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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telecon with Supreme Soviet Chairman
Stanislav Shushkevich of Belarus

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Chairman Stanislav Shushkevich
Interpreter: Dmitriy Zarechnak
Notetaker: Christine Potts

DATE, TIME: Tuesday, February 9, 1993, 10:35-10:44 a.m.
AND PLACE: Oval Office

The President: Hello, Mr. Chairman, I am truly delighted to have the opportunity to speak with you and congratulate you on the historic step taken by your Supreme Soviet on Thursday. (U)

By taking the lead in ratifying START I and the Non-Proliferation Treaty, Belarus has proven itself a real leader among the countries of the world. Your resolve to become a non-nuclear state, shown by this vote, is unprecedented in the history of mankind. I hope that your action will be a strong example to all of the parties to START I and the Lisbon Protocols. (S)

In response to your vote, the U.S. is prepared immediately to extend security assurances to your country. They will reiterate our commitments to non-aggression, territorial integrity, and non-use of nuclear weapons. I have instructed Ambassador Shwartz to transmit the text of the assurances to you, and to discuss them with you. (S)

I also wanted to assure you that we are committed to providing substantial resources through the Nunn-Lugar Act here in the United States to assist in the denuclearization process in Belarus. (S)

As a first step toward building our cooperation in this area, I suggest that our Secretary of State Christopher and Foreign Minister Kravchanka meet during the Minister's visit here to Washington to open your embassy in March. At that time we expect to discuss some concrete proposals with you, in response to the five priority denuclearization needs that your government has suggested. (S)

And beyond these priorities, I wanted to assure you that I look forward to working with you to develop a relationship that focuses not simply on security issues, but also on closer economic, political, and cultural ties as well. (U)

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I thank you once again, Chairman Shushkevich, and I congratulate you on your truly historic step. (U)

Chairman Shushkevich: Thank you very much, Mr. President. First of all, I want to congratulate you on taking office and I want to wish you success on behalf of Belarus and all of mankind. (U)

The President: Thank you. (U)

Chairman Shushkevich: The ratification of START I and other treaties is a larger continuation of the policy of Belarus toward neutrality and denuclearization. I thank you very much, Mr. President, for offering us security assurances and the other steps you suggested. I promise to consider all problems and take the necessary actions. (S)

Already certain elements of the Nunn-Lugar funds have been agreed to, and I hope we will find additional opportunities beyond the funds mentioned when the senators were here in Minsk. I firmly believe that Belarus will be a good obstacle to the transit of nuclear arms from Russia through Lithuania, Latvia, and Poland to the West. I believe we can be a good obstacle to the transfer of arms. (S)

It is good that Foreign Minister Kravchanka and Secretary of State Christopher will meet in March when our embassy opens. We hope relations will develop in two directions: in the conversion of nuclear weapons; and in helping Belarus economically to become independent. I also hope to work closely with Belarussian emigrants in the United States now that we are on the road to democracy. (S)

Thank you very much for your cultural and economic help and for your warm attitude. Thank you, Mr. President. (U)

The President: I look forward to working with you and becoming very close over the years. (U)

Chairman Shushkevich: Thank you and good-bye. (U)

-- END OF CONVERSATION --