

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Expanded Session on Security Issues with
President Yeltsin of the Russian Federation

PARTICIPANTS: The President
The Vice President
Warren Christopher, The Secretary of State
William Perry, The Secretary of Defense
Anthony Lake, Assistant to the President for
National Security Affairs
Leon Fuerth, Assistant to the Vice President
for National Security Affairs
Lynn Davis, Undersecretary for International
Security Affairs
Thomas Pickering, U.S. Ambassador to the
Russian Federation
Nicholas Burns, Special Assistant to the
President and Senior Director for
Russian, Ukrainian and Eurasian Affairs,
NSC
Rose Gottemoeller, Director for Russian,
Ukrainian and Eurasian Affairs, NSC
Notetaker
Peter Afanasenko, Interpreter

Boris Yeltsin, President of the Russian
Federation
Oleg Soskovets, Deputy Prime Minister
Andrey Kozyrev, Minister of Foreign Affairs
Pavel Grachev, Minister of Defense
Oleg Davydov, Minister of Foreign Economics
Trade
Georgiy Mamedov, Deputy Minister of Foreign
Affairs
Viktor Illyushin, First Assistant to the
President
Yuliy Vorontsov, Russian Ambassador to the
U.S.
Interpreter

DATE, TIME September 27, 1994; 4:35-5:35pm
AND PLACE: Cabinet Room

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The President: I would like to start with a summary of what we discussed earlier, then go to issues on which there is no controversy, then you and I will discuss Nagorno-Karabakh one-on-one for a few minutes. I would like to break promptly at 5:30 so that you have some time to rest before this evening. (U)

On the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty, you and I agreed to get our experts together today or tomorrow to discuss areas of flexibility. We agree your concerns are legitimate. We will then move the talks into a trilateral framework as John Major suggested. We agreed that these talks would not be substitutes for the discussions on in Vienna, but would support them. (U)

On COCOM, we discussed the issue of Russian arms sales to Iran. You said that there would be no new contracts, but that you would service existing contracts. Our experts are to get together to discuss this matter. They will discuss it as a dimension of Russia's joining the successor regime to COCOM. (U)

President Yeltsin: We must work together on this. We will fulfill our promise. (U)

The President: On Bosnia, we agreed to consider the idea of an international conference and the Russian government would consider the progress with Milosevic on the question of borders. (U)

We have not yet discussed nuclear safety, but I want to say a word about it. Clearly, we need to work together. The Vice President told me how you raised the NPT issue in your lunchtime toast. I have also appreciated your cooperation on international crime problems. I believe that as a political matter, one way to keep up the public support for our partnership is to work together on the crime problem. People here are very worried about it. (U)

On nuclear security, should we go into specific steps? (U)

Secretary Perry: I already had a very good one-on-one discussion with Minister of Defense Grachev. I start off with the belief that while we remain concerned about nuclear security, we are concerned about ours and yours. The newspapers have overdramatized the problem, but we should take further steps to reduce the risk of losing control of nuclear materials or warheads. Both the United States and Russia have strong controls but both can make improvements in our Defense and Energy ministries. The issue is not only nuclear warheads but materials as well. One action underway in the United States which Russia should follow is to reduce the number of storage sites. Another is documentation control. I believe we should begin with a

confidential exchange of stockpile data and discussion of methods or ways to improve security of warheads and materials already under Defense control, and use Nunn-Lugar monies. In summary, I believe you have good methods of control, but both of us can improve and we should cooperate. The first steps is an exchange of information on stockpiles. The second is discussion of ways to improve control of nuclear warheads and materials. We should do this arm-in-arm, because a failure could affect both--indeed, the whole world. (S)

President Yeltsin: I would like to talk about North Korea. You have reached good results in your discussions, but what we need is a power plant to be reequipped with light water fuels. We are proposing the resources of Russia--we build it. Of course, this would only be done with appropriate controls by the IAEA and the United States. How do you view this? (S)

The President: Mr. Secretary? (U)

Secretary Perry: With respect to North Korea, the negotiations are ongoing, but a great deal still needs to be accomplished. North Korea has agreed to freeze its activities. It is not reprocessing or refueling. It is uncertain whether they will maintain that position. We are still unconvinced as to the nature of their transition. Kim Jong Il has not formally assumed all the positions of leadership, and we are somewhat puzzled. (S)

Mr. Lake: The problem with the reactor is that for reasons of financial feasibility, there is a requirement for a South Korean reactor. We would very much appreciate Russian assistance in supporting projects. (S)

The President: I would like to know what you think. We have a very delicate role to play. Every time we negotiate with North Korea, it makes South Korea nervous. They are trying to establish a bilateral relationship and they are afraid if they do not build the reactor, then North Korea will find a way around it. The issue is not just financial. We have troops there and they are very exposed. We feel we have to work through the South Koreans. Maybe you can say something to North Korea to make them feel more secure. (S)

President Yeltsin: Kim Jong Il is a more rigid person, tougher. Some steps backwards are to be expected. Right now, North Korea is not going to talk to South Korea--it is useless for the next year or two. I understand your situation, taking into account South Korea and your troops. But it may be technically easier for you if we came in and helped with the reactor. We could involve U.S. companies to attract international financing. But

maybe major parts from Russia. If you agree, maybe we could start talking. (S)

The President: The real problem is that South Korea is ready to pay, but not if they cannot do the work. (S)

President Yeltsin: No, that is useless. It is not going to work. (S)

The President: You mean North Korea is not going to take it. (S)

President Yeltsin: Yes. Kim Jong Il wants first to strengthen his power base, which means no contacts with the South. It is not allowing him to take some steps. Time is needed. Until he firms up his power base, under no circumstances is he going to talk to the South Koreans. It is a political problem for him to do so. (S)

Secretary Christopher: There is an important sequencing issue here. North Korea seems to have demanded that a light water reactor be delivered and operating before it agrees not to reprocess. (S)

President Yeltsin: Yes. (U)

Secretary Christopher: We should not exclude the idea of an international consortium. But until we get agreement on sequencing, it is difficult to move forward. (S)

Secretary Perry: We are worried that even if we agree on financing, they will reverse themselves and refuel, then all hell will break loose here. Thus far they have escaped sanctions by maintaining a freeze. (S)

Minister Kozyrev: The thing is, the difficulties are now visible. To have a South Korean light water reactor causes additional difficulties for North Korea. The leadership simply cannot allow itself to agree. The United States representative is saying that the reactor has to be South Korean--this makes the talks more colicated. At the same time, it was our idea to propose going to a light water reactor, to once and for all solve the problem. In Geneva with Secretary Christopher and Bob Gallucci, we listened to the experts, who said a light water reactor is much more safe. At the same time, the North Koreans are saying that they want a Russian light water reactor. It is very important if the two Presidents could reach an accord saying that when the North Koreans are ready to go to a light water reactor, then it should be a Russian one. It would make current

and future negotiations simpler. Of course, it would also be a multi-billion dollar contract for us. (e)

The President: I have a proposal. But do you think if we agreed they would agree not to refuel? (e)

Minister Kozyrev: It would make it easier. (U)

The President: I have a suggestion. Suppose we asked Secretary Christopher and Minister Kozyrev to come up with a common diplomatic initiative. Our major concern is that we not be put in a position to have to go to the United Nations for sanctions. At all costs, we need to keep the freeze on. (e)

Secretary Christopher: OK. (U)

The President: Let's talk again tomorrow. (U)

President Yeltsin: Sure, let's do it. I agree. I've got a proposal on the issue of nuclear safety. What was being proposed on biological weapons--an information exchange--we should do the same on the nuclear issue. Did you receive our report on biological weapons? (e)

The Vice President: Pickering has it. (U)

Ambassador Pickering: I received it yesterday in New York. (U)

President Yeltsin: We should do the same kind of exchange on nuclear issues. We have told you everything about our BW program in that report. We have fulfilled our commitment. Now we need to figure out how to do a data exchange on nuclear warheads and materials. How much time do we need to set up such an exchange? (Confers with his delegation.) Soskovets says two months should be enough time. Can we agree on two months? (e)

Secretary Perry: It should not take any longer. (U)

The Vice President: We should complete it by December when our Commission meets. (U)

President Yeltsin: Yes, let's get it done by December. (U)

The Vice President: We're still translating the document received yesterday. (U)

President Yeltsin: The point is, we have done what we said, we have fulfilled our pledge. (U)

Minister Grachev: The cardinal issue is the new U.S. strategy, which I talked about with Secretary Perry yesterday. Nuclear security must be considered at the level of the Energy Department and MinAtom, too. So, before Vice President Gore's visit in December, we will work out an exchange on nuclear security by then. The second issue is nuclear security provided in terms of the START I and II Treaties. I informed Secretary Perry of all the issues of nuclear safety and security that were being implemented. Missiles are coming out of Kazakhstan and Belarus, warheads are being removed from Ukraine, all according to schedule. We are destroying strategic nuclear arms strictly according to schedule. There was a misunderstanding before this visit that we were stopping or slowing down. No. We showed Secretary Perry that we are on schedule. We have cut back 374 ICBMs, you saw 13. For submarines, we have cut back 184 compared to the 52 you counted. As far as tactical nuclear delivery vehicles on heavy bombers--both you and we have taken them all off. I'd like to propose that Perry come to one of our tactical nuclear handling sites when he visits in December, to see that safety is provided for. But we cannot destroy all the tactical nuclear weapons at once--unlike the United States, which is geographically in a more favorable position. You do not need them. But for us, within reasonable bounds we need some. There could be problems with some of the states to the south. They are contained now, but as a restraint to aggression some tactical nuclear weapons are needed. (S)

President Yeltsin: To be objective and fair, Pavel Sergeyeovich, I cannot agree. I said this to him: let's just add them up. You say you want to keep tactical nuclear weapons more than strategic, OK, get rid of that many more strategic. Either we knock out all tactical nuclear weapons, or sum them up. (S)

Minister Grachev: We're asking that at the level of experts that we look at this question one more time. Here is another difficulty: We are cutting back strategic nuclear weapons in accordance with START I, but the Treaty is not ratified. Now START II is pressing us, with a date of 2003 to complete reductions. If you do not press Ukraine, then we will not be able to proceed with START II. (S)

President Yeltsin: What concerns Ukraine is START I, not II. START II is a matter between us. So we have to press Ukraine with all our might. (S)

The President: President Kuchma is coming here. You said that he is OK. So we need to press them to accede to the Non-Proliferation Treaty by the time of the CSCE Summit in Budapest, and we have to ensure they get some credit. (S)

The Vice President: We should urge President Kuchma together to satisfy this requirement by the time of the CSCE Summit. (S)

President Yeltsin: Yes, and Ukraine in general. We should bring all the pressure we have to bear. We signed the Trilateral accord, we three, so then what? I've got to visit Ukraine in November. I'm going to press Kuchma to the wall. NPT or they get no gas or oil! (S)

The Vice President: Don't be too hard on him. (U)

The President: I will tell him that we need to get NPT out of the way to bring START I into force and to ratify START II. Then we can begin to explore START III ideas. (S)

President Yeltsin: No, Kuchma is fine. I think it is very realistic to expect to be able to finish NPT by the end of the year. As Grachev here will tell you, we have got to get START II going. (S)

Minister Grachev: We are already beginning to think about it. The difficulty has been in getting all of the warheads out of those three countries. (S)

President Yeltsin: I propose so that we do not have any surprise misunderstandings, that every three months we exchange information on how much has been destroyed. (S)

The President: Yes. (U)

President Yeltsin: Then our Ministers of Defense should sign on the bottom line, who has destroyed what, and where. (S)

Secretary Perry: To summarize what we and Minister Grachev have agreed: First, we will cooperate in ratifying START I and II and bringing them into force; second, once that is achieved, we will accelerate the pace of reductions, to go even faster by informal agreement, using Nunn-Lugar funds to do so. Third, we will start discussing what reductions will be possible under START III. And fourth, while we are discussing START III, each side will take unilateral reductions beyond START II. Each side will be taking unilateral steps toward START III (S)

The President: We have been doing some of that already? (U)

Secretary Perry: Yes. (U)

President Yeltsin: On the ratification of START I, that is fine, we are destroying all of those anyway. On the other points, let's do it this way: when START II enters into force, let us

take all of the weapons to be reduced under START II off of combat status. So all of the nuclear weapons subject to START II would be without their warheads. (S)

Secretary Perry: I like that. (U)

The President: Done. (U)

The Vice President: OK. (U)

Minister Grachev: Let's let our experts examine this. (U)

President Yeltsin: The experts will get it all balled up. (U)

Minister Grachev: President Clinton has said that under the new policy, no more reductions will take place until START II is ratified. (S)

President Yeltsin: That is what I'm talking about: after START II, we should take all the weapons subject to it off combat status right away. And it seems to me, Bill, that we do not have to wait for ratification of START II until we get planning for START III underway. We should create a joint working group. You remember how much time we took to get START II--and it took ten years to get START I going. So, we should just get around a table so by the time START II is ratified, we have a plan ready for START III and we can dovetail right into it. (S)

The Vice President: That sounds very good, partly because such long periods of time are involved here--it is very sound. (U)

The President: This way, we will not have a meeting where people say the experts have not had time to work on it. We will get to work on it right away. We need to be careful what we say publicly. We have to ratify START II. (S)

Secretary Perry. I want to keep a strong emphasis on ratifying START II. (S)

The President: But it is OK to have experts start talking now about the mechanics and details of START III. (S)

The Vice President: Why not? (U)

President Yeltsin: Let's do it. But we will tell the press that after START II, we will remove all the reentry vehicles reduced under the Treaty from combat status. No other states will be required to do that. After START I, we will have taken everything out of Kazakhstan, Ukraine and Belarus. (S)

Mr. Lake: But if we announce this before ratification, it could be a problem for the Senate. (S)

The President: No, he is saying after ratification. It will make the treaty reductions immediately effective, rather than waiting seven years. It shows we have decided to do something important here. (S)

President Yeltsin: We would also like to limit nuclear submarine patrolling zones. (S)

The President: That is a problem for us. (U)

The Vice President: Freedom of navigation of the seas is vital to us. It goes beyond Russia--other countries are getting submarines. We are not selling them. (S)

Minister Grachev: This has nothing to do with selling submarines. I do not appreciate this humor. Off the Kola peninsula, some submarines have entered our territorial waters and we almost had a catastrophe. (S)

President Yeltsin: We should be able to do this without hurting the naval operations of either side. (S)

Minister Kozyrev: As the member of the Duma elected from Murmansk, I can tell you that I hear from many of my constituents, complaining about this matter. (S)

President Yeltsin: I would like to move the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Murmansk, to get it out of Moscow. (S)

The President: You have raised a legitimate issue. We have had some long discussions on this. It causes problems for us, but maybe something can be done. We should come back to this tomorrow. (S)

Minister Grachev: So it falls to Perry and me to try to work out a solution. (S)

President Yeltsin: At least a formulation as to how to view this problem. (S)

The President: Before that, I want to stress that this is a big issue for us, throughout the whole history of the twentieth century. I want Perry to meet with you to talk about it. But we cannot agree to restrain operations along the lines you said. Let's talk about it tomorrow. (S)

President Yeltsin: Here is a sixth point for Perry, directly relevant to the Presidents. Let us say we get rid of the nuclear footballs. (S)

The President: What would my military aide do? (U)

President Yeltsin: Go back to the Air Force or Navy. (U)

The President: I have got to think about it. I have given it no thought. (U)

The Vice President: In our military doctrine, we rely on the idea of deterrence not only with the former Soviet Union in mind. As other nations develop long-range missiles and nuclear warheads of their own, we may be in an era where deterrence has a new orientation, regardless of the relationship between the U.S. and Russia. There might be other dangers. This would need to be studied very carefully. (S)

President Yeltsin: Of course we don't have to decide this today. But you have wonderful communications and we have wonderful communication. If I need to communicate with the nuclear forces, I can pick up any number of telephone lines to do so. But to drag around one of these briefcases, have one guy guarding another guy--it seems like too much. (S)

The President: I don't know, I need some time--one thing I have not spent time on is this issue. But when I took this job, I understood the symbolic importance that the football has in terms of civilian control over the military's decisions. It has nothing to do with you. It is a double check that only a civilian, elected leader can make this decision. (S)

President Yeltsin: OK. (U)

The President: Now, we have agreed to discuss chemical and biological weapons tomorrow, because you have given us something to look at. And on the demarcation between anti-ballistic missile and theater ballistic missile defense systems--in Naples, we made new proposals, then in August you made some new proposals in response to ours. Now Secretary Christopher has a set of proposals to give you to respond to what you gave us. You can look at them tonight. Maybe we can get close and finish this. (S)

Minister Kozyrev: It is not such a simple matter. I propose we move it to the Commission in October. We have included a provision on this in the joint statement. You send us your version. We will study it back home and decide how to proceed. (S)

-- End of Conversation --

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