

# An Open Letter to U.S. President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin

Dear Presidents Trump and Putin,

April 25, 2020, marks the 75th anniversary of the momentous occasion when U.S. and Soviet forces met at the Elbe River in the city of Torgau, Germany, successfully cutting the German army in two.

The “Meeting on the Elbe” signaled the approaching end of the Nazi regime and was heralded around the world. Today, the joyfulness created by that open display of comradeship between East and West is needed more than ever.

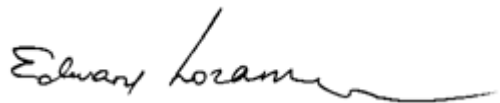
For many years, American and Russian veterans, as well as public organizations, have kept the spirit of that Elbe River linkage alive with commemorations and reunions and by erecting monuments, plaques, and statues in our two countries. The American University in Moscow, a Washington DC-based, non-profit organization, in cooperation with many American and Russian public groups, has participated in a number of these ceremonies in the U.S. and Russia, often supported by the respective embassies of these two great nations.

Next year, however, we intend to bring the ceremony back to its starting point in Torgau and the Elbe River, where we will reenact that historic moment, not only with uniformed actors, but also with some of the surviving original heroes.

The upcoming anniversary may be the last for many of the remaining veterans and witnesses of that tremendous event. Our goal is to recognize these veterans and commemorate their achievement in a way that honors them and the spirit of cooperation the Elbe River meeting represents. Their example of courage and dedication remains an inspiration to our soldiers of today.

On behalf of Organizing Committee of the Elbe River Meeting Ceremony, we invite you to join us on April 25, 2020 in Torgau, Germany, for a commemoration and wreath-laying ceremony at the monument dedicated to the troops and armies who created a moment in history that shall never be forgotten.

At the same time this event can be a great opportunity for both of you to engage in a long-awaited dialogue in view of unprecedented tensions that threaten the security of our two nations and the world.



Edward Lozansky  
President  
American University in Moscow



Yevgeny Vandalkovsky  
Chair, Department of Production  
Moscow Institute of Modern Art



*On that day, April 25, 1945 American and Russian soldiers met as comrades-in-arms, embraced each other, and exchanged buttons, stars and patches from each other's uniforms. Soviet Marshal Ivan Konev presented U.S. General Omar Bradley with his war horse, Bradley presented Konev with the Legion of Merit – and also gave him a jeep. Marshal Georgy Zhukov, the top Soviet general, awarded Supreme Allied Commander Dwight D. Eisenhower the highest honor of the Soviet Union, the Order of Victory. Eisenhower gave Zhukov the Legion of Honor.*

