

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with President Gorbachev of the USSR on May 27, 1991

PARTICIPANTS: The President  
President Mikhail Gorbachev  
Interpreter: Peter Afanassenko  
Notetaker: Nicholas Burns, NSC Staff

DATE, TIME May 27, 1991, 4:30 - 4:49pm  
AND PLACE Kennebunkport

President Gorbachev: Hello, Mr. President. (U)

The President: Mikhail, how are you? I am calling to say that I really would like to go to a summit if we can reach agreement on CFE and get a START agreement. (S)

President Gorbachev: George, I very cordially greet you. And I would like to say that both of us have a lot of work in Moscow and in Washington. Since we both have a lot of work, I hope there will be good results for both of us. I am pleased we are in touch and working hard. I hope you can hear me well, George (there were phone line difficulties throughout the call). (S)

The President: I am wondering if you have received my letter to you on General Moiseyev's visit. I know you have so many other things on your mind, and I want you to know I'm with you. I don't mean to press you on CFE but I am eager to get past this obstacle. First, I want to reiterate directly what I said in my letter about General Moiseyev. He showed real statesmanship and, I think, has helped prepare a solution. He also impressed me with his commitment to our relationship and to what you stand for. (S)

President Gorbachev: Yes, I received it. The Moiseyev visit was good. I appreciated the attention you gave to it. I hope that in Lisbon Bessmertnykh and Baker will be able to wrap up that work. (S)

The President: Moiseyev is a statesman and I knew that as a military man he had good reasons to say what he did. He described his core problem. He would rather not take 1100 pieces of equipment in the naval infantry, especially another 753 armored vehicles, out of service. As I said in my letter, he had

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practical military arguments for his view. But the issue transcends this equipment. This CFE problem is an obstacle to the summit. (S)

President Gorbachev: I considered carefully your points. I listened to Moiseyev's report and instructed my people on the basis of your letter to urgently prepare a proposal for Lisbon. I hope they will be able to solve it. (S)

The President: I hope we can resolve CFE and START and that I can then come to Moscow. That would be a historic step and I very much want to come to Moscow. Mikhail, I really want to come there. (S)

President Gorbachev: That coincides with what we want. That would be an enormous historical step forward. That is the way it will be and we should assume we must move to complete work on START. (S)

The President: Moiseyev said the differences between us are very narrow and I agree with him. (S)

President Gorbachev: I do too. I think there will be a solution in Lisbon. (S)

The President: By the way, Primakov and Yavlinskiy will be in town this week and we will discuss with them economic issues in general and credit guarantees. (S)

President Gorbachev: I think Primakov will give you a more detailed idea of what I had in mind during our last call. The concept of cooperation at this critical phase in reform and critical passage in our process of change is important. (S)

The President: When Primakov and Yavlinskiy return to Moscow, I am sure they will communicate the results of their meetings. (S)

President Gorbachev: Yes, George, I very much hope we will cooperate at this very important phase in our reform process. (S)

The President: We will discuss with Primakov not only broad issues, but also in particular the credit issue. We are leaning forward and are not stepping away from you. We want to strengthen the general relationship and I do really want to come to Moscow. (S)

President Gorbachev: George, I think we must both be pragmatic and practical and take a long-term view. This is a unique chance which we must not miss. If we do, then I think we will miss quite a lot. (S)

The President: I appreciate your meeting with our agricultural team. I will be talking with them. Brent Scowcroft has talked to them briefly. They have some good ideas you and I could pursue together. (S)

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President Gorbachev: They had a good visit and good discussions here. They have some facts and material to analyze and certain conclusions that were interesting for me to hear. I can see you have sent competent and constructive people. Therefore our discussion was meaningful. (S)

The President: Well, I am glad they had a good visit with you. You know, Mikhail, as far as credits in general, there are some limits. When it comes to grain in particular, the Soviets will always be good for it. We'll do whatever is possible to get over the limits. (S)

President Gorbachev: Mr. President, yes I am also hopeful. I am pleased to hear what you have just said. You don't know how happy that makes me, especially that last line. (At this point, Gorbachev said but his interpreter did not translate: Can I quote you as having said that?) (S)

The President: We wish you all well. I hope we meet soon in Moscow and have a long discussion because there is a lot to talk about. (S)

President Gorbachev: Yes, I think both of us feel the summit is possible and what is most important, is necessary. I would like to wish you and your family, especially Barbara, the best. Please tell that to Barbara. (U)

The President: Please send my greetings to Raisa and your family. We want to support the relationship. We have to talk again soon and keep up contacts often. I want to say that here I am not playing games. We will do everything we can to support you. (S)

President Gorbachev: I very much appreciate what you have just said and I could repeat the same words and say that to you. Goodbye. (U)

The President: Goodbye. Thanks a million. And let's get that conventional arms treaty thing resolved. I really want to go to Moscow. (S)

(After the President left the line, Gorbachev and his interpreter stayed on the line unsure if the conversation had ended. After asking if it had, Gorbachev asked his interpreter when he could get him a transcript of the conversation. The interpreter said he would do so at 8:00 a.m. May 28. Gorbachev then said he thought it had been a very interesting call, full of substantive content.)

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