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THE WHITE HOUSE

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MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon With President Boris Yeltsin of Russia
(U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
President Boris Yeltsin of Russia
Interpreter: Dmitriy Zarechnak
Notetaker: Christine Potts

DATE, TIME: May 10, 1993, 8:12 - 8:19am
AND PLACE: The Oval Office

President Clinton: Hello, Boris. Good morning. (U)

President Yeltsin: Good morning. (U)

President Clinton: I do not want to take a lot of your time. I understand that Minister of Defense Grachev has briefed you on the proposal that we received from Mr. Dudayev to inspect alleged nuclear weapons in his possession. (S)

The possibility that such weapons might be outside firm control is one that I know both you and I take very seriously. Since Dudayev has come to us with this proposal, we believe it is in our interest and yours that we should use the opportunity to find out what weapons, if any, he has. We will do so with the utmost discretion. (S)

Based on our earlier conversations with General Grachev, we have prepared a small inspection team, which is now standing by and is ready to proceed with the inspection within the next few days. (S)

I wanted to ensure that you had been briefed on the proposed inspection, and to ensure that you are fully on board with the idea of doing it. (S)

As we promised General Grachev, we will provide the complete results of the inspection to you as soon as the raw inspection data is analyzed. (S)

I know that this is a delicate situation. Mr. Dudayev, in making the proposal last November, had asked my predecessor not to tell your government about it. I share the view of President Bush, however, that this effort can only be followed through in

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partnership with you. And that is the way I want to handle it. But, I think in view of the seriousness of the situation, we should go ahead and do it and see if there is anything to it.

(S)

President Yeltsin: Bill, I understand the situation. I am aware of the situation and of the proposal made by Dudayev. Indeed, I believe the situation is delicate, because we have not recognized Chechenya as independent and still see it as part of Russia. Dudayev has found himself in a difficult situation, because of the increasing resistance to his rule, which we are assisting.

(S)

According to our preliminary information, they want to get something from the United States. But, as far as we know, they do not have nuclear weapons on their territory. I believe that behind this there is a desire to legitimate themselves in the eyes of the world, telling the world that they have these weapons there and that they are dealing with the U.S. Still, I believe that even if there is only a one-thousandth likelihood of truth to this, it needs to be checked out. I agree with what you said. So, you should send the inspection team over and inform us as soon as possible of the results. (S)

President Clinton: If this is a ploy by Dudayev to get recognition then it will backfire. If they do not have nuclear weapons, then it means that they have not been telling the truth. If they do, there will be a lot of pressure on them from outside to give them up right away. We really appreciate your attitude. We will proceed and let you know the results. Thank you very much. (S)

President Yeltsin: Thank you very much. (U)

President Clinton: Thank you and good-bye. (U)