

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

DECLASSIFIED
PER E.O. 13526
KDC 2/19/2004
2017-0222-M (1.25)

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with President of Russia (S)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
President Putin

Interpreter: Peter Afanassenko

Notetakers: Robin Rickard, Rob Hargis, Rob Williams, Brad Mynatt

DATE, TIME: August 16, 2000, 10:15-10:39 AM EDT
AND PLACE: Residence

The President: Hello, Vladimir? Good day. (U)

President Putin: Hello. I know that you are currently very busy, and I am therefore grateful for you responding to my request for this telephone conversation. I wish you the best for a successful convention. I know that you delivered a very good speech, and I congratulate you. I'd like to thank you for your expressions of commiseration and sympathy over the recent terrorist acts in Moscow. (S)

Further, Bill, I would like to speak briefly about the situation in the Middle East and the related talks. Several days ago, I met with Mr. Arafat who was here for meetings. I subsequently had telephone conversations with Prime Minister Barak and President Mubarak of Egypt. (S)

My impression is that although you did not succeed in achieving an agreement, there was a tremendous amount of work accomplished under your guidance. Indeed, this is the first time in history that progress has been made on refugees, territories, and other key issues. (S)

In my conversation with Mr. Arafat, I expressed our views about the plan to declare statehood. I told him that to recognize such a state is not a problem and that we already did this long ago. Further, I stated we have both an ambassador and an embassy for the Palestinians, but that proclaiming statehood without signing an agreement beforehand would harm the interests of the Palestinian people. I think that Mr. Arafat feels, as I myself

felt in my telephone conversation with Mr. Barak, that they have not yet talked this over sufficiently to reach a compromise. (S)

Mr. Arafat suggested we hold a summit in New York before the Millennium Summit, and that President Mubarak also participate in that meeting. But as far as I am aware, he has not given thought as to whether or not he would attend the summit in New York. (S)

So, this is the first issue I would like to raise and discuss with you. Then I can give instructions to our Foreign Ministry and you to your State Department to study this and the issues around such a meeting. I think a meeting of this type should be held only if we think progress can be made and if there are some new ideas about East Jerusalem and other key issues. (S)

This is the first issue. I think that this is an issue that Mr. Ivanov and Mr. Berger also agreed to discuss in New York. They will also discuss the issues that you raised in your letter, such as Iran's missile program and other nonproliferation related matters. I think that prior to our meeting in New York, Mr. Ivanov will inform me on the results of the discussions, and I can discuss them with you later. Actually, this is all I would like to discuss with you now. What are your views on what I've said? (S)

The President: First of all, I want to say personally how very sorry I am about what has happened to your submarine. I know that our people have been in touch through NATO, but if there is anything we can do, just let us know. I know what a difficult time this is for you and for the Russian people. I've been following it through the media here, and I am concerned about the families as well. (S)

President Putin: Thank you. (U)

The President: Secondly, on the Middle East, I want to thank you for your report and for your government's public statements after the Arafat visit. I think they were helpful. I think we should have Sandy and Ivanov talk about this. (S)

We have to be very careful. We can't get Barak into another public meeting unless we know it will produce results because he is in a very weakened position in Israel right now. They are giving him a lot of trouble in the context of Israeli politics. He made a lot of concessions without getting an agreement. (S)

So the next time he has a meeting, or a secret meeting that his people are involved in, we have to have results or we will just hurt him worse. Our people have to discuss this. I do think you

and I can do some good to help the process during the Millennium Summit, and we need to follow up on that. (S)

If I can mention one or two other issues. First of all, we are very concerned about the elections on September 24 in Yugoslavia. It would be very helpful if Russia could challenge Milosevic to hold free and fair elections and allow international observers. I am also worried that he will move against Djukanovic and Montenegro. As we have discussed before, I hope you will make it clear to him publicly and privately that this would be a mistake. (S)

As we already said, Sandy Berger and Sergey Ivanov will see each other in New York. Strobe Talbott and Mr. Mamedov will address the cooperative strategic initiative. I think we can make some real progress on nonproliferation and other issues they will focus on. I look forward to it. (S)

The other thing I wanted to mention briefly is the request I've made to you before in the case of Edmond Pope and releasing him as soon as possible on humanitarian grounds. Now that the investigation is complete, I hope you can do that. In the meanwhile, we are worried about his health and direct access to him by one of our doctors is very important. I think this would reassure his family who are also very concerned about his immediate health condition. I wanted to mention this one more time. (S)

Again, on the Middle East, we have to be careful not to put Barak in a weaker position. He is working on meeting Arafat's basic needs, and I think the best thing is to wait until Sandy and Sergey discuss this when they meet in New York. (S)

President Putin: Let's consider that we agree as far as the Middle East is concerned. In keeping with the objectives of a medical doctor, when I talked to Barak, my principle was not to do any harm to the patient. (S)

As far as Mr. Pope's case is concerned, right after we spoke at Okinawa, I immediately instructed my people to look into the matter. I expect to get the report on this very soon. When I meet with you in New York, I will be in a position to be more specific on this matter, and I think we can move forward positively. (S)

Now, as far as elections are concerned in Yugoslavia, we will act on the assumption that any action, any measure taken by the international community, be of a concerted nature and that the very complicated issues we face there be addressed in the optimal and most fair manner. I remember full well the conversation we

had about this, and Russia will act in accordance to the conversation you and I had in Okinawa on this matter. (S)

I would like to thank you about something that you started the conversation with -- your condolences for our submarine and your offer to provide help. After this conversation, I will instruct my people to use this offer of help to determine how we can specifically use assistance to address this matter. (S)

As far as the other issues are concerned, let our people discuss these prior to our meeting and let Berger and Ivanov work them out. Thank you for this conversation. I look forward to our meeting. (S)

The President: Me, too. Thank you. (U)

President Putin: Thank you. Bye. (U)

-- End of Conversation --

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