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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telecon with President Boris Yeltsin of
Russia

PARTICIPANTS: The President
President Yeltsin
Interpreter: Galina Tunik-Rosniansky
Notetaker: Katherine O'Loughlin

DATE, TIME: February 20, 1994; 1:27-1:47pm EST
AND PLACE: The Oval Office

The President: Hello, Boris. (U)

President Yeltsin: Hello. (U)

The President: I hear you. (U)

President Yeltsin: Bill, good evening. Greetings. (U)

The President: It's nice to you hear your voice. (U)

President Yeltsin: If you remember Bill, as we agreed before, the purpose of this call is to finalize measures on Sarajevo. As I promised I got in touch with Milosevic and what I proposed was a political and peaceful solution. He accepted this and sent me a message and immediately thereafter he began the withdrawal of heavy artillery from Sarajevo. What do you think is the current update of the situation as it stands today? (✓)

The President: I'm very encouraged the Muslims and Serbs have made efforts to comply with the rules to pull weapons out of the safe zone around Sarajevo. There have been a lot of heavy weapons moved out of the zone in the last 36 hours and there is a great deal of activity going on there as we speak. I want to thank you for your leadership. If you had not gotten involved, I don't think this would have happened. The UN is working hard to see that the weapons in place in the zone are under their control. I think that it is important to make it clear that no prior decision has been made by anyone for airstrikes. The decision is solely for UN Commander, Mr. Akashi and Boutros Ghali to make based on what is happening on the ground. There has been no prior coordination with the NATO Commander. I am very encouraged by what I see happening now. I know that it is getting late and you're going to bed soon. Our people will keep in close contact in case anything happens, but it looks pretty good now. I know Secretary Christopher and Foreign Minister Kozyrev spoke yesterday about next steps over the next few days.

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I am committed to stop the killing around Sarajevo and to work out a fair settlement. I will continue to work to see that happen. (S)

President Yeltsin: Bill, I totally agree with you. Of course our top priority task is to put an end to this murderous war in Sarajevo. The fact that the Serbs, in response to my message, specifically with Milosevic, have almost completed withdrawal of heavy weapons, is already a big success. We should give thought to next steps. I suggest we do the following, Bill, since the Sarajevo war has been dragging - you the President of the United States, me the President of the Russian Federation, President Mitterrand, Prime Minister Major, and Chancellor Kohl get together someplace, it remains to be determined, and put together a document that war in Sarajevo is drawing to a close. I'm prepared to play host to all of you in Moscow. So we as leaders of great powers could get together and invite leaders of former Yugoslavia and sign the document to put an end to the bloody conflict in Yugoslavia. What is your view of the situation? (S)

The President: I believe we all should become more active, now that we have stopped the violence. (S)

President Yeltsin: Well, could I take it you have no objections to the suggestion I just made? (S)

The President: Tuesday our five countries will have representatives meeting in Bonn. I suggest we see what happens in Sarajevo within the next 48 hours and see if our people can work on details Tuesday. We will see where we are then, that will give us time to see if things are successful in Sarajevo and how we can best contribute to the peace process to keep it going. (S)

President Yeltsin: Bill, I agree. I had a talk with Kohl and he also has an initiative of his own. Well, in that case, I take it within the next 48 hours we should get together by phone and finally decide if we need this meeting. We would first hold a meeting of experts to finalize the document. Then have a meeting with the five members of the Security Council on this situation and then we could invite Milosevic and Karadzic and some other leaders of the former Yugoslavia, and put an end to this. (S)

The President: It is plain we need to do something like that. You have a good idea. Kohl has the same idea of the five leaders meeting. Let's stay on top of the situation and talk about this on Tuesday and then we'll get back together. (S)

President Yeltsin: Bill, I fully accept this idea and if there is a need for that I'm prepared to invite five leaders to Moscow. Of course, we could meet in Geneva, Bonn, or another country in Europe. (S)

The President: Thank you. I'm very excited about this idea. I appreciate your leadership, without it I don't think we would be at this point. Thank you very much. (S)

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President Yeltsin: I agree, accept a hug from me. I believe what counts most is that we've been successful in avoiding a catastrophe. And on Tuesday we'll talk again. (U)

The President: Have a good night's sleep. Good-bye. (U)

President Yeltsin: Thank you very much. Good-bye. (U)

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