

THE WHITE HOUSE  
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2004-1975-MR  
JK 9/23/08

## MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with Mikhail Gorbachev, President of the  
Soviet UnionPARTICIPANTS: The President  
Mikhail Gorbachev, President  
Interpreter: Dmitri Zarechnak  
Notetaker: Nicholas Burns, NSC StaffDATE, TIME: December 25, 1991, 10:03 - 10:25 a.m.  
AND PLACE: Camp DavidThe President: Hello, Mikhail. (U)President Gorbachev: George, my dear friend. It is good to hear  
your voice. (U)The President: I greet you on this momentous day, this historic  
day. I appreciate your calling me. (U)President Gorbachev: Let me begin by saying something pleasant  
to you: Merry Christmas to you, Barbara and your family. I had  
been thinking about when to make my statement, Tuesday or today.  
I finally decided to do it today, at the end of the day. So let  
me say first Merry Christmas and very best wishes. (U)

Well, let me say that in about two hours I will speak on Moscow  
TV and will make a short statement about my decision. I have  
sent a letter to you, George. I hope you will receive it  
shortly. I said in the letter a most important thing. And I  
would like to reaffirm to you that I greatly value what we did  
working together with you, first as Vice President and then as  
President of the United States. I hope that all leaders of the  
Commonwealth and, above all, Russia understand what kind of  
assets we have accrued between the leaders of our two countries.  
I hope they understand their responsibility to preserve and  
expand this important source of capital. (U)

The debate in our union on what kind of state to create took a  
different track from what I thought right. But let me say that I  
will use my political authority and role to make sure that this  
new commonwealth will be effective. I am pleased that already at  
Alma-Ata the leaders of the commonwealth worked out important  
nuclear and strategic agreements. I hope that in Minsk they will

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take decisions on other questions to assure a mechanism of cooperation among republics. (S)

George, let me say something to you that I regard as very important. (U)

The President: Okay. (U)

President Gorbachev: Of course, it is necessary to move to recognize all of these countries. But I would like you to bear in mind the importance for the future of the commonwealth that the process of disintegration and destruction does not grow worse. So, helping the process of cooperation among republics is our common duty. I would really like to emphasize this to you. (S)

Now, about Russia--this is the second most important emphasis in our conversations. I have here on my desk a decree of the President of the USSR on my resignation. I will also resign my duties as Commander-in-Chief and will transfer authority to use the nuclear weapons to the President of the Russian Federation. So I am conducting affairs until the completion of the constitutional process. I can assure you that everything is under strict control. As soon as I announce my resignation, I will put these decrees into effect. There will be no disconnection. You can have a very quiet Christmas evening. Again, about Russia, let me say we should all do our best to support it. I will do this to support Russia. But our partners should do this too and should play a role to help and support it. (S)

As for me, I do not intend to hide in the taiga, in the woods. I will be active politically, in political life. My main intention is to help all the processes here begun by Perestroika and New Thinking in world affairs. Your people, the press here, have been asking me about my personal relationship with you. I want you to know at this historic time that I value greatly our cooperation together, our partnership and friendship. Our roles may change but I want to assure you that what we have developed will not change. Raisa and I send to you and Barbara our very best wishes. (S)

The President: Mikhail, let me say first how grateful I am for this call. I listened to your presentation with great interest. We will stay involved, particularly with the Russian republic whose enormous problems could get worse this winter. I am delighted you won't plan to hide in the woods and that you will be active politically. I have total confidence that will benefit the new commonwealth. (S)

I have written you a letter to be posted today. And in it I express the conviction that what you have done will live in history and be fully appreciated by historians. (S)

I appreciate your comments on nuclear weapons. This is of vital significance internationally and I commend you and the leaders of

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the republics for what has been a great process. I note with interest that the constitutional responsibilities on this issue have been passed to Boris Yeltsin. I assure you we will have good cooperation on this. ~~(S)~~

And now, Mikhail, on the personal side. I have noticed the wonderfully strong statements from you on your relationships with me and Jim Baker. I appreciate them very much since it is exactly the way I feel. You found me at Camp David with Barbara and three of our kids and grandchildren. One of our kids is in Florida and the other with family in Virginia. ~~(S)~~

The horseshoe pit where you threw that ringer is still in good shape. That reminds me that in my letter to you, I say that I hope our paths will cross soon again. You are most welcome in the U.S. Perhaps we could even meet here at Camp David when you have straightened out your affairs. Our friendship is as strong as ever and will continue to be as events unfold. There is no question about that. ~~(S)~~

I will, of course, deal with respect, and openly with the leaders of the Russian republic and the other republics. We will move forward with recognition and respect for the sovereignty that each has. We will be working with them on a wide array of issues. None will interfere with my desire to stay in touch and I welcome suggestions from you whatever your new role may be. But I do want to keep intact the friendships that Barbara and I value very, very much. ~~(S)~~

And so at this special time of year and at this historic time, We salute you and thank you for what you have done for world peace. Thank you very much. (U)

President Gorbachev: Thank you, George. I was glad to hear all of this today. I am saying good bye and shaking your hands. You have said to me many important things and I appreciate it. (U)

The President: All the best to you, Mikhail. (U)

President Gorbachev: Good-bye. (U)

-- End of Conversation --

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