

**THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON**

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March 31, 1993

**DECLASSIFIED
PER E.O. 13526**
2016-0132-M (1.03)
KBH 1/10/2020

TO: THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Warren Christopher *WC.*

SUBJECT: Meeting with President Boris Yeltsin of the Russian Federation

I. SETTING

At Vancouver, you will engage Boris Yeltsin directly on the toughest and most important foreign policy problem of your Presidency -- the ongoing transformation of Russia and its implications for the national security of the United States. Your Annapolis speech will set the stage by signalling your personal commitment to a broad and sustained American commitment to the support of democracy and market economic reform in Russia, despite the budgetary stringencies that we confront. When you meet Yeltsin, the phased approach we have developed will allow you to put a credible and innovative program on the table immediately. But it will also hold out to Yeltsin the prospect of even more substantial support, on both the bilateral and multilateral (G-7) tracks over the next few months. By phasing our support in this fashion, we are also signalling that we expect the Russians to take the economic stabilization steps that will be essential if our support is to be effective.

While economics will hold center stage at Vancouver, you will also need to engage Yeltsin on security and international issues. The Russian political crisis is certain to limit Yeltsin's ability to reach new agreements, even when they would clearly be to Russia's benefit. It will be important to probe the limits of Yeltsin's ability to cooperate with us on politically sensitive issues such as Bosnia and export of missile technology. We also need to open a frank dialogue with the Russians on the behavior of their military forces in some of the other new independent states of the former Soviet Union. These and a host of other questions will not be resolved at Vancouver. With the Russians and in our public

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comment, we need to underscore that Vancouver represents only the beginning of the Clinton Administration's engagement with Russia, and that we are in this for the long haul.

Yeltsin at Vancouver

Yeltsin has seized the initiative in Russia's gravest political crisis since the collapse of the Soviet Union. His courageous and thus far successful confrontation with the Congress has buoyed supporters and rallied many ordinary Russians.

However, despite the Congress' failure to impeach Yeltsin, the political crisis in Russia is far from over. All eyes will now focus on the April 25 referendum which the Congress has been forced to accept but which it is trying to control by setting the ground rules and the wording of the referendum questions. Yeltsin will ignore these actions of the Congress, setting the stage for a further heating-up of the political atmosphere as the vote approaches. Moreover, it is still not clear whether all of Russia's regions will participate in the plebiscite.

Behind the wrangling over the means of conducting the referendum lie even more intractable disagreements over Russia's future constitution, federal arrangements, and the nature and pace of economic reform. Until now, these issues have been fought out within the confines of the Kremlin and the parliament. This will now change dramatically. The April 25 referendum is supposed to take place in every city, town, and village across the country. The key governing instruments will be Russia's eighty-nine republics and regions which, by law, are responsible for conducting the referendum. It is to these entities -- many of whose governing organs are strongholds of the old guard -- that the battle for Russia's future will turn.

With April 25 looming in the background, the Vancouver summit has assumed extraordinary importance for Yeltsin. Foreign Minister Kozyrev expressed to you Yeltsin's gratitude for the support given him over the past week. Yeltsin will seek to reinforce this support by establishing a personal rapport with you based on a frank and open discussion of the internal situation in Russia. For this reason, the Russians have asked that the meetings be kept small.

Yeltsin will repeat the warning sounded by Kozyrev that Russian economic reform is in a race against time and that, if we and our partners wish to influence the outcome, we must act now to improve Russian economic prospects. He will stress that he and the reformers will not be helped by general promises with the specifics to be defined later. The perception that the West has failed to honor past promises of aid has figured heavily in the Russian political debate -- at one point last week, Yeltsin felt constrained to acknowledge to the Congress that it had been a mistake to rely on U.S. assistance. You can

therefore expect the Russian president to repeat Kozyrev's message that the time has come to pass from intentions to decisions on concrete measures.

You will want to explain to Yeltsin the specifics of our bilateral economic package and our view of prospects for the G-7 process. We expect him to press for an early G-7 summit. We have informed the Russians that this possibility will be on the agenda of the April 13-14 meeting of G-7 foreign and finance ministers in Tokyo. At the same time, it will be important to stress to Yeltsin that a summit that failed to deliver concrete results would do more harm than good to the cause of Russian reform.

In foreign affairs, Russian policy has taken on a more "nationalist" coloration as Yeltsin's hardline critics have pounded him, and Foreign Minister Kozyrev, for being too accommodating to the United States. The deepening domestic crisis has limited Yeltsin's freedom of maneuver even further, especially on issues such as Bosnia and START II that have sparked criticism from the parliament.

On Bosnia, Yeltsin will seek to avoid decisions that could add to his domestic travails. On START II, he will argue that parliament is in no mood now to give the treaty objective consideration and that the ratification debate should be deferred until later this spring or summer -- or, if his April 25 plebiscite succeeds, until there is a new parliament. Yeltsin is likely to note in this connection the strong opposition in parliament to ratifying START II before Ukraine has ratified START I and adhered to the NPT. Even on lesser agreements -- involving highly enriched uranium (HEU) and the safe and secure dismantlement of nuclear weapons (SSD) -- the Russians may be reluctant to come to closure now lest these accords become caught up in domestic political controversy.

Given Yeltsin's commitment to reform and to cooperation with us, it will be in our interest to find ways to work with him in the management of these domestically hot issues. There are certain sensitive matters, however, on which you will need to lay down firm markers.

You will need to urge that Yeltsin agree to our proposal on missile technology control in return for access to the space launch market. Unless this deal is concluded, U.S. law requires sanctions on the Russian enterprises that are selling missile technology to India. This in turn would, absent presidential waiver, lead to a cutoff of funds available under the FREEDOM Support Act.

The second sensitive issue involves the growing involvement of Russian military forces in conflicts in the new independent states of the former Soviet Union. While this involvement has often been undertaken by local commanders without apparent sanction from Moscow, there have been a number of cases where


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it has had Moscow's tacit approval. Yeltsin should understand that Russian failure to respect the independence and territorial integrity of the new states would jeopardize public and Congressional support for him and Russian reform.

In our judgment, both of these issues could best be raised in your initial one-on-one meeting with Yeltsin. The intimacy of this meeting will allow for a freer discussion and greater candor.

II. TOPICS

- o Stress our strong support for building democracy and market economic reform in Russia and President Yeltsin's leadership in that effort.
- o Stress the importance of an active and effective U.S.-Russian partnership that benefits both sides.
- o Emphasize the importance we attach to the economic agenda and outline a package of bilateral assistance measures, explaining to Yeltsin that, while we believe this package is substantial, we are prepared to go to Congress and the American people to seek additional funding.
- o Stress the importance of GOR cooperation with the G-7 to put a package of macroeconomic assistance in place and to adopt economic policies to make it effective. The ability of the G-7 to provide support is linked to the GOR's ability to stabilize its economy.
- o Express appreciation for Russia's willingness to work closely with us, bilaterally and at the UN, in seeking a negotiated settlement to end a number of regional conflicts, including those in the Middle East and ex-Yugoslavia.
- o Seek Yeltsin's cooperation on a number of arms control issues, including the sharing of HEU proceeds and draft security assurances for Ukraine.
- o  Propose that, as soon as Ukraine ratifies START, the U.S. and Russia call a "Lisbon II" foreign ministers meeting to exchange instruments of ratification, provide security assurances, and discuss implementation of the treaty. The forum would continue to meet periodically.
- o Stress the importance of non-proliferation and press for Russian agreement to our proposal on the control of missile technology.
- o Express concern regarding certain Russian military actions in the new independent states of the former Soviet Union.

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