

THE WHITE HOUSE
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MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with President Putin of Russia (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
President Putin

Interpreter: Yuri Shkeyrov

Notetakers: Don Gentile, Rob Hargis, Rob Williams, Michael Manning, and Andrew Weiss

DATE, TIME: June 9, 2000, 8:25-8:42 a.m. EDT,
AND PLACE: Residence

President Putin: Mr. President, good morning. (U)

The President: Good morning. (U)

President Putin: I'm very glad to hear from you. Once again, I'd like to thank you for your visit. It was very productive and useful, judging by the response we are receiving in Italy and also yesterday when I spoke to Jiang Zemin. They all had a positive response to your visit and liked the results of our discussion. (S)

In my conversation with Mr. Jiang, I stressed that both you and I in our conversation agreed that all the parties involved in the process, including China, should be included and not be left out in our discussion of arms control issues. Now, as we agreed previously, we can continue discussions on START III to implement our course in that area and also to initiate our discussions on the Global Monitoring System, which is something we agreed upon. (S)

Now, a couple of words about something I discussed in Italy, and that is the common European missile defense system. You should understand there is nothing new to it. What we are talking about here is the practical implementation of the 1997 New York accords differentiating between strategic and non-strategic defensive systems. As you know, our Defense Minister, Marshal Sergeyev, is in Brussels today, and he is taking part in a meeting of the Russia-NATO Permanent Joint Council there. (S)

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After that, we expect Secretary Cohen to come to Moscow and, as we agreed, I'm prepared to meet with him here. I'd like to remind you of the idea I mentioned before of involving our officers from the General Staff in the deliberations of the NATO planning committee. As I recall, you liked the idea, and I think we can consider how to practically implement it. (S)

It would be a good thing to start our joint work on a bilateral effort to counter the terrorist threat, especially the one coming from Afghanistan. I think it would be a good thing to issue instructions to our respective services, such as CIA and, on our part, our Federal Security Service (FSB) and the Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR) to set up a joint ad hoc working group to counter the threat in that area. (S)

Now another matter in another area. It concerns my upcoming visit to Germany. I remember what you told me confidentially about Schroeder's position on debt restructuring for Russia. Now he is signaling that he wouldn't like to discuss that subject, and we don't want to put him in a difficult position. We will be very careful in dealing with that issue. But I think that we will hardly be in a position not to raise this issue since it is very important to both Germany and Russia. I count on your support in this matter, Mr. President. I hope after the upcoming G-8 meeting that we will be able to make headway on improving our bilateral economic relations. (S)

The President: Thank you very much, Vladimir. Let me first of all say that on the debt issue I think that the chances of getting debt relief and a comprehensive solution, as I said in Moscow, depends upon first getting agreement on an IMF program. And then getting at least a short-term debt rescheduling from the Paris Club. Then, you will need to argue on the basis of Russia's commitment to reform and persuade people that it justifies a more comprehensive debt solution. It also depends on whether your annual debt repayment will be far too large a portion of your national budget, and you won't be able to take care of your people. But I think it should all happen in that sequence. We can discuss this when we're in Okinawa, we can talk more. I can discuss this with Schroeder, and we can involve other people there as well. (S)

On the question of a bilateral group working on terrorism, especially on what is happening in Afghanistan, I'm in favor of that, and we'll intensify our efforts on that. (S)

On the other items you mentioned: I think closer Russian cooperation with NATO sounds like a good idea. We will raise your proposal in NATO channels and get back to you as quickly as possible. (S)

On the idea of missile defense, obviously, I listened very carefully to everything you said in Moscow and have followed your remarks closely since then. I do believe that the U.S. has to consult with China as well, and I will do that. (S)

I appreciate your willingness to meet with Secretary Cohen next week and to hold candid conversations on this matter so we can have a common understanding of what the facts are. I know it's difficult because of your schedule. (S)

Just one more thing: I looked into the NOGA issue after our discussion on Sunday, and I think we'll be able to fix that problem. I've asked our lawyers to prepare the necessary papers as soon as they can. The only thing I wanted to mention on that is I hope you will also follow up on the discussion we had on talking about restricting any nuclear cooperation various Russian entities might have with Iran. (S)

Thank you very much for your hospitality in Moscow. I thought it was an excellent meeting, and I look forward to another meeting. Anytime you want to talk on the phone like this is, I think, a good thing to do. (S)

President Putin: Thank you for this conversation. I'd like to thank you for not forgetting various situations and crises which are not, at first glance, very important, like the NOGA problem. You can rest assured that, for our part, we will abide by our agreements. Let me say that it is also a pleasure for me to recall your visit here to Moscow, and it's a pleasure for me to see that you are satisfied with the visit. We will be looking forward to our next meeting. Thank you. (S)

The President: Thank you very much. Goodbye. (U)

-- End of Conversation --