

Withdrawal/Redaction Sheet

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DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
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001. email	Elaine Wasserman to Andrew Weiss re: Putin Bilat-Oslo (12 pages) <i>Partial release - KBH 4/12/2022</i>	11/04/1999	P1/b(1)
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COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
NSC Emails
Exchange-Record (Sept 97-Jan 01) ([Putin])
OA/Box Number: 620000

FOLDER TITLE:

[11/04/1999]

2014-0944-M

rs1141

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

- P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
- P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
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- P5 Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA]
- P6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA]

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- b(9) Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]

C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.

PRM. Personal record misfile defined in accordance with 44 U.S.C. 2201(3).

RR. Document will be reviewed upon request.

Exchange Mail

DATE-TIME 11/4/99 3:56:48 PM
 FROM Wasserman, Elaine P. (EXSEC)
 CLASSIFICATION ~~SECRET~~
 CLASSIFICATIONREASON 1.5(d)
 DATECLASSIFIEDON 11/04/1999
 DECLASSIFYON 11/04/2009
 SUBJECT Putin Bilat - Oslo [~~SECRET~~]
 TO Weiss, Andrew S. (RUE)

DECLASSIFIED IN PART
 PER E. O. 13526

2014-0944-M [1.01]
 KBH 3/11/2020

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 Wasserman, Elaine P. (EXSEC)

TEXT_BODY
 Per your request, here's the Oslo Putin Bilat - FYI, the backgrounder on Chechnya was not part of the final package.

TRANSLATED_ATTACHMENT Putin Mtg.doc
 BILATERAL MEETING WITH
 RUSSIAN PRIME MINISTER PUTIN

KEY OBJECTIVES

* Underscore our concerns about Russian military escalation in Chechnya and dangers posed by protracted conflict.

- * Highlight CFE-related steps Russia needs to take in run-up to Istanbul OSCE Summit.
- * Call for progress on ABM/NMD and START issues.

CONTEXT OF MEETING

Putin comes to this meeting knowing that his rapidly rising popularity could shatter instantly if Russia takes major casualties in its military campaign in Chechnya. He will use the meeting to argue that Russia has a coherent strategy in Chechnya, that civilian casualties are limited, and that Russia is waging a war against Islamic terrorism. Expect him to filibuster. The press will be very interested in the meeting in light of increased indiscriminate bombings of civilians and mile-long lines of displaced people blocked by Russia at the Ingushetia border. While you should affirm that we recognize Russia's obligation to fight terrorism and protect its territory, it is crucial that Putin get an unambiguous message that we are concerned about rising civilian casualties and the need for a credible political dialogue to resolve the crisis.

The war in Chechnya has overshadowed even the December parliamentary elections. Putin has pulled even in many polls with Primakov, but his rapid surge in popularity highlights the inherent volatility of Russian politics. The Kremlin still lacks a credible strategy for the December elections, but the Yeltsin coterie is clearly pleased with the success of its attempts to marginalize Luzhkov. There are too many variables (the war in Chechnya, lingering crime, and corruption allegations, and Yeltsin's uncertain health) for Putin to feel overly confident about his own Presidential prospects.

AGENDA

While the meeting is short (Sandy hopes to hold a separate meeting with Putin to

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001. email	Elaine Wasserman to Andrew Weiss re: Putin Bilat-Oslo [partial] (4 pages)	11/04/1999	P1/b(1)
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cover nonproliferation and other issues), you should touch on the following topics:

Chechnya. The core issue is whether Russia is waging war against radical Islamists or against the Chechen people. Hesitant to engage in a bloody ground conflict as in 1994-1996, the Russians are relying heavily on artillery and air strikes to pummel Grozni and other cities to drive out civilians and weaken the rebels. Three fundamental problems: (1) The rebels are interspersed with civilians, and such imprecise bombings will exact an enormous humanitarian toll. (2) The Russians are blocking displaced civilians, trying to weed out the rebels, in turn heightening the humanitarian risk (e.g., the attack on a refugee convoy October 29 which killed two Red Cross workers). As of October 30, the border with Ingushetia, the main escape route, remained blocked. (3) The rising humanitarian toll further reduces the chance for meaningful political dialogue.

As he did with your comments on Chechnya during the Obasanjo press conference, Putin may characterize your meeting as expressing support for Russia's Chechnya policy. You need to stress that without progress on a political solution,

continued military escalation will damage relations with the international community, an outcome we all hope to avoid. Putin needs to understand our concern about rising civilian casualties and the impact of intensified air and artillery strikes. You should underscore that such tactics will harden Chechen resistance. On a more positive note, we are cooperating through

EO 13526 1.4c, EO 13526 3.5(c)

channels to cut off external financing for the insurgents.

Istanbul OSCE Summit/CFE: We are urging the Russians to take several CFE-related steps, given that Russian forces are well over even the new CFE flank limits.

These include a public commitment from Putin to comply with the

Treaty as soon as possible as well as continued transparency about Russian deployments. The most critical piece of our strategy is getting Russia to agree on schedules with Georgia and Moldova for withdrawal of Russian troops.

Arms Control: High-profile Russian threats and posturing about ABM are damaging the atmosphere in Moscow and fostering skepticism on the Hill that the Russians are seriously engaged on possible ABM amendments. You should stress the importance you attach to making progress on this issue and our determination not to undermine mutual deterrence. Putin has previously been open-minded about the rogue state threat, and you encourage him to tone down Russian rhetoric and remind him that cooperation on ABM/NMD would provide tangible benefits to Russian security and unlock further strategic force reductions in START III.

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Reason: 1.5 (b)(d)

Declassify on: 8/31/09

TRANSLATED_ATTACHMENT

Putin Summary TPs.doc

SUMMARY POINTS TO BE MADE FOR MEETING WITH
PRIME MINISTER PUTIN

* Sandy recounted Saturday phone conversation with you. Agree on: Russian sovereignty, territorial integrity and right to protect your people, opposition to terrorism. To save time, let's turn directly to Chechnya issues, CFE, arms control.

* First, know you told Sandy you do not intend to hit civilians, but fighting has intensified. Your military is reporting Russia is relying more on

artillery and
air strikes against rebels who are completely intermingled with the
civilians.

* Very concerned your military may destroy cities, villages in order to
save
them. Civilian casualties will get worse, and so will international
pressure to
criticize and isolate Russia. None of these outcomes is desirable.

* Second point. Closing borders to displaced people heightening
humanitarian
tragedy. Sandy explained your view that you want to block weapons
and
contraband. But international community has also been jolted by air
strikes
against Red Cross and image of mile-long lines at border.

* Know that you want to deal with humanitarian problem. We can
help through
UNHCR and ICRC. But must give displaced people a chance to get to
safety.

* Final point on political dialogue. No better example than Middle
East to
demonstrate that people must stop fighting and start talking. Rabin
made that
breakthrough with Arafat.

* Sandy told me your problems finding a Chechen counterpart. Have
you considered
a third party, either in or out of Russia, to act as intermediary until
direct
contacts possible?

* CFE: to sign Treaty, must show that flank limits are meaningful,
despite
Russia exceeding Treaty levels. No more important step than reaching
agreement
before Istanbul with Georgians and Moldovans on withdrawal of
Russian forces.

* Arms control: not pursuing NMD system that threatens your
deterrent; want to
share security benefits. Presented ideas October 22 to accomplish this,
amend
ABM Treaty and proceed with deeper reductions in START III. Hope
you stay
engaged.

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Reason: 1.5b,d

Declassify On: 10/30/09

TRANSLATED_ATTACHMENT

Putin TPs.doc

**POINTS TO BE MADE FOR BILATERAL MEETING
WITH RUSSIAN PRIME MINISTER PUTIN**

* Glad to see you again. Know this is a difficult time for you, for Boris, for Russia.

* Sandy recounted his detailed phone conversation with you on Saturday. Agree on many issues: Russian sovereignty, right to protect your territorial integrity and safety of your people, opposition to terrorism.

* To make best use of our time, propose we go directly to key points on Chechnya and Istanbul Summit/CFE, discuss arms control if time.

Chechnya

* Three issues on Chechnya. First is rising civilian casualties and their impact on Russia's international reputation.

* Know you told Sandy your intent is not to hit civilians, but it seems you've come to a new point in the war. Intensity of fighting, rebels' counterattacks have increased now that you are in core Chechen territory.

* As your military is reporting, Russia is relying more and more on artillery and air strikes against rebels who, by all accounts, are completely intermingled with the civilians.

* Very concerned your military may destroy cities, villages in order to save them. Civilian casualties will get worse, and so will international

pressure to
criticize and isolate Russia. None of these outcomes is desirable.

* We are not in a position to tell you what to do. But as a friend, can
tell you
that an intensified bombing campaign in places where you cannot
isolate the
rebels or their infrastructure will have enormous human and political
costs.

* Leads to my second point. Closing borders to displaced people will
only
heighten the humanitarian tragedy. Sandy explained your view that
border
officials are corrupt and that you want to block weapons and
contraband.

* But the international community has also been jolted by air strikes
against Red
Cross and other convoys, as well as image of mile-long lines of
fleeing people
blocked at the Ingushetia border after bombings have driven them
from their
homes.

* Know that you want to deal with this growing humanitarian
problem. We can help
through UNHCR and ICRC. But it is crucial to give displaced people
a chance to
get to safety.

* Final point on political dialogue. No example more poignant than
Middle East
to demonstrate that where there are genuine ethnic and religious
differences,
sooner or later people have to stop fighting and start talking.

* Rabin made that breakthrough with Arafat. Sandy told me about
your problems
trying to find a Chechen counterpart. There are no easy answers, but
you are
going to have to be proactive.

* Would be interested in whether you've considered a third party --
either in or
out of Russia -- who could act as an intermediary until you are able to
have
direct contacts.

CFE

- * Sandy tells me you will make a public statement reiterating Russian commitment to meet CFE flank limits as soon as possible and to continue transparency on force levels. That's important.
 - * Want to focus on points you and Sandy discussed about Georgia and Moldova. To sign Treaty, must be able to show that CFE flank limits are meaningful despite the fact that Russia has exceeded Treaty levels.
 - * No more important step than reaching agreement before Istanbul with Georgians and Moldovans on withdrawal of Russian forces; will help show you are still committed to CFE limits.
 - * On Moldova, understand your problems with Smirnov in Transnistria. Know he's tough to negotiate with, but if anyone has leverage with him, it's Russia.
 - * On Georgia, we followed up on your questions to Sandy. We have heard authoritatively that President Shevardnadze decided to control the border using only Georgian forces, and that he communicated this to you even before we engaged.
 - * As we understand it, the problem on Georgia is a dispute over the schedule to withdraw forces and phase out Russian bases. I hope you will show flexibility to agree on a realistic timetable.
- Arms Control
- * On arms control, Boris and I agreed in Cologne that we'd push to make real progress during our remaining time in office. Our teams are already engaged on ABM/NMD and START issues.
 - * Know from conversation in New Zealand you believe rogue state ballistic missile threat to both our countries is real. Also know that I'm committed to preserving strategic equilibrium, not pursuing NMD system that threatens your deterrent.
 - * Want to ensure development of NMD also creates tangible benefits for Russian security. Our people have presented concrete ideas about how to accomplish this, while also working to amend ABM Treaty and complete START III.
 - * Really hope you'll stay engaged on this issue. Need to make

progress on
ABM/NMD to proceed with deeper reductions in START III. Would
also help to
create an atmosphere for making progress if you could ask your
military to tone
down rhetoric on this issue.

[If asked]
Information on Chechnya distorted
* Compelling basis for our assessment, concern about civilian
casualties.
Important that you understand how Europeans and we see situation.
Worried about
impact on our relations, Russia's international image.
Political dialogue not realistic
* Not trying to tell you whom to speak with. You've expressed
willingness to
conduct serious dialogue. Would ask that you not do things that make
dialogue
harder, marginalize remaining Chechen moderates.

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TRANSLATED_ATTACHMENT

Putin Oslo Meeting 2 - Background.doc
Background: Russia's Chechnya Strategy

Facts. Russia has some 70,000-75,000 Ministry of Defense (MOD)
and Interior
Ministry (MVD) forces deployed in and around Chechnya.
Approximately 45,000 are
MOD troops who lead the military attack. About 25,000-30,000 are
MVD forces who
follow up in "controlled" areas and try to set up local administrations
and
pólice forces. By all accounts, the troops are undisciplined and sloppy,
relying
on overwhelming force

EO 13526 1.4c, EO 13526 3.5(c)



EO 13526 1.4c, EO 13526 3.5(c)

The principal foreign involvement is money channeled through NGOs based in the Middle East and Pakistan.

Military Strategy. Both the Russians and the rebels have learned from the 1994-96 conflict. The Russians advance until they come into conflict with the rebels and then rely on artillery and air strikes. At that point, the rebels also withdraw, ceding territory rather than allowing themselves to be pummeled by artillery. The Russians claim that they are taking fewer casualties than in 1994. That is misleading. In 1994 the Russians advanced almost unopposed into Grozny, where the rebels then massacred an unprepared Russian force. The Russians then withdrew and shelled Grozny for six weeks, decimating the city to the point where they could enter it unchallenged.

In this context, Russia's strategy is becoming clearer. There are about 4,000-5,000 Russian troops just outside Grozny, with another 5,000 moving toward Grozny from the north and 8,000-10,000 advancing from the east; another 10,000 troops have been stalled in the West. With about 10,000 rebels in Grozny, it is unlikely the Russians will try to take the city now and risk a repeat of the 1994 massacre. Three outcomes are likely:

1. The Russians will surround Grozny (and Gudermes, the second largest city) and ratchet up artillery and air strikes until they rebels surrender or are sufficiently weakened to risk a ground battle. Daily air strikes have spiked over the past week to 50-70 flights per day; it is unclear that the Russians can sustain this tempo. The Russians are now saying they want to wrap up military operations by the end of November.

2. Civilian casualties will increase. With the rebels intermingled among the civilian population, it is almost inevitable that Russian air and artillery

strikes will hit civilians. The Russians are trying to drive civilians out of Grozny and Gudermes, leaving open corridors to the south. The border to Ingushetia is closed, leaving refugees vulnerable to indiscriminate attacks.

3. No credible political dialogue is under way. Putin has called Chechen President Maskhadov, the principal Chechen moderate, a tool of the terrorists. Putin has said they will find moderates to negotiate with, but Russia has not come up with anyone who is not considered a puppet.

Who's in Charge? To the extent anyone is in charge, it may be Putin. But as in the ill-fated dash to Pristina, the generals are interpreting their political guidance broadly. Defense Minister Sergeyev has said that his troops "have come to Chechnya to never leave." Putin has to balance these hot-blooded instincts against his own political interests. His ratings soared as the troops have advanced into Chechnya, but they will plummet if the military starts taking heavy combat losses. In any event, Yeltsin's deputy chief of staff has publicly reminded Putin that he will be held personally accountable for success or failure of the operation.

Our Objectives:

* Press the Russians to avoid a costly conflict that is likely to endanger innocent civilians, to harm Russia's democratic development, and damage its international standing. We have ramped up our public rhetoric in the aftermath of civilian attacks. We are working with UNHCR and ICRC to increase relief efforts for the nearly 180,000 refugees in neighboring regions, a task is complicated by terrible security.

* Prevent spillover to the south Caucasus and the creation of new problems in

Russian relations with Azerbaijan and Georgia. The Russians are pressuring the Georgians to put troops on Georgian territory to handle the southern exodus from Georgia, a step the Georgians oppose.

* Cooperate with Russia to prevent future terrorist attacks and to thwart terrorists such as Bin-Ladin from strengthening their connections to Islamists in the north Caucasus. We are providing help to take down the logistics network used by terrorists to funnel funds into the North Caucasus. Our embassies and 1.4(d) in the Caucasus, Central Asia, the Gulf, and South Asia are pressing host governments to cut off support for the insurgents.

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