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THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

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January 29, 1992

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: JAMES A. BAKER, III *JAB III*

SUBJECT: MY MEETINGS IN MOSCOW

*Eyes Only -
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(see memo)
Done
2/3/92*

My meeting today with Boris Yeltsin was extraordinary in many respects. More than anything else, I saw a Yeltsin different from the man I've seen before. Whereas in the past he's often seemed vague and rather glib, today he spoke at great length with no notes and about highly technical issues. He focussed almost exclusively on security questions -- on his and your strategic reduction proposals, on dismantling and destruction of nuclear weapons (strategic and tactical), on his desire to see a joint US-Soviet strategic defense, on the "brain drain", and on the need to establish some understandings on conventional arms transfers.

His focus on the security questions was driven largely by his upcoming trip to New York and his meeting with you at Camp David. I suspect the reason he wants to make this a focus is that he is going to be acting on a world stage and he wants to be seen as a world leader and not someone who is coming as a supplicant. By the same token, I think he wants to demonstrate in his new capacity that there really is a new world. I think he wants to use that new world to justify a far smaller military establishment and to help rationalize the kind of help from the outside that would be needed to get Russia through its internal transition.

His desire to be seen as a major player and to demonstrate how much the world has changed has led to at least one objective for his trip: He would love to see a short, pithy joint statement emerge from Camp David. He'd like such a statement or declaration to give an historical aura to his visit and to make it clear that democratic Russia has a very different relationship with the United States.

Frankly, I think such a statement happens to be very much in our interest as well. Your first meeting with the elected leader of democratic Russia is historic and we ought to have a joint declaration of principles that will guide our relationship in a new era. I don't know if you want to go down this route, but I have asked Dennis to draft a possible statement which we might go over in New York. The simpler we make it, the better.

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Another of his ambitious ideas that he wants to discuss at Camp David is his concept of a joint system of global defense or protection.

I'm quite sure that his concept of a joint operating global defense isn't what we have in mind. But again, I think he sees it as a basis to demonstrate our new relations and I suspect also he's motivated by wanting to convince his military and his public that our pursuit of GPALS will come neither at their expense nor will it leave them at our mercy.

We need to remember that for all of his desire to develop and affirm a relationship of friendship with us, Yeltsin is a genuine Russian nationalist. He will be sensitive to charges that he is making unilateral concessions and he is being exploited by us. Accordingly, when we respond to this kind of idea, we need to take those particular sensitivities into account. I think the same general understanding needs to shape our response to his call for ending our targetting of each other with nuclear missiles. While he knows that this is a difficult thing to make real, he sees great value in the symbolism of it and even Shaposhnikov told me that if the political leaders mandate such a policy, we should explore ways to implement it.

Besides the nuclear question, he is also quite anxious to have a discussion on "the do's and the don't's" of conventional arms transfers. This is clearly a discussion we should also want to have, particularly at a time when the Russians have a tremendous need to earn hard currency and arms sales are one of their surest ways to get it. I've got some ideas on the kinds of guidelines or criteria we should be outlining to Yeltsin on where, what kinds, and to whom arms sales might make sense. I think we need to come at it this way, precisely because he clearly wants to have some understanding with us on this question. While understanding his own needs in selling arms, he also understands the political fallout of an indiscriminate policy and he wants to see whether there are some general parameters that might be acceptable.

Finally, he also wants to mention to you two other issues. He told me today about his decision on BW.

Since we had been prepared to offer Gorbachev a visit by Soviet experts to our facilities even though he had made no commitment to terminating a program which he denied existed, I think we should have no problem going along with what Yeltsin is asking.

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