

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTONDECLASSIFIED
PER E.O. 13526
2015-0782-M-2 (1.64)
3/13/2018 K84

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telephone Conversation with Russian
President Yeltsin (S)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Russian President Yeltsin

Notetakers: Tony Campanella, Elizabeth
Rogers, Michael Manning, Sean Tarver,
Andrew Weiss
Interpreter: Peter Afanasenko

DATE, TIME May 2, 1999, 10:18 - 10:31 a.m. EDT,
AND PLACE: Residence

The President: Hello, Boris? (U)

President Yeltsin: Good afternoon, Bill. (U)

The President: Good afternoon. It is good to hear to hear your voice. (U)

President Yeltsin: Very well, Bill. I decided to call you on Sunday because this question is extremely important. As you know, on my instructions, my envoy Victor Chernomyrdin engaged in extremely difficult negotiations in Belgrade for many hours, and there are some results of these negotiations. Moreover, I believe that now real prospects have opened for making a practical step in reaching a political settlement. That was exactly the objective we agreed on with you. Not only the people of the U.S., Yugoslavia, and Russia, but the entire world needs this. Because of the very urgent nature of these developments, I have instructed my special envoy Chernomyrdin to go to Washington and deliver my personal message to you. I would ask you, Bill, to receive him without delay and want you to receive him tomorrow on May 3rd. That is all I have to say.
(S)

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Declassify On: 4/26/09

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The President: First of all, Boris, I will be glad to see him and am pleased by everything you have been doing, by your personal involvement, and by how hard Viktor has worked. He and Gore have been in touch, and I want to thank you for all the good work that has been done and by all progress that has been made. I also want -- (S)

President Yeltsin: [interrupting] Do you agree to receive Chernomyrdin on Monday? (U)

The President: Yes, I do. The Japanese Prime Minister will be here, and I will ask him to adjust our schedule, but I will be glad to receive him. I think it is important that he meet with Al Gore to keep the channel working there. (S)

President Yeltsin: He will relate to you all the details of the latest developments. (S)

The President: I can't wait to see him, but I think it's important that he see Al Gore, too, to keep that channel working. As you know, I am very impressed by the work he has been doing and by the progress that has been made. Also, I want to say again how important -- (S)

President Yeltsin: [interrupting] Can we agree now on the exact hour you will receive Chernomyrdin tomorrow? (S)

The President: No, it will have to be tomorrow afternoon, but I can see him. I would like him to see Al Gore first, and then I will see him and will give him plenty of time. I will have to look at my schedule, and we can get back to your people, perhaps later today. (S)

President Yeltsin: It is okay that he meet with Mr. Gore, but I ask you to receive Chernomyrdin personally and to receive from him my personal letter. That is what I'm asking. (U)

The President: Absolutely, I will do that. (U)

President Yeltsin: Chernomyrdin will need all the proper identification papers so everything is official and on a solid level. (U)

The President: Absolutely, there will be no problem with that. (U)

President Yeltsin: I think at the airport it will be desirable for an official, some representative, not necessarily a high level official, of the government to meet him at the airport. I have provided him with my personal plane. (S)

The President: Yes, I will have someone meet him. (U)

President Yeltsin: Are we agreed on this, Bill? (U)

The President: Yes, we are. (U)

President Yeltsin: I owe you a bear hug. (U)

The President: Yes, I want a bear hug. You remember, Boris, I think it's very important that we get out of this whole affair in a way that is good for peace in the Balkans and good for Russia, and good for our relations. I am very pleased you are involved in this and that Chernomyrdin is involved, and I look forward to seeing him tomorrow. We both have to be involved. (S)

President Yeltsin: This morning, I held a closed meeting of the Security Council, in the narrow composition, and Chernomyrdin attended that meeting. We agreed on further work with Milosevic, so we shall continue our activities. You mentioned to me it is useful when Russia is involved as an intermediary in this process. (S)

The President: Yes, it is very useful, and I believe the right sort of deal can truly bring this crisis to a conclusion, but the wrong kind of deal will prolong the crisis. But I believe you have to be involved, the U.S. has to be involved, and the Europeans have to be involved, not only in Kosovo, but we have to help in all of the Balkans and Southeast Europe. It is critical to the future of our relations. So you have to be involved in a leading role, and I am very pleased. We just have to get the right kind of deal here. (S)

President Yeltsin: Very well, Bill. (U)

The President: Alright, Boris, I will see him tomorrow. Thank you very much. (U)

President Yeltsin: He is leaving Moscow very shortly and looking forward to meeting with you tomorrow on May 3rd. (U)

The President: Thank you. Good-bye. (U)

President Yeltsin: Thank you. (U)

-- End of Conversation --