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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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REVIEW AUTHORITY: Marvin Russell, Senior Reviewer

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with President Boris Yeltsin of Russian Federation (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
President Yeltsin
Interpreter: Demitry Zarechnak
Notetakers: John Beyrle and Rose Gottemoeller

DATE, TIME AND PLACE: September 21, 1993, 3:56 - 4:13pm
White House Residence (President's Study)

President Yeltsin: Good evening, Bill. (U)

The President: Hello, Boris. I have just been briefed on your speech tonight and I wanted to call you right away to get your personal sense of what this step will mean for you, for the Russian political process, and for reform. I want to issue a public statement to state my support for you but before I do I wanted to hear from you how this affects your position and the process of reform in Russia. (S)

President Yeltsin: Bill, the Supreme Soviet has totally gone out of control. It no longer supports the reform process. They have become communist. We cannot no longer put up with that. For that reason, today I signed a decree on elections to a new democratic assembly to take place on December 11 and 12. In that period, the Supreme Soviet and Congress actions will not have any effect. Everything will be governed by Presidential decree. All the democratic forces are supporting me. (S)

The President: Are the military and security services with you? (S)

President Yeltsin: Both the military and Ministry of Internal Affairs have come out in support of me. There is no disorder for the time being. There are about 300 people gathered but they are dispersing. I think there will be no bloodshed. (S)

The President: That's good. Your speech comes at an important time here -- the Senate will act this week on the \$2.5 billion assistance package for Russia and the other states. Secretary Christopher is with key members of Congress now to underscore our continued support for the bill. (S)

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President Yeltsin: Yes, of course, now the reforms will go faster. (S)

The President: That's good. It will also be important for me to be able to tell the U.S. people and the Senate that you intend to pursue the elections in a fully democratic manner, that they will be free and fair and that the outcome will be observed by you and all other parties. It will be important to confirm publicly that is what you said and that is what you believe. (S)

President Yeltsin: Absolutely, this will be the case, and I thank you for your support. (C)

The President: Let me ask you one question that I know the press will ask me today. I have heard that Rutskoi and Khasbulatov are claiming that they are being denied access to the press. Freedom of expression will be important during the elections. It will be important to be able to say that they proceeded really freely and democratically. Free access to the press is an important part of that. What are the facts from your point of view and what is the connection to the election? (S)

President Yeltsin: This is not connected to the elections and nobody has forbidden them to talk to the press. I have made no such decisions. (S)

The President: Thank you. I intend to be in touch with our allies in Europe and Asia to underscore the importance of support for reform in Russia at this critical juncture. I just want to say again that you will have my support and the support of the American people. I will continue to push for the aid package. It will be important if you can confirm to us and to your own people that you are really going to continue the process of reform and that the elections will be free and fair. (S)

President Yeltsin: Thank you for your support. I promise that the elections will be fully carried out in a democratic way without discrimination of any kind. Anybody who wants to take part will be able to do so. The reforms will go much faster now than in the past. The Supreme Soviet hindered reforms in the past. And thank you for your support. The Russian people will not forget. (S)

The President: I know you need your rest, but before you go I wanted to ask you what will the opposition do? (S)

President Yeltsin: The opposition will try not to recognize what has happened. But the people will understand all of this, especially the intelligentsia. We don't want to use force. Everything will take place peacefully. We do not in any circumstances want bloodshed. (S)

The President: I thought it would be important to talk to you before I spoke to the press, because the American people are standing with you and the Russian people. This conversation has

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helped. If you need to talk to me any time in the next two days, I'll available any time of the day or night. All the best. (S)

President Yeltsin: Thank you, Bill. Then we should tell the press about our conversation. (U)

The President: Yes, I will immediately issue a statement to the press. Good night. (U)

President Yeltsin: Thank you. I embrace you, Bill. (U)

-- End of Conversation --

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