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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with Czech President Havel (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
President of the Czech Republic Vaclav Havel
Lisa Silhankova, Interpreter
Daniel Fried, NSC Notetaker

DATE, TIME: July 4, 9:05-9:16 am

AND PLACE: Camp David/Philadelphia - Four Seasons Hotel
(U)

President Clinton greeted President Havel, expressing delight at being able to speak with Havel and offering his congratulations at Havel's receipt of the Liberty Medal. (U)

President Havel said he was grateful for the call and thanked President Clinton for his expression of congratulations. Havel also offered his congratulations on the occasion of America's Independence Day. (U)

President Clinton observed that Havel's receipt of the Liberty Medal was an apt reminder of the freedom celebrated on Independence Day. (U)

President Havel thanked the President for the thought. He remembered their meeting in Prague last January and said he would be happy to meet again to deepen the already very strong bilateral ties. While there might well be no time on the President's schedule for a return to Prague, perhaps they could meet elsewhere (the Czech Ambassador later clarified this point to NSC/staff, noting that the Czechs also had in mind a meeting in 1995). Havel said he was very pleased to hear of the President's forthcoming trip to Poland and Latvia, which was another manifestation of U.S. interest in the security of Central and Eastern Europe. (U)

President Clinton noted that he would be meeting with the CEE foreign ministers in Warsaw and was looking to meeting the Czech Foreign Minister. (U)

President Havel interjected that Foreign Minister Zieleniec would certainly go to Warsaw. (U)

President Clinton continued that he had recently had a good meeting with Slovakia's President Kovac and Hungary's President Goncz. (U)

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President Havel observed that he was aware of the meeting when the two Presidents were in the U.S. June 21-23 to receive an award from the Institute for East West Studies. This was an important visit and he was pleased that Kovac and Goncz had come to the United States and had been received by President Clinton. President Havel referred to President Clinton's June 30 letter concerning continued support in the UNSC for the Iraqi sanctions regime. The Czech Republic, Havel stressed, appreciated the letter and would insist that Iraq respected all UNSC stipulations. Havel remarked that CJCS General Shalikashvili would be present at the Liberty Medal ceremony and that he looked forward to being able to talk to him then. (S)

President Clinton said that he hoped Havel and Shalikashvili, who would represent the U.S. at the Liberty Medal presentation, would have the chance for a good conversation. The President turned to RFE/RL, saying that this appeared to be a good occasion to inform the Czech government that the U.S. was prepared to accept the generous Czech offer to help RFE/RL move to Prague to occupy the former Federal Parliament Building. (S)

President Havel responded that he was very happy, indeed delighted, to hear of this decision. The Czech Republic attached a good deal of importance to the matter and looked forward to seeing the move successfully completed. (S)

President Clinton referred to their discussion in Prague last January, when he had told Havel of his interest in seeing RFE/RL move to Prague. As he said then, the move involved complex budgetary issues. (S)

President Havel remarked that he understood the problem and was pleased that the U.S. had found a way to resolve them. (S)

President Clinton continued that the issue remained complex for the Congress, and that Congressional agreement was necessary to proceed with the move. That might prove difficult though the President believed it would be possible. Nevertheless, in light of the need to work closely with the U.S. Congress, he asked the Czech Government to delay its announcement and coordinate closely with the USG. It could be very difficult to obtain Congressional assent to the move if an announcement took place before Congress had been notified properly. (S)

President Havel said he would convey this request to the Czech Government and that Prague would coordinate announcements with the U.S. (S)

President Clinton closed the conversation, wishing Havel a great day and asking him to convey regards to former President and Mrs. Bush. (U)

President Havel said he would do so and asked that the President give his best regards to Mrs. Clinton. (U)