

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

1337

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telephone Conversation with
Russian President Boris Yeltsin (C)

PARTICIPANTS: President Clinton
Russian President Boris Yeltsin

Interpreter: Peter Afansenko
Notetakers: Pat O'Shaughnessy, Tom Corwell,
Bonnie Glick, Jeff Rathke, Jim Smith,
Rexon Ryu, Ki Fort

DATE, TIME February 23, 1998, 11:01 - 11:17 a.m. EST
AND PLACE: The White House

THE PRESIDENT: Boris? (U)

PRESIDENT YELTSIN: Hi, Bill. (U)

THE PRESIDENT: Hi, Boris, how are you? (U)

PRESIDENT YELTSIN: Well, it's been some time since we talked,
so I've started missing you. (U)

THE PRESIDENT: And I missed you, too. (U)

PRESIDENT YELTSIN: And everything seems to be going okay, you
know we've seen an upsurge in January and February -- I mean
economic indicators. (U)

THE PRESIDENT: I'm very pleased by that. Can we talk about
Iraq for a moment? (C)

PRESIDENT YELTSIN: Of course. (U)

THE PRESIDENT: I've had a chance to review the memorandum of
understanding signed by Kofi Annan and Tariq Aziz. There is
much that is positive in the document, including its guarantee
of unconditional acceptance of the UN resolutions and

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Classified by: Glyn T. Davies
Reason: 1.5 (d)
Declassify On: 2/22/08

**DECLASSIFIED
PER E.O. 13526**

2015-0782-M-2(1.23)
3/13/2018 KBH

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

2

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

cooperation with UNSCOM on immediate and unconditional access to every site in Iraq. This is good. At the same time, there are details which are unclear about the role of UNSCOM and the special commission and how the inspection and reporting will actually work. We will listen carefully to Kofi Annan's explanation to the Security Council tomorrow to make sure it conforms to the standards of the five permanent members. I think it is important that we clarify the terms of the agreement and then test it out in the next few days, to be sure it is going to be honored. (Ø)

The one thing I want to ask you to consider, which may be difficult for you, is this: if we are all going to endorse this agreement, we have to make it clear to Saddam Hussein that we've resolved this, but we can't have another interruption every six months. I can't keep moving the fleet into the Persian Gulf every time there is a violation. We have to say that the next violation will have severe consequences. The easiest way to do it is to say that the next violation will constitute a material breach. We've done this twice now. We can't have any further violations. (Ø)

PRESIDENT YELTSIN: Yes. Well, I agree with what you said. (U)

THE PRESIDENT: Well, that's very good, because we need to continue to work together. I know how hard and firm your diplomats were in talking to Saddam Hussein. I think the fact that we pursued two different strategies helped us get this done. We need to find a way to stay together. We may have avoided a big problem or solved a big problem, but it will only work if they implement this agreement in good faith. (Ø)

PRESIDENT YELTSIN: Well, I agree with what you said; through common effort we succeeded in avoiding the worst consequences, and we must make sure that Iraq fully complies with all Security Council resolutions. Russia and the U.S. strongly advocate that. I think this time, by taking a common stand, you through the pressure of your forces, we through diplomatic means, we have led Saddam Hussein to understand the gravity of the situation. There's no repeat performance anytime in the future. (Ø)

THE PRESIDENT: I think the way to do this is to work together in the Security Council tomorrow. If we can do that, we have a chance to succeed. (Ø)

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

3

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

PRESIDENT YELTSIN: Okay, yes, we will. I believe the results that have been accomplished through the active participation of the UN Secretary General and our common stand have provided a key to find a way out of an extremely difficult and complex situation. (C)

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I do too, Boris. I hope you will tell Primakov to work with us to get some kind of statement that if there is another violation after this, it will be a material breach. I think that will ensure that Saddam complies with the agreement. (C)

PRESIDENT YELTSIN: Yes, I'll immediately tell that to Primakov, and he will be cooperating with your side. (C)

THE PRESIDENT: Great. (U)

PRESIDENT YELTSIN: Well, I'm very glad that we've come to the end of the road in this way. Our hope is that the Security Council will draft a resolution that will underscore once again the importance of the step we have taken, the gravity of the situation, and the consequences we've managed to avert. It's very important for us to launch a mechanism to avoid situations like this, to rule out such a grave situation in the future. Well, Bill, I believe we now have quite a few questions, involving bilateral relations and international problems. I believe we need to meet. It is now your turn to come to Russia. What month do you think you'll be able to visit Russia? (C)

THE PRESIDENT: Let me ask you this -- when we talked before we talked about coming after the Duma ratified START-II so we could begin discussing START-III. What's the state of play with that? (C)

PRESIDENT YELTSIN: I don't think it will take very long to have it ratified. At maximum, two months. (C)

THE PRESIDENT: Well, let me say, I will come as quickly as I can after that. I'm anxious to do this and will rearrange my schedule to do it. I would come in the middle of night, and I want to make a dramatic gesture to the rest of the world that would reaffirm our partnership. It would be better if they would do it in the near future, that I come after START-II, so we can begin work on START-III. (C)

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

4

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

PRESIDENT YELTSIN: Well, that would be great. I will start putting pressure on the State Duma, and I don't think they can avoid feeling my pressure. (S)

THE PRESIDENT: Great. (U)

PRESIDENT YELTSIN: I may use this thing I've only rarely used in the past--only twice--maybe I'll appear personally before the Duma and put pressure on them so START-II can be ratified. I don't think they can avoid that. (S)

THE PRESIDENT: That's great, Boris, thank you. I'm glad the economy is doing well. If we need to speak again in the next few days, I'll be available. (S)

PRESIDENT YELTSIN: Okay, agreed, Bill. A hug from me. Goodbye. (U)

THE PRESIDENT: Goodbye, Boris, thank you. (U)

-- End of Conversation --

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~