

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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10/2/2018 KBH

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting with Ukrainian President Kuchma (U)

PARTICIPANTS: U.S. Participants
The President
Secretary of State Madeleine Albright
U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations
Bill Richardson
Deputy Chief of Staff to the President,
John Podesta
National Security Advisor Sandy Berger
Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott
Deputy National Security Advisor Jim
Steinberg
Ki Fort (NSC notetaker)
Peter Sedynsky (U.S. interpreter)

Ukrainian Participants
President Leonid Kuchma
Foreign Minister Hennadiy Udovenko
Ukrainian Ambassador to the United Nations
Anatoliy Zlenko
Ukrainian Ambassador to the United States
Yuriy Shcherbak
Presidential Foreign Policy
Advisor Volodymyr Ohryshko
Ukrainian Interpreter

DATE, TIME September 21, 1997, 7:00-7:10 p.m.
AND PLACE: Waldorf Astoria Hotel, New York

The President: Very nice to see you again. (U)

President Kuchma: I am glad to see you again, too. You are the most popular president here; congratulations on your speech. If there were more Ukrainians in the United States, it would add to your popularity. (U)

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Classified by: Glyn T. Davies
Reason: 1.5 (d)
Declassify On: 09/30/07

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The President: Popularity is a passing thing; it goes up and down. How are you? (U)

President Kuchma: We are more or less confident about the future, although there are more than enough problems. It will be impossible for us to solve all of them without U.S. assistance. We understand that they are our problems, but I am certain that we cannot solve them without your help. There are problems that I have discussed with you several times, and at Madrid, like the anti-dumping measures on Ukrainian steel. We need your assistance. (C)

The President: I will see what I can do. What else? We asked the international financial institutions to do as much as possible to help Ukraine. I have asked Secretary Albright to discuss this more with you. (C)

President Kuchma: I will discuss many of the details with Secretary Albright. But, suddenly, we face other problems, all new. There is not yet a cent from the IMF, although several tranches are in the works, we have not yet gotten anything. Then they criticize our reforms, as being too slow. It's all interconnected, and then something else comes along. (C)

The President: What does the IMF say - that reforms are too slow? (C)

President Kuchma: They ask about many things; we have very difficult problems, especially with debts and salary arrears. We had to increase the budget deficit, because we must choose between the dissatisfaction of our people and a larger deficit. (C)

The President: You and Secretary Albright will meet tomorrow to discuss in detail these issues. I want to minimize the burdens you face. Our influence on the international financial institutions is sometimes limited, but let's try to work through this. I do not want to see additional problems for you before your elections. (C)

President Kuchma: The main thing is not to scatter your assistance in too many areas; your aid should be targeted. There are many influential U.S. organizations all around Ukraine, but often they pursue too many different programs. (C)

Principally, what I fear is that we might have a return to the past; we must not allow a "red revanche" and the Communists to

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win in March. The government now is getting all the blame and criticism for the (economic) problems. (S)

The President: I understand. We'll talk some more about all of this. I will talk to Secretary Albright about the steel case. I was not familiar with it; we will get back to you. (S)

President Kuchma: If you take action to cut steel deliveries from 600,000 tons to 135,000, it will cut our exports down to 25 percent (of current exports). Russia will have left 60 percent of its exports. These are Ukrainian jobs. (S)

The President: I am very glad to have seen you. (U)

Foreign Minister Udovenko: We have given agreement to your new ambassador. (U)

Secretary Albright: That is very good news. (U)

The President: Pifer is a good man; has been close to me. (U)

- End of Conversation --

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