

~~SECRET~~ -- ENTIRE TEXT

PRIVACY CHANNEL MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT GEORGE BUSH TO PRESIDENT  
YELTSIN. DELIVER TO CHARGE COLLINS ONLY

JIM, FOLLOWING IS A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT BUSH TO PRESIDENT  
YELTSIN. PLEASE DELIVER URGENTLY. THERE WILL BE NO SIGNED  
ORIGINAL.

WARM REGARDS,

BRENT

BEGIN TEXT OF MESSAGE

DEAR BORIS,

I WAS HEARTENED BY OUR CONVERSATION ON SUNDAY, IN WHICH YOU  
REAFFIRMED YOUR STRONG COMMITMENT TO OUR JUNE AGREEMENT ON  
FURTHER STRATEGIC ARMS REDUCTIONS AND THE ELIMINATION OF MIRVED  
ICBMS. WE BOTH WANT TO SIGN A TREATY CODIFYING THAT HISTORIC  
AGREEMENT; OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO OUR NATIONS AND TO THE WORLD  
REQUIRES NO LESS OF US.

THERE IS STILL MUCH WORK TO DO IF WE ARE TO BE ABLE TO SIGN THE  
START II TREATY BEFORE I LEAVE OFFICE. YOU HAVE IDENTIFIED THREE  
IMPORTANT ISSUES TO ME. YOUR FOREIGN MINISTRY SENT US A DRAFT  
TREATY TEXT THAT DIVERGES EVEN MORE FROM OUR JUNE AGREEMENT AND,  
IN SOME INSTANCES, FROM THE START I TREATY. THAT IS WHY I  
WELCOME YOUR REAFFIRMATION OF OUR JUNE AGREEMENT AS THE BASIS FOR  
THE ACTUAL TREATY, AND YOUR STATEMENT THAT MOST OF THE  
DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE U.S. AND RUSSIAN DRAFT TREATY TEXTS

DECLASSIFIED  
PER E.O. 12958,  
AS AMENDED  
2000-1334-F/1  
JL 3/27/08

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REFLECT RUSSIAN ECONOMIC CONCERNS, NOT POLITICAL OR MILITARY DIFFERENCES.

YOU SHOULD HAVE NO DOUBT THAT THE UNITED STATES IS PREPARED TO ASSIST RUSSIA FINANCIALLY AND TECHNICALLY TO IMPLEMENT BOTH THE START TREATY AND START II. INDEED, OUR JUNE AGREEMENT, FOR THE FIRST TIME IN ARMS CONTROL, FEATURES THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH ASSISTANCE. U.S. TECHNICAL EXPERTS WILL BE IN MOSCOW NEXT WEEK TO CONTINUE DISCUSSION OF POSSIBLE ASSISTANCE PROJECTS.

LET ME OFFER A SUGGESTION AS TO HOW WE MIGHT PROCEED. ON CONVERSION OF SS-18 SILOS, I MUST TELL YOU THAT THIS IS BEYOND MY ABILITY TO ACCEPT. I UNDERSTAND THAT SENATOR NUNN, WHO WILL PLAY A CENTRAL ROLE IN OUR RATIFICATION PROCESS, RECENTLY EXPRESSED SIMILAR SENTIMENTS TO YOU. THESE SYSTEMS HAVE BECOME A SYMBOL OF SUCH IMPORTANCE THAT I CANNOT SEE ANY OTHER ALTERNATIVE TO THEIR DESTRUCTION. THEIR RETENTION, EVEN IF CONVERTED WITH THOROUGH SAFEGUARDS, JUST WOULD NOT BE AN ACCEPTABLE ALTERATION OF THE PROCEDURES CONTAINED IN START I.

IF YOU AND I CAN AGREE TO THE DISPOSITION OF THE SS-18 ISSUE THROUGH SILO DESTRUCTION, THEN I THINK WE COULD TURN THE REMAINDER OF THE NEGOTIATIONS OVER TO LARRY EAGLEBURGER AND ANDREI KOZYREV FOR RAPID CONCLUSION OF A TREATY TEXT. I BELIEVE THAT IT IS STILL POSSIBLE IN THE TIME REMAINING IF LARRY AND ANDREI WORK FROM THE U.S. DRAFT TEXT. I AM SURE YOU CAN

UNDERSTAND HOW DIFFICULT IT WOULD BE TO WORK FROM YOUR TEXT -- YOUR GOVERNMENT NEEDED FOUR MONTHS TO REVIEW OUR TEXT AND WE HAVE HAD YOUR FAR MORE COMPLICATED ONE, WITH ITS FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCES, FOR ONLY TWO WEEKS. OF COURSE, THEY WOULD HAVE TO RESOLVE DIFFERENCES ON SPECIFIC LANGUAGE. I WOULD SEND LARRY WITH CONCRETE INSTRUCTIONS TO ENABLE THE TREATY TO BE COMPLETED IN TIME FOR YOU AND ME TO SIGN.

I ALSO WOULD LIKE TO RESPOND TO YOUR SUGGESTION THAT GOVERNOR CLINTON MIGHT JOIN US IF WE MEET. I HAVE LOOKED INTO THIS THOROUGHLY AND, ALTHOUGH IT IS A GOOD IDEA IN PRINCIPLE, IT WOULD SIMPLY CREATE TOO MANY COMPLICATIONS IN OUR POLITICAL SYSTEM DURING A TRANSITION BETWEEN TWO POLITICAL PARTIES. AS I MENTIONED IN AN EARLIER LETTER, GOVERNOR CLINTON AND I AGREE THAT THE NEW U.S.-RUSSIAN PARTNERSHIP IS TOO IMPORTANT TO DELAY PROGRESS ON VITAL ISSUES. THEREFORE, GOVERNOR CLINTON HOPES YOU AND I CAN CONCLUDE THIS TREATY.

I UNDERSTAND THE RELUCTANCE YOU MIGHT HAVE AT A SIGNING CEREMONY ON AMERICAN SOIL, WITHOUT THE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET WITH THE PRESIDENT-ELECT AS A <sup>During</sup> ~~SPECIAL REASON~~ FOR YOUR VISIT. HOWEVER, ASSUMING WE ARE ABLE TO RESOLVE OUR DIFFERENCES OVER THE TREATY TEXT IN TIME FOR US TO CONCLUDE THE PROCESS, THERE ARE A VARIETY OF WAYS IN WHICH YOU AND I COULD ACCOMPLISH ITS SIGNATURE. FOR EXAMPLE, WE COULD MEET IN A THIRD COUNTRY OR EVEN HAVE SIMULTANEOUS SIGNING CEREMONIES IN OUR RESPECTIVE CAPITALS. FOR

THE MOMENT, HOWEVER, WE NEED TO FOCUS ALL OUR ATTENTION ON  
CONCLUDING THE TREATY ~~TEXT~~.

SINCERELY,

GEORGE BUSH

END TEXT OF MESSAGE