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President's Phone Call with Gorbachev-January 11, 1991

- Gorbachev initiated the call at 8:00 a.m.
- Gorbachev spoke generally about domestic events in the USSR, including the situation in the Baltics.
- The President urged against the use of force in the Baltics.
- The President asked for Gorbachev's thoughts on the Gulf.
- Gorbachev said Saddam Hussein had responded to his letter. Gorbachev said it might be worthwhile for him to send an envoy to compare notes with Washington. Gorbachev did not indicate specifically the ideas he wanted to convey to the President.
- The President responded he would be willing to discuss the Gulf with the Soviets but didn't want to give Saddam a reason to delay a final decision past January 15. He agreed to meet with Bessmertnykh that day to discuss Soviet views.

President's Meeting with Bessmertnykh-January 11, 1991

- The meeting began at 3:00 p.m. and lasted for one half hour.
- The President referred to the morning meeting and said how important it was that the Soviets had consulted with the U.S. before going forward with an initiative.
- The President said the U.S. preferred the USSR not go forward with an initiative. He said the U.S. appreciated Gorbachev's efforts and the spirit in which they were undertaken.
- The President explained the need to be fully consistent with and stand by the 12 UNSC resolutions and for the coalition partners to stick together.
- The President said the U.S. thought it most appropriate for the UNSYG to undertake a mission instead.
- The President said the U.S. wanted to avoid a war in a manner fully consistent with the UNSC resolutions.
- The President explained the best hope for peace lay in convincing Saddam he had nothing to gain from being obstinate.
- Bessmertnykh said he appreciated the President's frankness and would report to Gorbachev. He said the Soviets had removed most

of their citizens from Iraq. He said the Gulf situation had not had a major impact on events inside the USSR and that the Iraqi regime was increasingly unpopular.

--The President said his letter to Saddam Hussein contained no insults but was meant to tell him what he was up against. Its purpose was to give Saddam a clear view of events that he probably did not get from his advisors.

President's Phone Call with Gorbachev--January 18, 1991

--Gorbachev initiated the call at 9:23 a.m.

--Gorbachev said he wanted to engage in a discussion of the Persian Gulf situation. He said the USSR's public statement had laid the blame squarely on Saddam, and that war had been inevitable. He said the Soviets were calling for an Iraqi withdrawal and full compliance with the UN resolutions.

--The President congratulated Gorbachev on the Soviet statement.

--Both leaders agreed they should strive to contain the war, especially to prevent Israel from being dragged in.

--Gorbachev said two days of war had essentially dealt a severe blow to Saddam and to Iraq's military and industrial infrastructure. He said the U.S. should consider how much longer to continue the air strikes. He also said his Ambassador in Baghdad had been in touch with the Iraqis to urge an Iraqi withdrawal in return for an end to the air war.

--The President said much of Saddam's military war machine was still intact and that there was no sign he was ready to accept peace. The President said the U.S. was being very careful to avoid civilian casualties. He reiterated the coalition would stay the course until Iraq was prepared to withdraw from Kuwait. To end the fighting now would give Saddam a victory.

--Gorbachev reaffirmed Soviet support for the coalition and repeated Saddam was to blame for the war. He said the Soviets believed Saddam had lost the military capability to threaten his neighbors and that the time had come to stop the fighting.

--The President said the coalition had to insure full compliance with the UN resolutions and prevent Saddam from achieving a victory. He said there was no evidence Saddam would comply with the UN resolutions if the fighting stopped.

--Gorbachev said he agreed with the President on the need for full compliance. He reiterated U.S. belief that Saddam still retained a significant military capability.

--The President raised the Baltic situation and emphasized U.S.

concern that it be resolved peacefully. He also raised CFE and START.

Letter from the President to Gorbachev--January 24, 1991

--The President's letter conveyed deep concern about recent events in the Baltics.

--It referred to their many discussions on this issue during the past and Soviet assurances on a peaceful resolution of their differences with the Balts.

--It also mentioned U.S. attempts to normalize its economic relations with the USSR, including signing of the Trade Agreement at the June summit, and the President's December 12 initiatives.

--The letter argued that the democratically-elected Baltic leaders had acted with restraint and did not deserve to have their desire to negotiate met by force.

--It said that, should the use of force be continued, the U.S. would have no choice but to freeze the major elements of the economic relationship.

--The letter said the U.S. remained committed to trying to preserve the new relationship with the USSR and to work to overcome problems.

--It indicated U.S. understanding of the difficulties facing the USSR and stated we do not wish the disintegration of the USSR.

--The letter urged the Soviet government to turn away from force and back to a policy of negotiations and peaceful dialogue. It urged the Soviets to take concrete steps to prevent the further use of force and intimidation against the Baltic governments.

President's Meeting with Bessmertnykh--January 28, 1991

--The President opened by congratulating Bessmertnykh on his new assignment.

--The President reiterated the concern expressed in his letter to Gorbachev and said the Soviets must understand that while we do not want to intervene in their internal affairs, the Baltics are in a different category.

--Bessmertnykh said Perestroika and reform would continue in the USSR. He said the Soviets hoped to maintain cooperation with the U.S.

--He said the Baltic situation was unfortunate and not created by Moscow. Gorbachev had read the President's letter carefully and

wanted to preserve the trust in the relationship. The situation in the Baltics was difficult and exacerbated by some irresponsible Baltic leaders.

--Bessmertnykh said the Gorbachev letter said the Soviets wanted a political solution and would avoid force.

--Bessmertnykh said the Soviets were trying by many ways to resolve the crisis peacefully. Some army and MVD units would be removed. The Federation Council would meet to discuss the Baltics. He appealed for U.S. calm during a difficult time. He said postponement of the summit would worry some Soviets but the joint statement would help.

--The President urged progress on negotiations with the Baltic states. He said use of force was the critical element and that drawing down on military presence was the right way to go. He reiterated the major point of his letter that, barring progress on the Baltic question, the U.S. would be forced to take steps. He said the U.S. felt strongly about the use of force. He urged quick action to better the situation. He said the Soviets should not underestimate feeling in the U.S. on this issue.

--The President mentioned the need to move on START and CFE.

#### Gorbachev's Letter to the President--February 13, 1991

--Gorbachev wrote a brief letter describing Primakov's trip to Baghdad.

--He said Primakov used his meeting with Saddam to convince him to comply with the UNSC resolutions and to spell out Soviet conditions for a withdrawal and cease-fire.

--While not making any commitments, Saddam told Primakov he was interested in continuing the dialogue.

--Gorbachev said Tariq Aziz would visit Moscow to continue discussions.

--He promised to inform the President of the results of these talks.

#### President's Letter to Gorbachev--February 14, 1991

--The President responded to Gorbachev's letter detailing Primakov's trip to Baghdad.

--The President recalled our close coordination during the Gulf crisis with the USSR.

--The President asked that Gorbachev brief him on Tariq Aziz' visit to Moscow.

--The President said he could make no promises to pause in the campaign based upon hopes Saddam would comply with the UNSC resolutions. This might encourage Saddam to avoid a withdrawal.

--The President reiterated that the military campaign was fully consistent with the UNSC resolutions. He reaffirmed the coalition goal of liberating Kuwait, not destroying Iraq. He said the coalition had gone to extraordinary lengths to avoid injury to civilians and non-military installations.

--The President mentioned need for movement on CFE and START.

President's Telephone Conversation with Gorbachev--February 21, 1991

--Gorbachev initiated the call at 6:45 p.m.

--Gorbachev said he had just finished three hours of talks with Tariq Aziz and wanted to brief the President. He described in some detail Iraqi willingness to entertain a withdrawal and cease-fire. He said Aziz would be in touch with Baghdad and get an answer to the Soviet proposal.

--The President thanked Gorbachev for the call. He said Saddam Hussein's speech that day contained nothing positive and indicated no interest in accepting withdrawal terms.

--The President said it is hard to trust what Saddam says. It would be difficult for the coalition to accept the notion of stopping and hoping Saddam would then follow through on a cease-fire. He hasn't released any POWs or permitted the ICRC to see them. There is evidence of torture. There was also the problem of reparations and the necessity to consider an arms embargo before sanctions could be lifted.

--The President said an Iraqi withdrawal would have to be swift, not slow. He said he would have to consult with his coalition partners.

--Gorbachev praised U.S.-Soviet cooperation on the Gulf situation. He admitted it was hard to trust what Saddam said but argued that Aziz's willingness to make the Soviet proposal public demonstrated a change in the Iraqi position.

--Gorbachev assured the President the Soviets were insisting on tough conditions for the Iraqi withdrawal.

--The President thanked Gorbachev for his efforts and said he understood what the USSR was doing. While he had problems with some of the proposals, he was thankful for U.S.-Soviet cooperation since the start of the Gulf crisis. He said Gorbachev was playing a very helpful and constructive role.

--The President asked Gorbachev to be back in touch when the Soviets had heard from Baghdad because time was running out.

President's Telephone Call with Gorbachev--February 22, 1991

--The call was initiated by the USG at 11:31 a.m. Secretary Baker began the conversation in place of the President who was at another engagement.

--The Secretary read a message from the President responding to the Soviet initiative. He said the Soviet effort was intensive and useful. But Saddam Hussein had begun to blow up Kuwaiti oil production and refining capabilities.

--The Secretary described the President's public statement of that morning announcing a 24-hour waiting period before the initiation of a ground campaign. The Secretary then read to Gorbachev the USG statement on what would be required to avert a ground campaign.

--The President arrived and added his concern over the Iraqi action against the oil fields.

--Gorbachev then described what he understood the Iraqis would be willing to do based on his conversations with Tariq Aziz.

--He suggested a combined U.S.-Soviet approach in the UNSC based on Soviet conversations with Aziz. He spoke of the need for a political solution.

--Gorbachev said he expected an answer to his proposals to the Iraqis from Saddam Hussein soon.

--The President thanked Gorbachev for his efforts and for the close coordination between the U.S. and USSR since the inception of the crisis. He said Gorbachev had brought Saddam further than anyone could have brought him.

--The President said the coalition was unanimous that Saddam Hussein could not be trusted and that his statements of the day before were incompatible with what was being asked of him.

--The President reminded Gorbachev that Saddam had fired SCUD missiles the day before and had launched a scorched earth policy in Kuwait which showed his true intentions.

--The President said the coalition could not allow the Iraqis to stall and play for time. The coalition needed an answer to its demand for withdrawal.

--The President said he would send his statement to Gorbachev and

requested that he support the coalition position. He also said he hoped U.S.-Soviet relations would not be adversely affected by these events.

--Gorbachev said he had the same assessment of Hussein. He reiterated that they take advantage of the opportunity to find a political solution. He advocated again a joint U.S.-Soviet approach in the UNSC.

--The President said we could not allow the Iraqis to stall, and that the Soviet plan had fallen short of an unconditional withdrawal.

--The President raised the need for action on CFE and START. He said the relationship would not fall apart over Iraq.

President's Telephone Call with Gorbachev--February 23, 1991

--Gorbachev initiated the call at 11:15 a.m. and mentioned it was Soviet army day.

--Gorbachev said Saddam Hussein had shown a white flag by agreeing to withdraw from Kuwait City within four days.

--Gorbachev proposed the U.S. and USSR combine their approaches in a joint effort in the UN.

--The President responded that Secretary Baker had explained the U.S. position to Bessmertynikh the previous evening. He added that the Iraqis continued to use a scorched earth policy and were stalling and putting forth too many conditions.

--The President said the U.S. position was the UN position. He praised Gorbachev for his efforts and appealed to him to support the UN position of unconditional withdrawal. He said the U.S. could not wait any longer.

--Gorbachev again raised the idea of a joint effort in the UN before the initiation of a ground campaign.

--The President said he didn't want to mislead the Soviets. Unless the Iraqis changed their position very soon, the U.S. could not wait longer.

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