

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with Acting President Putin of Russia (✓)
PARTICIPANTS: The President and Acting President Putin
NOTETAKERS: Rogers, Manning, and Williams
DATE, TIME: January 1, 2000, 1107-1116 EST
AND PLACE: Residence

The President: Hello? (U)

Acting President Putin: Yes, I am listening. (U)

The President: Congratulations, and thank you for taking my call. (U)

Acting President Putin: Thank you very much, Mr. President, for this call. (U)

The President: I think you are off to a very good start. Yeltsin's resignation statement, and what you have said in your initial statements, are very encouraging for the future of Russian democracy. I wanted to call just to reaffirm my commitment to our partnership and to work with you. I know that we still have some differences in our relationship, and you know what our concerns are about Chechnya and the Caucasus, but we also have much in common and there are many things we need to be working on together. I just wanted to say that I hope we'll have an early chance to meet and talk. I know you have a campaign to run over the next 90 days, but we're eager to be a constructive partner. There are so many things we have to do in the future, but I think we can have a very good year, and I am committed to doing that. (✓)

Acting President Putin: Thank you once again for this call. I visited with Boris Nikolayevich today, and he knew that we were going to talk. He asked me to pass on to you his warmest New Year's wishes. We were pleased with your statement on President Yeltsin's resignation. It was quite balanced and well wishing, and we appreciate this. We thank you personally, because you have done a lot to develop Russian-American relations. We know that your administration can appreciate the nature and level of

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these relations. The fact that the Administration appreciates our relations obliges us to develop them further, as you probably know, or your Administration knows, from my interview with CNN two days ago. [gap in transmission] (C)

The President: Hello? What happened? (U)

Acting President Putin: Yes, I am here. (U)

The President: Hello? (U)

Acting President Putin: We are ready to receive you at any moment, at any time that is convenient for you. Our meetings usually have been short, but they were very impressive. There are certain issues on which we do not agree; however, I believe that on the core themes, we always will be together. The most important thing is to develop Russia-U.S. relations for the good of our peoples. (C)

As you mentioned in your statement, President Yeltsin did a lot to destroy the Communist system and to push Russia toward the civilized countries. The direction of Russian policies in all areas will continue in the coming three months while I am Acting President. A lot will depend on the person elected President; however, I believe it will be a progressive person. (C)

Once again, I would like to congratulate you on the New Year. I would like to wish you and all the American people happiness and prosperity in every home and household. I am sure we will find a solution to all the questions on which we disagree. Once again, Happy New Year. (C)

The President: Thank you again, and Happy New Year to you. We will meet as soon as possible, and I want you to know that you can call me at any time, day or night. I, too, want the economic problems of the Russian people to be a thing of the past and for this good partnership to grow even stronger. I also want to wish you a Happy New Year. (U)

Acting President Putin: Thank you very much, and Happy New Year to you. In conclusion, I would like to say a few words about the fact that our election campaign is coming up, as you mentioned. I remember that in our first meeting in Auckland, we touched upon some of the problems you had to go through in the process of political strife. You have shown strong character and have set a good example for us. I wish you happiness in the New Year. (U)

The President: Thank you very much, and goodbye. (U)

Acting President Putin: Goodbye. (U)

-- End of Conversation --