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It's great to be here with my friend and partner Senator Lugar who has worked so effectively for so long to serve his country by making the world more secure. I'd also like to thank Ambassador Burns who is such an effective steward of the U.S. – Russian relationship at an important time for both of our countries. It's an honor to be here again in Russia, and particularly here at Spaso House, to join all of you in marking 200 years of our bilateral relationship.

My essential message tonight is that U.S.–Russian cooperation and leadership is vital to the security of the United States, the security of Russia and the security of the world. I believe that the world's best chance for peace will only come when we have the most talented minds from the most powerful countries working together to advance our common interests. In our modern age, considering the explosion of technology, know how and terrorism, any plan for global peace and security that does not feature the Russians and the Americans working together is not likely to be successful for either of us or the world.

For the first one hundred years of U.S.-Russian relations, what happened over here didn't much matter over there – and what happened over there didn't make much difference over here. We were not competing for scarce resources. We were not rivals for influence. We weren't big trade partners.

Then, in 20th century, our interests clashed, then intersected during World War II and then clashed again during the Cold War and intersected again at its conclusion. During World War II, even though there were huge differences between us, we recognized that the danger posed to us by the external threat was much greater than the threat we posed to each other. We realized that the best way to fight it was together. We did, and we won.

During the long Cold War, U.S. and Russian interests clashed -- any gain for Moscow was seen as a loss to Washington; any gain for Washington was seen as a loss to Moscow, the exception being arms control agreements and confidence building measures which were deemed essential even in an era of confrontation.

A little more than fifteen years ago, we ended decades of hostility. We hoped and believed that we were coming closer together, but we also knew that whether or not we developed common interests and values, we were facing a common threat – the threat of a catastrophe, stemming from the spread of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons, materials and know-how to other countries and to terrorist groups. Together we launched the U.S.-Russian Cooperative Threat Reduction program.

In 15 years, there has been amazing progress on that front. I salute the Russians and Americans -- some of them here tonight -- who saw the dramatic and historic change taking place and understood that there would be no real security for Russia or the United States, unless we worked together again. I particularly thank those Russian patriots from the shipyards, the missile fields, the bomber bases, the storage facilities, the transportation arena, the laboratories and the military bases who rolled up their sleeves and worked diligently with their former adversary in successfully implementing this cooperative program.

So we have proved more than once that we can come together to defeat a common threat if the threat is grave and if the threat to both of us is greater than the threat we pose to each other, and if cooperation clearly improves our chance of winning. I believe that we are facing another such a global threat today.

The goal of our respective governments to protect our citizens from catastrophe has not changed, but the means of protecting our citizens has changed dramatically. I know of no other example in history where two great rival powers moved almost overnight from an environment where their security depended on confrontation with each other, to an environment where their security depended on cooperation. It is not easy to come to terms with such a change, particularly for those of us in both countries who have been through the Cold War.

President Bush has repeatedly said that it is our highest priority to keep nuclear weapons out of terrorist hands. President Putin has made the same point many times. President Putin recently said: “If these weapons fall into the hands of terrorists, the consequences would be simply disastrous.”

Both presidents have also talked about the importance of cooperation against the nuclear threat. Last February, in a speech at a security conference in Munich, in a part of the speech little reported in the United States, President Putin said:

“I consider that Russia and the USA are objectively and equally interested in strengthening the regime of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their deployment. It is precisely our countries, with leading nuclear and missile capabilities that must act as leaders in developing new, stricter, non-proliferation measures.”

The statements of our two presidents make it clear: We understand the threat, and we know cooperation is required. Both presidents have made clear with their words that partnership is required.

Partnership is a word that has been used so much, and practiced so little, that the very sound of the word can be irritating today, when so many aspects of the US – Russian relationship today don't meet that test.

Treating someone as an equal partner means doing everything possible to study and understand their interests and doing your utmost to pursue your interests in the context of their concerns.

To protect ourselves and the world from catastrophe, the United States and Russia must go beyond cooperation and make our partnership a reality by embracing shared leadership. This requires change on the part of both our nations.

It is clear that many of the non-nuclear nations of the world will simply not fully cooperate with the United States and Russia in fighting the spread of nuclear weapons if we are not seen as carrying out our obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. As IAEA Director ElBaradei has said: "It's hard to tell people not to smoke when you have a cigarette dangling from your mouth."

If we are to do what President Putin suggests, and act as leaders in developing stricter nonproliferation measures, then one essential change is clear:

The United States and Russia must visibly and steadily reduce our reliance on nuclear weapons. Neither nation will do it unless *both* do it – and that is shared leadership.

Today, as I view the world, the major interests of all the great powers are more aligned than at any point in modern history. We all benefit from the growth of the global economy. We all depend on healthy citizens and a healthy planet. We are all vulnerable to catastrophic terrorism.

This alignment of our interests must lead to an alignment of actions, or our vital interests will be lost in our non-vital disagreements. Without joint actions, our citizens will lose their perspective of the alignment of interests and the lack of public support for cooperative efforts will undermine even visionary political leadership.

The United States and Russia must move to shared leadership -- starting in nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction and spreading out to a wider agenda. We need to accelerate our work together to address an imperative agenda:

- 1) Reduce the number of nuclear weapons and take our nuclear arsenals off hair trigger alert.
- 2) Preserve and strengthen ironclad verification procedures and assurances for monitoring and enforcing all agreements involving weapons of mass destruction and dangerous materials.
- 3) Secure, reduce and eliminate nuclear weapons material.
- 4) Prevent any increase in the number of nuclear weapons nations.

- 5) Prevent the spread of enrichment capacity around the world and work together for a nuclear fuel assurance regime.
- 6) Relieve the regional tensions that give rise to nations seeking nuclear weapons.
- 7) Destroy chemical weapons and begin to work together on preventing infectious disease and bioterrorism.
- 8) Build energy security and combat global warming.

Last month, Henry Kissinger, George Shultz, I and others visited with President Putin at his request to discuss how to strengthen the U.S. – Russian relationship and explore areas for cooperation in both nations' interest. In the meeting with President Putin and in meetings with Minister Lavrov and former Prime Minister Primakov, we discussed both the frustrations of our current relationship and the opportunities.

Missile defense is a front burner example that is both a danger to our relationship and potentially an opportunity. The United States and Russia need to pause – take a deep breath and realize that we are at a crossroads in our strategic nuclear relationship. We could stumble to the precipice of strategic danger if we and our Russian friends play a foolish zero sum game with missile defense.

Henry Kissinger has recently described President Putin's missile defense proposal as containing "a vision of how to implement parallel strategic interests that might set a precedent for overcoming other global challenges." I agree. I believe that the United States should seriously explore President Putin's offer to work together on missile defense. If we work together to defend against nuclear attack, it would seem to logically follow that we should reduce our offensive threats to each other, including expanding warning time and getting as many weapons as possible off hair trigger alert.

In the words of an old saying, "If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together." On nuclear defense and offense, today we have an opportunity to go far together.

We have seen one century of U.S.-Russia relations in which we left each other alone. We have seen a second century in which we largely spent our talent and resources on opposing the talent and resources of the other side.

We now have an opportunity and, in my view, an obligation to discover what can be accomplished in a century of shared leadership – as the United States and Russia combine our talents and resources on behalf of a safer – healthier – more prosperous and more secure world.

The world is in a race between cooperation and catastrophe. This is a race that we must run together – that we must get others to join – and that we must win.

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