

to make
sure we keep the relationship on a solid track.
* PM: Let's keep it such. I share your view about the necessity to do
all our
best to keep the relationship on track. It's our aim also. You see I'm a
little
more optimistic after your assurances about ground operations and
about the
discussions over the next several days.
* VP: I hope you'll be able to give assurances about sharing of
intelligence and
military assistance. This is very important to our country.
* PM: Yes, we shall think about it.

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TRANSLATED_ATTACHMENT memcon -- vp-stepashin call 6-12-99.doc
DRAFT MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: THE VICE PRESIDENT
SERGEY VADIMOVICH STEPASHIN

LOCATION: RESIDENCE

NOTE TAKER: RICHARD BRODY

INTERPRETER: Nick Sorokin

DATE/TIME: 12 JUNE (times?)

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: Hello, this is Al Gore. Thank you for
taking this call. I
know it's your national day and that you are very busy. I wouldn't be
calling
unless it was very important and urgent. I know that our Presidents
plan to
speak tomorrow and that they will discuss the current situation in
Kosovo. The
reason I am calling is to suggest a way to resolve the problems
currently before

us so that by the time our presidents speak, they can affirm our agreement on a path forward. We have an opportunity to consolidate our achievements on Kosovo. If the current situation is not handled well, it could undo all of the progress that we have made. However, I do not want to call about problems without offering solutions as well. Let me summarize what I see as the current problem.

PRIME MINISTER STEPASHIN: I accept your proposal. So in order to simplify our conversation, let's use our first names. I'm Sergei, you're Al. I think we should talk like friends do.

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: Thank you. Contrary to assurances we received yesterday from Foreign Minister Ivanov, Russian forces have deployed in Kosovo unilaterally and without warning. Also contrary to the assurances we received, those forces have not been withdrawn. Now we see reports of possible further unilateral developments. Just now we've heard CNN announce that President Yeltsin approved yesterday's deployment and ordered MOD to implement it. Unless these matters are clarified, these mixed signals will deeply damage Russia's international credibility. Sergei, this situation is very serious. We need to do everything possible to avoid a conflict over this matter and work together to solve it. The solution to this problem was developed last night with Ministers Ivanov and Sergeyev. Strobe and his team met with them for hours, and together they developed a sound proposal. As we speak, Russian and American generals and military people are meeting in Macedonia to work out the details that would allow us to deploy together in Kosovo in the short term. This is not a permanent solution, but it is a way we can show that we are working together now. I have three requests in order to make this approach work. I ask that you instruct your generals to complete these discussions immediately, and we

will send the same instructions to our team. Second, the Russian forces that have deployed to Pristina have to be folded into the interim joint deployment that the generals are now planning. I stress this would be an interim solution under US command based on the SFOR model. We need to go with a model we know will work so that we can move together tomorrow. Third, we need your agreement that Russia will not deploy additional troops without our coordination and agreement. If that happens, it would be a very serious blow to our relationship and to our ability to resolve this problem in a satisfactory way. That is the temporary solution I recommend and the three requests I respectfully make to make this approach work.

PRIME MINISTER STEPASHIN: OK. First of all, thanks for the call and the holiday greetings. We haven't talked since we reached the major agreement on putting an end to NATO's strikes on Yugoslavia. Russia and the US worked together to get that agreement. But today as you mentioned we're facing a similarly difficult task on the civilian administration and deployment of the international security presence. Unfortunately, the UNSCR didn't spell out all the modalities which creates objective problems for implementation at the initial stage. We need to tackle the problem with mutual understanding and that is the approach I propose to you. It has been our approach with Strobe to take care of misunderstandings and it should be used in all of our approaches. I would like to calm you right away. About the CNN report, I can assure you President Yeltsin never approved deployment of forces. I just spoke with Ivanov and he reported on the outcomes of his discussions with Strobe. My information is that they have not reached an agreement. As for the three points you raised, I don't think we have misunderstandings on them. Our generals agree to no movement without a political

arrangement. I would like you to inform President Clinton of this before he speaks with President Yeltsin tomorrow. The second point you mentioned - our troops in Pristina. I think the formula is very interesting and in the framework of our discussions we can think of a technical [tactical?] redeployment or a way to make them part of the troops in Kosovo as part of the settlement. I agree we should send a message to our generals that a political agreement would be most important, to spell out the sectors. I thought when I spoke with Strobe several days ago that there was no disagreement on this. To avoid misunderstanding in the future we should agree on the role Russian forces will play in Kosovo. Unfortunately, our negotiations as of now haven't reached a mutually acceptable solution. But it's a matter of time. We need a strong political message on both sides. Russia does not plan to play some special role, although you know what role we played in reaching the [peace] settlement and we expect Russia would play a fair and respectful part in future operations. In that regard, I rely on your understanding. As you know, in the days to come, our presidents are scheduled to meet. And this will play a big part in these discussions. We're preparing for this meeting and want it to go without a hitch and be a success. I think in tomorrow's conversation between our presidents if President Clinton would raise the question of our upcoming July meeting on economic and technical cooperation, this would be very important. I'm getting prepared for that meeting. You said it took a great effort to reach a diplomatic settlement in Kosovo. But you shouldn't dramatize it. We'll reach some agreement. I know the US side is now having doubts about how you can trust or mistrust Russia...I would like to assure you that confidence and trust is the underlying principle of our policy. And we will stick to it in the future. I sincerely welcome the formula for the interaction we've developed. Whenever we have a problem we call

and discuss it.

This reflects a constructive attitude. It's better not to get the news from CNN, but from the horse's mouth, like we're doing now.

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: I appreciate the fact that you know confidence and trust are important to the relationship. I pledge to you that I will work with you to rebuild that confidence and trust, but we must deal with the serious blow to the confidence that the world community has in Russia right now. Because it has been reported to the entire world that contrary to what we were told, President Yeltsin approved yesterday's deployment and ordered the MOD to implement it. I welcome your statement that it's not true. It's important to have a public statement today clarifying the problem the conflicting signals have created. This could result in irreparable damage to Russia's international reputation. The foreign minister assures us they will not be deployed, and then they are. Then we're assured that they'll be withdrawn, and then they're not. Then we're told it was a mistake, then it's reported that Yeltsin ordered it. We want to help you clarify this. We have exercised great restraint and have not dramatized this...I pledge to work with you closely in order to find a solution. Part of the solution must be, in my opinion, a statement today clarifying that President Yeltsin did not order this deployment and that we agree to work together to solve this problem. And then I have some comments to make about the future structure of the security force.

PRIME MINISTER STEPASHIN: I would like to answer your first question right away. I will instruct Minister Ivanov to find an acceptable formula to explain the existing situation and we will speak to the principle which was spelled out in the decision of the Security Council of the consolidated decision taken by our military people. The decision and the document which would spell out

the exact
numbers of our forces, modalities, nature of forces. That's the spirit
we'll
work in and it will be the spirit of the Presidents' call tomorrow.
Before I
hear your proposal, I would like to make a proposal on my side. It
would be
useful to have a statement from the US side - that Russia's part will be

respected. Russia together with the US will determine the modalities
of its part
in the peace keeping force. That its role will be responsible
[respected?] and
we'll play a considerable part.

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: Thank you Sergei. We've consistently
said we welcome
Russian participation. We've consistently praised the constructive and
competent
and professional manner in which Russia has played an extremely
important role in
Bosnia and we have always invited Russian participation and we will
make that
clear. As you know, we have also felt very strongly and do now, of
course, that
unity of command is absolutely critical for the success of the mission.
Reconciling your concerns with ours is the reason why we have
recommended this
interim solution, based on to SFOR model. I've heard your concerns
and let me
say we are committed to work together on a long-term solution. I hope
we can
work together on an approach and I'll pause for the interpreter. Our
objective
is to achieve a solution that is satisfactory to Russia, allows it to
participate
in the international security force, and is consistent with unity of
command and
effectiveness on which we have all agree. The proposal which we
offered goes as
far as possible to create a special Russian area of responsibility. It is
not as
much as you have asked, but it is a lot, and it is much more than some
have
proposed. President Clinton has told me that if you agree a with this
approach,
he will fight for its approval. I believe that if we can put this plan in
place,
it will again show the success of our cooperation and that it will
provide

reassurance to the peaceful Serbs who have remained in Kosovo. As we look ahead to next week's meetings at Cologne, none of us want to entertain the prospect that our disagreement on these issues could ruin what we have achieved thus far in Kosovo. All of us want to see our two presidents highlight our cooperation and demonstrate how much we can accomplish when we work together. I will give my people instructions to get all of this done today, so that as I have suggested earlier, by the time our Presidents speak tomorrow, all the things we have discussed will be completed. I hope you will do the same. And I hope you'll make a public statement clarifying that President Yeltsin didn't order deployment of Russian troops and that it was as you've said a mistake.

PRIME MINISTER STEPASHIN: OK, about the issue of deployment of our forces on the ground. That was done through MOD channels. We can provide an adequate explanation. I ask a favor, before tomorrow's conversation between our presidents that you don't divulge the details of this conversation to the public. I think we should each give a chance to our diplomats and military representatives to work on this and tomorrow in the phone conversation between our presidents...will make it clear.

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: Well Sergei, am I free to say that President Yeltsin didn't order the deployment of the troops? Did he or didn't he?

PRIME MINISTER STEPASHIN: I know that he didn't give such an order. But again, I would like to refer to the favor that I asked of you that in tomorrow's conversation between our presidents, they should make everything clear. Before that we should refrain from making the details of our conversation public. I think for the short term, which lies between this phone conversation and tomorrow's conversation, I think I have provided enough information to you and for President Clinton.

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: Well, Sergei, I will respect your wishes, because this line of communication is so important to our two countries, and because I place so much importance on our friendship, which is just now really beginning and also is important to our countries. But I must remind you with all due respect that Russia is now in the following situation. Your foreign minister and you as prime minister have said the deployment was a mistake and not ordered by your president. The spokesperson for the president has said to the international news media the president did order the deployment. This is a country with a very large and powerful military. It deals with the entire world, and if the world is left in great doubt as to who is in control and doubt as to whether your

president has ordered the military to move, that stands to do very grave damage to Russia's international reputation. I say this to you privately, as a friend and as a colleague. And I said once more that I believe it would be important for Russia as well as for the relations between our two countries to have this matter clarified publicly today. And I say this with all due respect, my friend.

PRIME MINISTER STEPASHIN: What representative of the president made such a statement?

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: The statement was made on CNN as representing a decision by President Yeltsin. And the world has understood this to be coming from the Kremlin. If someone not authorized to speak for the President, then someone who is authorized to speak for the President should say it's not true.

PRIME MINISTER STEPASHIN: Well, I agree to the way you put this question and I would like to refer to the proposal which I made before, which is to refrain from making public statements about our conversation and I will instruct the defense

minister and foreign minister to do that. Following this, a public statement will be made. And now I'd like to say a few words about the public statement that caused all the problem. I think the misunderstandings are caused by the amount of effort and strain it took to reach the peace agreement. It took much effort and strain to reach it. Of course there are elements of distrust present, it's not easy, and I would like you to understand.

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: I understand it's been a difficult time. I understand in your personal situation, you face difficulties which I can only imagine. But with all due respect, to have Minister Ivanov seek to clarify the situation may not repair the damage to Russia's credibility, because he and the defense ministry have said previously things which have just been contradicted by not only by the statement representing President Yeltsin's views, but also by Russia's actions on the ground. I don't want to repeat what I've said, but it's of such importance to try to reassure the international community that Russia has a unified chain of command and President Yeltsin is in control and I would urge you to reflect upon what I have said and if possible to revisit the possibility of a statement. But I respect what you have said and accept what you have said and look forward to continuing our communication on these matters. And thank you very much.

PRIME MINISTER STEPASHIN: Thank you and I would like to have a few words, with your permission. First of all, I agree with your basic premise. I would like to assure you the situation is under our control and there is unity of command and everything you mentioned. I will like to chalk up the breakdown to temporary lack of clarity in the UNSCR and documents that were signed. Second, our position will be clarified following tomorrow's presidential telephone conversation. Only they can clarify this. I think that will happen

tomorrow. I
think it's of cardinal importance and that is what our presidents will
discuss
tomorrow. I would like to make clear that Russia-US relations are
moving
forward. Thank you.

[good byes]

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PARTICIPANTS: THE VICE PRESIDENT
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NOTE TAKER: RICHARD BRODY

INTERPRETER: ?

DATE/TIME: 14 JUNE 0740/0816 EDT

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: Sergey, thank you for taking my call at
such short notice
and I wanted to express appreciation for our very good conversation
on Saturday.
I know you're chairing a Security Council meeting today. So I
appreciate your
taking the call. Based on our conversation Saturday, I believe we are
able to
discuss even the most sensitive topics frankly and productively. And
President
Clinton is looking forward to seeing you in Cologne. Our Presidents
had a
constructive call yesterday. Their discussion laid a useful foundation
for how
we move forward on cooperation in Kosovo. Our countries must be
seen as working
together, not at cross purposes. Otherwise our success in bringing
peace to
Kosovo will falter and the conflict will quickly re-ignite, with our
forces in
the middle. I wanted to review the four issues that President Clinton
will wish
to discuss later today when he speaks to President Yeltsin. First, they