

RELEASE IN FULL

## Gore Debrief on One-on-One w/Yeltsin

## Atmospherics:

At Krylatskoye Hospital, in sitting room of BNY's suite. Three chairs around coffee table. Gore in center, BNY and Chernomyrdin on either side. Kremlin interpreter also present. Kremlin camera crew and still photographer allowed in to shoot photos at top of session. BNY in suit and tie. Nose still a little swollen. No bandages, but some faint subdural bruising still evident around nose. Looks basically normal.

Yeltsin very friendly, animated, obviously "on best behavior." He clearly had as his objective for the meeting to put the whole Budapest thing behind us if he could be satisfied we had some minimal understanding on NATO. He displayed some "ferociousness" at points, but "not like when he's drunk -- I've been through that."

## NATO Expansion, Budapest:

Gore's Impressions: Yeltsin had reacted to something BC said in his speech at Budapest -- probably when BC declared that the "process of NATO expansion had begun." This statement caused a rhetorical, chemical reaction. BC's comment combined with the NAC language on 1995 caused an explosion. The Russians had clearly misread the NAC language on 1995 -- either willfully or because they had been fed bad information by the Europeans (some combination of the Germans, French and indirectly, the Poles). The problem was compounded by Kozyrev; Yeltsin went to Budapest listening for bad news and thought he'd heard it.

Gore opens by telling BNY how much he appreciates the meeting and conveying BC's personal best wishes for his speedy recovery. He then gives his prepared talking points on NATO expansion. Gore said, "look, the reason we were surprised in Budapest is that in our hearts we didn't perceive any difference between what BC told you in September and what he said in Budapest." (Earlier Yeltsin had asked, "why did you change?") "What Clinton told you in September was that eventually NATO will expand. But the process will be gradual and open and we will consult carefully with you. The process will be conducted in parallel with a deepening of the US-Russia partnership and your partnership with NATO." Gore then uses the metaphor of two space stations docking, using his hands to illustrate.

Yeltsin: Da, Da. (He also starts making the docking hand motions with his hands.) "Simultaneous."

Gore: "Yes. We need a process of three things: our bilateral partnership; Russia's relationship with NATO; and NATO expansion. It must be gradual."

Yeltsin: Yes, in parallel. Simultaneous, simultaneous. (He then makes hand gestures to indicate one space station moving forward and the second moving away from it.) Not like this.

They then have a long discussion about what "gradual" means.

\* Yeltsin: Since the NAC said 1995, "gradual" could mean 12 months.

Gore: No.

Yeltsin: Or it could mean 10-15 years.

Gore shrugs, i.e. "anything's possible."

\* Yeltsin then sought specific assurances that NATO would not expand in 1995.

\* Yeltsin: When you come to the middle of 1995 and you need to send a signal to the Poles to tell them they are going to join, what will you do?

Gore offers to trade talking points with Yeltsin so he can see exactly what Gore was authorized to say, i.e., that 1995 will be a year of study and briefing only. (At the end of the meeting, they do exchange talking points.)

\* Gore: We understand you have parliamentary elections in mid-1995 and it would be hard for you if we moved forward then. I think you have been given bad information from some people other than us. We have no intention of doing that.

\* Gore suggests they shake hands to seal the deal that NATO will not expand in 1995. They shake, but Yeltsin is a little reluctant, thinking he should have sought more.

On next steps, Gore suggests Christopher and Kozyrev begin a process and he and Chernomyrdin will also stay in touch on the issue. Yeltsin agrees.

Yeltsin: There is a second question. If you do this (expand NATO), what is Russia's relationship to NATO?

Gore: Well, on one extreme, conceptually we have not ruled out that Russia could be a part of NATO.

Yeltsin: Nyet, Nyet. That doesn't make sense. (The implication here is that this is improbable; Russia is very big and NATO is very small.)

Gore: I'll take your word for it that it's not probable, but in the process of consultations, we should seek to find the very best relationship between Russia and NATO. Our goal is an undivided Europe and we must reach it.

Yeltsin: Agreed, but we may not reach our goal. Europe may break down into two blocs. What then will be Russia's relationship with NATO and Russia's relationship with the U.S.?

Gore: Our friendship is very important. No matter what happens, we will be interested in our partnership.

Yeltsin: That is very important to us. If you mean that, what you have said is very important. (To the interpreter/notetaker, Yeltsin says, "Write that down.") Great, I think we can consider this behind us.

In reviewing what he will say to the press, Gore asks if he can say "We had a misunderstanding, but it's behind us." Yeltsin suggests he not even refer to it as a misunderstanding; just focus on the strength of the relationship.

COCOM:

Earlier, in the car enroute to the hospital, Gore gave Chernomyrdin the list of our arms exports to Saudi Arabia. Gore says, "On Wednesday, you suggested a swap. I said I'd try. I got it done. I've got the list. My people told me to hold it for a mutual swap when you give me the Iran information. But you are my friend; I trust you." Chernomyrdin immediately asks his aide for his briefcase so he can put the list away in a special folder, but he does not offer Gore their list of exports to Iran. Gore teases him: "I thought you were reaching for your list on Iran." Chernomyrdin asks Gore if he plans to raise CoCom with Yeltsin. Gore says, "No. I'm working on that with you." Chernomyrdin says, "Good."

After they discuss NATO, Yeltsin asks Gore, "What about COCOM?"

Gore: I think the Prime Minister and I have found a way to solve it.

Yeltsin gives Gore an incredulous look.

Gore: In September, you and President Clinton agreed Russia would fulfill its existing contracts to Iran, but you'd have no new contracts. You'd get into the new regime, subject to our being able to insure that your existing contracts are not open ended.

Yeltsin: Da. That's what we agreed.

Gore: On Wednesday, the Prime Minister suggested we give you

information on our Saudi contracts in exchange. I've already given it to him.

Yeltsin and Chernomyrdin then talk heatedly among themselves in Russian. Gore asks the interpreter what's going on. The interpreter says Yeltsin is confirming Chernomyrdin got the stuff on Saudi Arabia and on that basis agreeing to allow Chernomyrdin to give us the Russian information on Iran.

Later, at the airport, Mamedov comes up to Gore and Chernomyrdin and thanks them both for the "tactical breakthrough", saying "you've unlocked it. Now that we know exactly what you want, we'll get back to you on Iran, BW and CW." Chernomyrdin points to Mamedov and says, "he's going to be handling alot of the work of the Commission."

After the debrief on COCOM, Talbott advises Gore that Lynn Davis is under pressure to impose sanctions, but they would then be waived for 90 days. A decision memo has been cleared interagency. Gore says "For God's sake, do NOT impose sanctions now." Talbott reiterates that they would be imposed but then waived. Gore says, "No, put it off. I'll talk to Lynn."