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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with President Mikhail Gorbachev of the USSR

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Mikhail Gorbachev, President of USSR
Interpreter: Peter Afanassenko
Notetaker: Beth Sanner (NSC Staff)

DATE, TIME August 21, 1991, 12:19 - 12:31pm
AND PLACE: Kennebunkport, Maine

The President: Oh my God, that's wonderful. Mikhail! (U)

President Gorbachev: My dearest George. I'm so happy to hear your voice again. (U)

The President: My God I'm glad to hear you. How are you doing? (U)

President Gorbachev: Mr. President, the adventurers have not succeeded. I have been here four days. They tried to pressure me, using every method. They had me blocked by sea and land. My guards protected me, we withstood the challenge. ~~(S)~~

The President: Where are you now? (U)

President Gorbachev: I'm in the Crimea. It's only been one hour since I have assumed Presidential powers. I have maintained full contact with the Republic leaders and handed over the Ministry of Defense to Moiseyev. He is to follow my orders only. Troops are to move out of the city or back to where they are normally based. ~~(S)~~

The President: That's good. (U)

President Gorbachev: Everything we've done together to improve cooperation with the republics has worked beautifully. All of them have taken positions of principle. The greatest opponent of these illegal acts was Yeltsin, the Supreme Soviet, Kravchuk, Nazarbayev, and K... ~~(S)~~

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The President: Well I was damned worried about it. (U)

President Gorbachev: You know this was a terrible tragedy. It showed that the adventurers won't succeed. The society is different now. Things like this won't work. ~~(S)~~

The President: Where are the adventurers? (U)

President Gorbachev: Some are coming this way to me. I don't know what they are bearing in their hands. The next two days I must make all these crucial decisions. ~~(S)~~

The President: Have you talked to Yeltsin yet? ~~(S)~~

President Gorbachev: He was the first one. ~~(S)~~

The President: I don't know what news you've been getting, but we've been supporting Yeltsin and you as President of the USSR. ~~(S)~~

President Gorbachev: I have to congratulate you and the position you took from the first minute. You have been stalwart. Thanks for taking off from your vacation. You affected everyone with your strong statements, except Qadhafi. ~~(S)~~

The President: Don't know what news you got in the last few days. (U)

President Gorbachev: I was cut off completely. ~~(S)~~

The President: Were you filled in just now? ~~(S)~~

President Gorbachev: Yes, everything started with me now. ~~(S)~~

The President: When are you going back to Moscow? ~~(S)~~

President Gorbachev: Either tonight or early tomorrow morning. ~~(S)~~

The President: Good luck. If I can say or do anything I will be available night or day. Don't hesitate to call. (U)

President Gorbachev: Yes, George, absolutely. I will have the need to talk to you. I have to go back to take some urgent, necessary steps and then we will have some matters to discuss with you. ~~(S)~~

The President: I'm happy that you are safe and back. Barbara is here and sends her love to Raisa. (U)

President Gorbachev: George, thank you and Barb both for your position of principle, but also for your humanity and friendship. (U)

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The President: Just glad you're well. I want to say to the press and the world that we've had this conversation. (U)

President Gorbachev: Yes, I'd only be thankful to you for that. (U)

The President: I'll get that message out to the whole world now. Bless you and your family. (U)

President Gorbachev: We want to keep going ahead with you. We will not falter because of what happened. One thing is that this was prevented by democracy. This is a guarantee for us. We will keep working in the country and out to keep cooperation going. ~~(S)~~

The President: Sounds like the same old Mikhail Gorbachev, one full of life and confidence. Once you get back we'll talk about what to work on since our talks in Moscow. ~~(S)~~

President Gorbachev: OK, George. Please proceed on this basis. Good-bye. (U)

The President: Good-bye. (U)

-- End of Conversation --

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