, the Russian historian Vladimir Klyuchevskiy, "is not a teacher, but a supervisor. She does not teach anything, but only punishes us for not knowing our lessons."

After the Second World War, the ties between our countries developed differently. Nonetheless, we achieved the main aim in the end: our countries have ceased to be afraid of each other. This opened the possibility of freeing ourselves also from what, for decades, aroused horror in the whole world's peoples: the arsenals of nuclear and other forms of weapons of mass destruction. Their current quantitative level is not at all in keeping with the current world situation or the nature of today's threats.

I did not doubt that on this issue we should encounter the understanding of the United States; and President Bush's statement today confirms this. That is why Russia is stating its readiness to proceed with significant reductions of strategic arms. That is why today we are proposing a radical program of further reductions of SOAs--at the least, by a factor of three--to the minimum level necessary to maintain strategic equilibrium in the world. We no longer need to frighten each other in order to arrive at agreements. Security is established, not by weapons and mountains of metal, but by the political will of states and of the leaders of these states.

Yes, today the world is still far from having international relations built exclusively upon trust. Unfortunately. That is why it is so important today to rely upon the existing foundation of treaties and agreements in the field of disarmament and arms control.

⁸ Official U.S. translation of the Russian Federation Ministry of Foreign Affairs transcript of President Putin's November 13, 2001, speech at the Russian Embassy in Washington. For clarity, only the text relevant to the Moscow Treaty is included.