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Obama, Medvedev Talk Chicken, Eat Burgers

By The Moscow Times

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Medvedev and Obama ordering at Ray's Hell Burger in Arlington, Virginia. **Kevin Lamarque**

WASHINGTON — U.S. President Barack Obama said Thursday that the United States and Russia had reached an agreement to resume exporting U.S. poultry products to Russia and his administration would support Moscow's accession to the World Trade Organization.

"Russia belongs in the WTO," Obama told reporters at a joint news conference with President Dmitry Medvedev.

He also declared that the two countries have "succeeded in resetting" their relationship but acknowledged differences in some areas, such as Moscow's tensions with Georgia.

"We addressed those differences candidly," he said.

And Obama announced that the U.S. and Russia had agreed to expand cooperation on intelligence and the counterterrorism fight and worked on strengthening economic ties

between the nations.

The two countries also will coordinate on humanitarian aid for Kyrgyzstan, Obama said.

He joked that Twitter accounts might eliminate the need for dedicated phone lines between Russian and U.S. leaders. Medvedev joined the popular social networking program while visiting California's Silicon Valley on Wednesday.

"We may be able to finally throw away those red phones" that were designed to allow immediate contact between the Kremlin and the White House during the Cold War, Obama said as he and Medvedev stood side-by-side in the East Room after two hours of meetings — including an impromptu trip to a nearby burger joint for lunch.

Obama and Medvedev loaded up in a motorcade and took a six-minute ride to the Washington suburb of Arlington, Virginia, home to Ray's Hell Burger, before the joint news conference.

A cheer went up from customers when the presidents walked in.

Having doffed their suit jackets, Obama and Medvedev, joined by two translators, ate their hamburgers at a table in the restaurant surrounded by the regular lunch crowd.

Obama had a cheddar cheeseburger with onions, lettuce, tomato and pickles, washed down with an iced tea. Medvedev selected a cheddar cheeseburger with onions, jalapeno peppers and mushrooms. He ordered a Coca-Cola. The two split fries.

Medvedev arrived in Washington earlier Thursday for talks with Obama before the Group of 20 summit in Canada this weekend.

Later Thursday, Medvedev was to give a speech at a U.S.-Russia business forum.

(AP, Bloomberg, Reuters)

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