

Legge Brady

Int. Coms Aug - 11<sup>o</sup> 4<sup>o</sup>

T-5102<sup>u</sup>

September 1, 1998

M. 61/A

Feb. 199

01-1161 A con 1

## REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT TO THE NEXT GENERATION OF RUSSIAN LEADERS

University Auditorium, Moscow University of International Relations, Moscow, Russia

America considers our relationship with Russia to be important. It is a relationship of friendship, of mutual responsibility, and of commitment to the future. We are all honored to be here today, and we thank you for your welcome.

On this first day of school, across both our countries, students are resuming their studies, including their study of history. At this critical, surely historic, moment, let me start with a few words about what I believe the past can teach us as we, and especially as the Russian people, face the challenges of the present and the future.

Two hundred and twenty-two years ago, we Americans declared our freedom from the tyranny of King George of England. We set out to govern ourselves. The road has not often -- or certainly not always -- been easy. First, we fought a very long war for independence. Then it took more than 10 years to devise a Constitution that worked. Then in 1814, we went to war with England again. They invaded our capital city and burned the President's house, the White House. Then in 1861, we began our bloodiest war ever, a civil war, fought over the conflicts of slavery. It almost divided our country forever, but instead we were reunited and we abolished slavery.

In the 1930s, before World War II, our country sank into an enormous depression with 25 percent of our people unemployed, and more than one-third of our people living in poverty. Well, you know the rest. We were allies in World War II, and after World War II we were adversaries. But it was a time of great prosperity for the American people, even though there ~~were~~ tense and difficult moments in the last 50 years. <sup>have been</sup>

The larger point I want to make as Russia goes through this time of extreme difficulty is that over the life of our democracy we have had many intense, even bitter, debates about what are the proper relations between people of different races or religions or backgrounds; over the gap between rich and poor; over crime and punishment; even over war and peace. We Americans have fought and argued with each other -- as we do even today. But we have preserved our freedom by remembering the fundamental values enshrined in our Constitution and our Declaration of Independence; by continuing to respect the dignity of every man, woman, and child; to tolerate those with different ideas and beliefs than our own; to demand equality of opportunity; to give everyone a chance to make the most of his or her life.

Russia's great ally in World War II, our President, Franklin Roosevelt, said that democracy is a never-ending <sup>search</sup> seeking for better things. For Americans, that means, in good times and bad, <sup>that</sup> we seek to widen the circle of opportunity, to deepen the meaning of our freedom, to build a stronger national community.

Now, what <sup>has</sup> ~~does~~ all that got to do with Russia in 1998? Your history is much longer than ours, and so rich <sup>with</sup> ~~with~~ accomplishment -- from military victories over Napoleon and Hitler; to the literary <sup>m</sup>

11

11 - 1.0

achievements of Pushkin, Tolstoy, Chekhov, Pasternak, and so many others; to greater achievements in art, music, dance, medicine, science, space flight.

Yet for all your rich, long history, it was just seven years ago that Russia embarked on its own quest for democracy, liberty, and free markets -- just seven years ago -- a journey that is uniquely your own and must be guided by your own vision of Russia's democratic destiny.

Now you are at a critical point on your journey. There are severe economic pressures and serious hardships which I discussed in my meetings with your leaders this morning. The stakes are enormous. Every choice Russia makes today may have consequences for years and years to come. Given the facts before you, I have to tell you that I do not believe there are any painless solutions; and, indeed, an attempt to avoid difficult solutions may only prolong and worsen the present challenges.

First, let me make a couple of points. The experience of our country over the last several years, and especially in the last six years, proves that the challenges of the global economy are very great, but so are its rewards. The Russian people have met tremendous challenges in the past. You can do it here. You can build a prosperous future. You can build opportunity and jobs for all the people of this land who are willing to work for them, if you stand strong and complete -- not run from, but complete the transformation you began seven years ago.

The second point I want to make is the rest of the world has a very large stake in your success. Today, about a quarter of the world's people are struggling with economic challenges that are profound -- the people of your country; the people in Japan, who have had no economic growth for five years -- it's still a very wealthy country, but when they don't have any growth it's harder for all other countries that trade with them who aren't so wealthy to grow -- other countries in Asia. And now we see when there are problems in Russia or in Japan or questions about the economy of China, you see all across the world the stock market in Latin America drops; you see the last two days we've had big drops in the American stock market.

What does that say? Well, among other things, it says, whether we like it or not, we must build the future together, because, whether we like it or not, we are going to be affected by what we do. We will be affected by what you do; you will be affected by what we do. We might as well do it together and make the most of it.