

May 13, 1994

**Cable, U.S. Embassy, Bonn, to the Secretaries of
State and Defense, 'May 12 Kohl/Yeltsin Talks'**

Citation:

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Summary:

A German official relays a summary of the talks between Helmut Kohl and Boris Yeltsin to Richard Holbrooke.

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Cable

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SUBJECT: MAY 12 KOHL/YELTSIN TALKS
1. ~~SECRET~~ ENTIRE TEXT.
2. HERewith A SUMMARY OF THE HIGH POINTS OF JOACHIM BITTERLICH'S DEBRIEFING TO FRANK WISNER AND MYSELF CONCERNING THE FIRST DAY OF THE KOHL-YELTSIN CONVERSATIONS. (WE DO NOT YET HAVE INFORMATION ON THE SECOND DAY -- PRIVATE TALKS WITHOUT AIDES -- BUT BITTERLICH PROMISED US THIS INFORMATION ONCE HE GETS IT FROM THE CHANCELLOR.)
3. ON A "MOST SENSITIVE BASIS", BITTERLICH BEGAN BY SAYING THAT IN THE DINNER AND AFTER DINNER HE FELT THAT YELTSIN HAD DRUNK FAR TOO MUCH. "HE WAS DRINKING WINE LIKE I DRINK WATER," BITTERLICH OBSERVED, "AND HE WAS NOT ONE-HUNDRED PERCENT ON HIS FEET. HIS BACK WAS IN PAIN. BUT, NONETHELESS, HE ALWAYS KNEW WHAT HE WAS SAYING AND SEEMED IN CONTROL OF HIMSELF INTELLECTUALLY."
4. DURING THE TALKS, THERE WAS MUCH DISCUSSION OF THE DEPARTURE OF THE RUSSIAN TROOPS FROM GERMANY. THE CHANCELLOR SAID HE WISHED TO AVOID INCREASING YELTSIN'S DOMESTIC DIFFICULTIES ON THIS SENSITIVE POINT. HE WOULD MAKE SURE THAT THE RUSSIAN DEPARTURE WAS "DIGNIFIED AND RESPECTFUL." THEY DISCUSSED A JOINT VISIT TO BUCHENWALD, SIMILAR TO THE KOHL-MITTERRAND RECONCILIATION EVENT AT VERDUN IN 1987. BUCHENWALD'S SYMBOLISM IS OBVIOUS, BITTERLICH SAID: "IT IS WHERE THE GERMANS KILLED THOUSANDS OF RUSSIANS DURING THE WAR AND THE RUSSIANS KILLED THOUSANDS OF GERMANS AFTER THE WAR." YELTSIN SAID HE AGREED WITH THE CONCEPT OF USING IT AS A SITE FOR RECONCILIATION BUT THAT HIS MILITARY WAS NOT YET READY TO ACCEPT SUCH AN EVENT. "LET US WAIT TWO OR THREE YEARS," HE REPORTEDLY TOLD KOHL.
5. IN THE SAME VEIN, KOHL ASKED YELTSIN TO GET HIS

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GENERALS UNDER CONTROL IN PUBLIC ON THE PARADE ISSUE-- SPECIFICALLY GRACHEV AND BULAKOV. BITTERLICH SAID "YELTSIN TURNED TO GRACHEV AND SO INSTRUCTED HIM DURING THE MEETING."

6. ON THE "MORE DIFFICULT" ISSUE OF CULTURAL TREASURES "STOLEN" BY RUSSIA AT THE END OF THE WAR, BITTERLICH SAID THAT THERE WERE STILL "TREMENDOUS DIFFICULTIES." HE SAID KINKEL AND FOREIGN MINISTRY HAD MADE A MESS OF THESE IMPORTANT NEGOTIATIONS. YELTSIN FURTHER COMPLICATED THE ISSUE BY SAYING GERMANY MUST PROVE FOR EACH PIECE THAT GERMANY WAS THE RIGHTFUL OWNER. IN REGARD TO SUCH TREASURES AS THE SCHLIEMANN DISCOVERY AT TROY THIS COULD INVOLVE PROBLEMS WITH BOTH GREECE AND TURKEY.

7. "WE HAD ONE SUCCESS IN THIS CULTURAL AREA," BITTERLICH SAID, WHEN KOHL PROPOSED, AND YELTSIN AGREED, TO CREATE A JOINT HISTORICAL COMMISSION TO EXAMINE THE GERMAN AND RUSSIAN ARCHIVES, "NOT TO WRITE OFFICIAL AGREED UPON HISTORY, BUT TO WORK ON THE HISTORICAL TRUTH, AND ALLOW MORE THAN ONE VERSION OF HISTORY."

8. PFP: THE DISCUSSION WAS PREDICTABLE. YELTSIN SAID HE ACCEPTED PFP, IN PRINCIPLE, BUT NEEDS A STATEMENT OR "PROTOCOL" THAT MAKES IT CLEAR THAT RUSSIA IS DIFFERENT FROM ALL OTHER COUNTRIES JOINING PFP - "A GREAT COUNTRY WITH A GREAT ARMY WITH NUCLEAR WEAPONS."

9. BITTERLICH PROPOSED THAT THE POLITICAL DIRECTORS IN THE QUAD DEVELOP SUCH A STATEMENT IN TIME FOR GRACHEV'S FORTHCOMING VISIT TO BRUSSELS. "THIS SHOULD NOT BE DONE IN NATO, BUT IN THE QUAD", HE SAID.

10. AS IS WELL KNOWN, BITTERLICH SAID, YELTSIN IS NOT HAPPY WITH RUSSIA'S STANDING IN THE G-7. HE MADE THE USUAL ARGUMENTS. KOHL RESPONDED THAT IN THE LONG RUN WE HAVE TO MOVE TO A POLITICAL G-8 BUT WE CANNOT MAKE RUSSIA PART OF AN ECONOMIC FRAMEWORK BECAUSE THIS WOULD BE INAPPROPRIATE TO THE FACTS. BITTERLICH SAID THAT THIS IS THE POINT ON WHICH YELTSIN WAS THE MOST EMOTIONAL.

11. IN ANSWER TO KOHL'S QUESTION, YELTSIN SAID THE UKRAINE WAS A DISASTER IN WHICH KRAVCHUK WAS CONSTANTLY CHANGING SIGNALS. THERE IS A POSSIBILITY OF A SPLIT BETWEEN THE EAST AND THE WEST, AND "I SEE BLACK." YELTSIN SAID HE WOULD CONTINUE TO SUPPLY OIL, BUT ONLY IN SMALL TRANCHES.

12. KOHL ASKED TO OPEN THREE CONSULATES IN RUSSIA. THE FIRST TWO WERE FINE WITH YELTSIN, BUT THE THIRD STARTLED THE RUSSIANS AND LED TO AN IMMEDIATE NEGATIVE RESPONSE, BECAUSE IT WAS KALININGRAD. AFTER INTERNAL DISCUSSIONS AMONG THE RUSSIAN TEAM, YELTSIN CAME BACK WITH A COUNTER SUGGESTION WHICH KOHL ACCEPTED: THE GERMANS WOULD OPEN OR INTENSIFY CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC PROGRAMS IN KALININGRAD AND OPEN A CONSULATE AT A DATE TO BE DETERMINED LATER.

13. FINALLY, ESTONIA: "UNDER THE PRESENT CONDITIONS, I CANNOT LEAVE," BITTERLICH QUOTED YELTSIN AS SAYING. I WANT TO LEAVE, YELTSIN SAID, BUT "I NEED YOUR HELP IN PERSUADING THE ESTONIANS TO GIVE THE RUSSIANS THERE THE SAME CONDITIONS AS THEY HAVE IN LATVIA AND LITHUANIA."

14. CITING RUSSIA'S CHAOTIC INVESTMENT LAWS AND RAMPANT CRIME, KOHL TOLD YELTSIN THE FRG COULD NOT PROMOTE ADDITIONAL INVESTMENT IN RUSSIA, AS THE RUSSIANS DESIRED. YELTSIN DID NOT DISAGREE. HOWEVER, HE NOTED HIS LACK OF EXPERTISE FOR REFORMING INVESTMENT LAW AND POLICY AND ASKED KOHL FOR HELP.

15. THIS CONCLUDED BITTERLICH'S SUMMARY, PRESENTED WITHOUT NOTES. THERE WAS ALSO SOME DISCUSSION OF BOSNIA, WHICH IS ALREADY OVERTAKEN BY EVENTS. WILL REPORT FURTHER AS MORE INFORMATION ARRIVES.##

HOLBROOKE

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