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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with President Boris Yeltsin of Russia
on January 23, 1993 (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
President Boris Yeltsin
Interpreter: Dmitri Zarechnak
Notetaker: Nicholas Burns, NSC staff

DATE, TIME: January 23, 1993, 10:45 - 11:17am
AND PLACE: Oval Office

The President: Mr. President, this is President Clinton. Good morning, Mr. President. (U)

Now that I have become President, I want to reemphasize with you my commitment that Russia be a top priority for U.S. foreign policy during my Administration. Thank you very much for your congratulatory message to me. I am determined that, together, we create the closest possible U.S.-Russia partnership. This is a complex time in Europe and in Asia and we will need to work together effectively to use the power of our two countries for the good. And I want our governments to get off to a fast start. I am looking forward to an early meeting between us. Secretary of State Christopher will contact Foreign Minister Kozyrev to schedule an early meeting between them and to begin discussions about our meeting. I know how vitally important their relationship will be to us both. (S)

I am also determined to find the best possible person as my Ambassador to Moscow. At the present time, I want you to know that we are determined to do whatever we can to help Russia's democratic reforms to succeed. We will try to make our economic aid as beneficial as possible. I have appointed a very close friend and expert on Russia, Strobe Talbott, to oversee all of our assistance programs in Russia and in Eastern Europe. His appointment will ensure that I can maintain a high level of personal involvement on this important issue. This will be good for both you and me. (S)

I will also do my best to get as soon as possible a good person in Moscow as Ambassador who has my complete confidence and attention. (C)

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President Yeltsin: Mr. President, I would like to thank you and tell you that I personally know Bob Strauss and believe that these good personal contacts did much for the development of relations between our two states. I would be very thankful if you could in a preliminary way give me the name of your candidate to be Ambassador to Russia. (S)

The President: Thank you. Let me mention a couple of specific issues. I want to reiterate my support for a rescheduling of Russia's debt in the Paris Club. I also want to boost American investment and trade. I would also like to work closely with you to resolve differences on Ukraine's ratification of START I and the NPT so that we can make progress on START II. (S)

I also want to make sure that we consult closely on important foreign policy issues. I know that the situation in Bosnia has presented you with some difficulties at home. The U.S. will continue to work closely with you on this issue. I will appreciate your continued support. On Iraq, we believe strongly that Saddam must comply with the UN Security Council resolutions and measures the coalition has established to enforce and monitor them, including the No-Fly Zones. I want to assure you that we will stay in close touch and I have instructed Secretary of State Christopher to speak to Foreign Minister Kozyrev as soon as possible about this and other issues of foreign policy. I want them to meet quickly and to set an agenda and a particular time to get together. I am anxious to see you and to get going. And I want our relations to be the same as in the past. (S)

President Yeltsin: Mr. President, I want to thank you very much for your nice and good words and your constructive proposals. I thank you, Mr. President for these proposals. Of course, I want us to cooperate on Yugoslavia, but hope the cooperation will be closer to your "softer line", stressing not only confrontation with military forces, but also a political settlement through the UN Security Council and the UN, to find a mutually acceptable solution to the problem. (S)

Now, about our meeting. I believe that the entire world is awaiting this meeting because the new U.S. President would probably make some corrections in policy, while supporting the general line of our policy and with me personally. Our Foreign Minister, Kozyrev, has got instructions personally from me to get in touch with Secretary Christopher to begin the organization of a working meeting in a third, neutral country. I believe this is the sentiment of all the world -- for the U.S. and Russia, it is important that we meet very soon to elaborate the common positions in our relations. I would like to believe that this kind of meeting could take place no later than February. As for the place, I leave the initiative to you and would accept your proposal. (S)

The President: I think that's a pretty good idea. Let me tell you -- I have to give a State of the Union address in early February to outline all of the economic issues here in the U.S. with the Congress. As soon as that is out of the way, we can

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proceed to a meeting with you. Let me talk to Secretary Christopher and the schedulers and we will be in touch. I appreciate your letting me choose the site. I'll try to pick something convenient for you. We might have to do it on a weekend so as not to conflict with the schedule of the Congress. I will be in touch soon. I am eager to do it. (S)

President Yeltsin: I thank you, Mr. President. This meeting should have an informal character. The most important thing is to meet. I agree with your support for a meeting between us personally which will not conflict with the schedule of the U.S. Congress or the Parliament of the Russian Federation. I believe we could make it at the end of February, after the 20th. I also believe that we should meet in a country of your choice. It will be good for all of us -- the U.S. and Russia. I had good relations with Bush. Now I need to develop relations with President Clinton. Everyone in the world wants this. The first meeting with you was very good. I am confident our relations will improve in the future. We just need to set a date and place. (S)

The President: I agree and we will be back in touch soon. Thank you very much. (U)

President Yeltsin: I agree with you, Mr. President and am grateful and we will be in contact. Congratulations on your inauguration. You are the President of the U.S. from the Democratic party. I believe you will play a great role in the life of the U.S. which will benefit America's national self-awareness as well as its foreign policy. I stand ready to cooperate in the future. I am anxious to meet with you and to get to know you as "Bill". (U)

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

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

-- End of Conversation --

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