

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: First Expanded Meeting with President Boris Yeltsin of Russia on Military and Security Issues

PARTICIPANTS: The President
The Vice President
James A. Baker III, Secretary of State
Richard B. Cheney, Secretary of Defense
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Robert S. Strauss, Ambassador to the Russian Federation
Paul Wolfowitz, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy
Reginald Bartholomew, Under Secretary of State for International Security
Dennis Ross, Director for Policy Planning, Department of State
Ed A. Hewett, Senior Director for Russian and Eurasian Affairs, NSC Staff
John Gordon, Senior Director for Defense Policy and Arms Control, NSC Staff
Thomas M.T. Niles, Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian Affairs
Nicholas Burns, Director for Russian and Eurasian Affairs, NSC Staff, Notetaker
Dmitri Zarechnak, Interpreter

Boris Yeltsin, President
Yevgeniy Gaydar, First Deputy Prime Minister
Andrey Kozyrev, Minister of Foreign Affairs
Pavel Grachev, Minister of Defense
Vladimir Lukin, Ambassador of Russia to the U.S.
Viktor Ilyushin, First Assistant to the President
Yuri Petrov, Chief of the Presidential Administration
Yuriy Skokov, Secretary, Security Council
Dimitriy Ryurikov, Assistant to the President
Yuliy Vorontsov, Adviser to the President
Georgiy Mamedov, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs
Vyacheslav Kostikov, Press Secretary

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Georgiy Berdennikov, Deputy of Foreign
Affairs
Nikolai Spassky, Notetaker
Interpreter

DATE, TIME June 16, 1992, 2:30 - 4:10pm
AND PLACE: Cabinet Room

The President: Mr. President, this is our first expanded meeting with our top teams. I want to begin by saluting you and your Administration. We are extraordinarily grateful for your visit and the positive steps that we just announced on arms. I am also grateful for the positive information on American POWs. This is a two-way street. If we can help with your Afghanistan prisoners of war, we will do so. We do not have much influence there, but we understand it is a major concern of yours and we will do as much as we can. I salute what you are doing at home. This is a meeting on security concerns -- but we have already taken care of the most important issues. I would invite you to take the floor.
(S)

President Yeltsin: Thank you, Mr. President. Together, you and I have just announced decisions of historic and unparalleled importance. We had the political will to close on these agreements, in contrast to the old dogmas, and we agreed with each other calmly and serenely. The ceilings -- 3,000 to 3,500 -- are low but realistic. We need to think now of the manner by which we can put them into practice. (S)

I would request that you consider allocating some funds to us for targeted investments to assist in nuclear disarmament, including at Arzamas 16, Chelyabinsk 70 and Sverdlovsk 45. These are the three major plants for nuclear missile production. I believe we must assure that strategic missiles are dismantled only by experts. This will also increase job opportunities there. (S)

We employ roughly 40,000-50,000 men at each. I have visited them all. Together, we will use the \$400 million to build storage facilities at the three and to store dismantled uranium and plutonium. We will have to think together to produce a common technology to recycle uranium and plutonium as fuel for power plants. Our scientists have done some work on this and we have design facilities. We have agreed with Ukraine, Byelarus and Kazakhstan that destruction will start first in their countries during stage I. Stage II destruction will be mainly in Russia.
(S)

I may say to your Congress that -- and Grachev can affirm this -- to demonstrate our political bona fides, we have begun to dismantle our SS-18 heavy missiles and to remove them from alert status. On our heavy bombers, 100 of them will be converted to conventional purposes. We will exchange letters of guarantee on this -- this is a pledge from me to you. (S)

We have agreed that the SS-24s and Peacekeepers will retain their old platforms, even if there is downloading -- it would be too expensive otherwise. Baker and Kozyrev will exchange letters on that. ~~(S)~~

The great progress we made is no surprise to our delegation. We had worked on this confidentially back home -- the range of 3,000-3,500 in the second stage with each country free to choose its level. I want us to discard the notion that great powers must have nuclear weapons -- because greatness depends on culture, on wealth, living standards. This is how we will compete in the future and the basis upon which we can assist each other. ~~(S)~~

We will also sign an agreement on a global shield to protect against some other countries. We will not fight each other. But there may be other crises, like the Gulf crisis, and we must have a way to safeguard against them. ~~(S)~~

The President: If there are no other questions, I would like to move down the agenda. I feel that we are close to a Chemical Weapons Convention and I want to bring it to a close this summer. We are ready to do so. At Camp David, we talked about a new security relationship. We should establish more vigorous and regular consultations. I like the concept of our top defense people getting together. We have asked Dennis Ross to chair a group for this purpose. I think military exchanges are a good idea. I am all for that, and it can help to avoid misunderstandings. ~~(S)~~

Secretary Cheney: Mr. Grachev and I will meet tomorrow to discuss an expansion of our military contacts. ~~(S)~~

President Yeltsin: Yes, in this context, let me add: we have a strong Navy in Russia. At the end of World War Two, the Germans sank chemical weapons in the Baltic Sea. These containers are now rusting and, in a matter of years, there could be a catastrophe and a big impact on our civilization. If the our two navies could work out a joint project to destroy those chemical agents, this would be an important achievement. ~~(S)~~

The President: I may have misspoke on the Chemical Weapons convention. You said this morning that it would be ready by fall. ~~(S)~~

President Yeltsin: Yes, by fall. To be candid, this is a purely financial issue, not political. I don't need much money to destroy the biological weapons, but I do need money for chemical weapons destruction. It is just a question of time. We tried to build plants to destroy chemical weapons in several cities, but people objected. They didn't want them there. I wanted to build in three places and failed. But we will sign the agreement. ~~(S)~~

The President: We know exactly what you are talking about. We had a similar problem on Johnston Island. We should cooperate on these technical problems. ~~(S)~~

With your permission, let's touch on Space. We will sign an agreement tomorrow. We will support your bid to launch one of the Inmarsat satellites -- this is an exception to our policy. Before additional launches, we will need agreement on international launch guidelines -- this is a highly sensitive question. ~~(S)~~

NASA is studying the Soyuz emergency recovery vehicle. This is a potentially very rich area for work. I know of your interest in space. Our Vice President is Chairman of our National Space Council and will discuss this with you tomorrow. ~~(S)~~

President Yeltsin: I will be at the Air and Space Museum today. ~~(U)~~

The Vice President: As the President indicated, the Space agreement is a major step forward. On Inmarsat, I would like to emphasize how sensitive this is. We are ready to set a date for a Russian Cosmonaut to ride on the Space Shuttle -- in November *September* 1993 and this will hopefully include a spacewalk. This will help us here at home to prove the relevance of space. I hope we can agree on a schedule for our Astronauts to travel on Mir in 1993, especially for life sciences data. We want to work in space as partners. Finally, we want a docking rendez-vous between the Shuttle and Mir in 1994 -- that will really demonstrate our partnership and our interest in Space. I want to congratulate both of you on this agreement. This is new -- it won't replace the arms deals -- but it is new and speaks to the next frontier. ~~(S)~~

President Yeltsin: Yes, Mr. Vice President, thank you and I appreciate your views. I think you omitted one point -- a joint mission to Mars. ~~(S)~~

The Vice President: We have no problem in trying to get to Mars -- 50 years after the Moon landing is our aim. That could be 2019. ~~(S)~~

The President: Are you suggesting more consultations on a long-range program to Mars? ~~(S)~~

President Yeltsin: Well, I think the draft agreement should include some provision about our joint preparation for Mars. We should not compete to get there first. We should cooperate. We don't care about competition. We should do it together and add a clause to the Space agreement to that effect. You have unique experience, and we do too. ~~(S)~~

The President: I don't know who is taking the lead on this. ~~(S)~~

The Vice President: I haven't seen the final language. In our agreement, we wanted to discuss specific programs. On Mars, we face spending cuts and there are some political and technical problems in getting too specific. But we are moving forward together. But we are not ready to get too specific on Mars yet. ~~(S)~~

President Yeltsin: Still, Mr. Vice President, I thought we could agree on a flexible formulation, subject to funding. We could say that we intend to make a joint effort on Mars. We should express our willingness to do this. Let's join together. ~~(S)~~

The President: Let's get some language on this such as "explore ways to work together on Mars." ~~(S)~~

On the proliferation of weapons, we share a goal on the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. We have a new Moscow Center on Science and Technology. We should continue to stem proliferation in other areas -- Korea, the Middle East. We need your leadership. I would be interested in working on all that. We have some problems with China on that. I would urge you to join a consensus -- it may be difficult -- on the supply of nuclear reactors to Iran. ~~(S)~~

Secretary Baker: We ought to clear up our old agenda. We should aim for the ratification of CFE at Helsinki, and we want to push Byelarus on this. The ratification of the START treaty is still important as a basis for additional reductions. We will be working on this next week. Also, we need to find ways to get Kazakhstan, Ukraine and Byelarus to accede to the NPT. We need to be careful how to handle this. We should brief them on our new agreement. And START should enter into force before they sign the NPT. ~~(S)~~

President Yeltsin: Thank you. I would simply say on START ratification that our Parliamentary commission is working on it. I agreed with Khasbulatov that Parliament will work until July 5-10 to assure ratification before their recess. There will be a 40-50 day break on the recess. We have a treaty with Kazakhstan on security. We have agreed they will sign the NPT as a non-nuclear weapons state. On June 23, I will see Kravchuk and will insist on the reaffirmation of the commitment on the NPT. ~~(S)~~

The President: Dick? (U)

Secretary Cheney: Mr. President, we will discuss many of these issues with Minister Grachev. On military to military ties, we will arrange for young Russians to attend our military schools. ~~(S)~~

President Yeltsin: Okay. On nuclear testing, I understand that we have less common ground here. We should bridge the gap. Our scientists want to assure reliability but I still signed a one-year moratorium, as did France. Could we at least start a

negotiating process to agree on a limited number of tests per year? Let our negotiators work out a limit. This is an important environmental issue. We have closed Semipalatinsk. But there is still a public outcry on the one still open. I would appreciate your cooperation so that we can talk. (S)

The President: There is a lot of sentiment for changing policy on nuclear testing. But safety and reliability concerns me -- maybe, Dick, you can start to discuss this. We are convinced that we must do some testing. We should talk. But I do not want to mislead you -- our experts are convinced that we need to test. I do want to get on the same wavelength with you and your experts. Dick, share what you can so that President Yeltsin knows about our concerns. (S)

Secretary Cheney: It is safer to test than not to test. We are convinced that it is unsafe to have a stockpile of weapons whose reliability we are unsure of. (S)

President Yeltsin: This is a pity because I also talked to my scientists. They say that two or three tests per year are enough. So I beg to differ, Mr. President, on minimizing environmental damage. I went to the Altai region. In 1949, our tests at Semipalatinsk contaminated 1.5 million people through the tests and the winds. Children were crippled. It was a terrible loss. It happened at Novzenum, not far from Moscow -- people live there. My Minister of Defense tells me that out of every thirty people, only one can be drafted since their health is no good. Let our scientists talk to establish a minimum ceiling. (S)

The President: We will talk. You are right. Let's get our people together to share information. We have not had the type of experience you have had. (S)

Secretary Baker: We haven't had more than 5-6 tests in the last year. (S)

President Yeltsin: I know that. Let's start with a scientific seminar. Let them do a workshop with our Foreign Service and military officers. (S)

The President: This all makes sense. Let's do it. But let's hear from Cheney why testing makes sense. We had a meeting on this recently. Let's talk about scientific exchanges. (S)

-- End of Conversation --