

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
DEDIP
FM MOSCOW
TO IMMEDIATE CABINET OFFICE
TELNO MISC 66
OF 231300Z FEBRUARY 90

R23/2

PERSONAL FOR CHARLES POWELL FROM AMBASSADOR
YOUR TELEGRAM MISC 68.

- Gorbachev's assistant.

1. I SPOKE TO CHERNYAEV THIS MORNING, 23 FEBRUARY. I TOLD HIM THAT ELTSIN WAS INTENDING TO VISIT LONDON IN MARCH TO LAUNCH HIS MEMOIRS, AND THAT HIS AGENTS HAD BEEN PRESSING FOR HIM TO CALL ON THE PRIME MINISTER. I THEN SPOKE AS YOU DID WITH KOSSOV.
2. CHERNYAEV SAID VERY QUICKLY THAT IT WAS NOT THEIR BUSINESS: IT WAS FOR THE PRIME MINISTER TO DECIDE. GORBACHEV WAS ALREADY READING THE MEMOIRS. ELTSIN WOULD NO DOUBT EXPLOIT THE FACT OF THE MEETING FOR HIS OWN POLITICAL PURPOSES. BUT GORBACHEV WOULD BE ABLE TO LIVE WITH THAT.
3. I SAID THAT I WOULD LET CHERNYAEV KNOW ONCE THE PRIME MINISTER HAD TAKEN A DECISION.
4. CHERNYAEV WAS CLEARLY NOT VERY HAPPY AT THE PROSPECT OF CALL BY ELTSIN ON THE PRIME MINISTER. BUT HE MADE NO ATTEMPT TO INFLUENCE THE OUTCOME. IT IS TRUE THAT ELTSIN HAS RECENTLY BEEN SPEAKING MORE OPENLY AGAINST GORBACHEV, AND HE WILL DOUBTLESS DO SO AT THE RALLIES ON 25 FEBRUARY. HE MAY IN ADDITION BE CONTEMPLATING RUNNING AGAINST GORBACHEV WHEN THE PEOPLE'S CONGRESS MEETS TO ELECT A CANDIDATE TO THE POST OF EXECUTIVE PRESIDENT. IF GORBACHEV'S TIMETABLE WORKS, THIS COULD BE SOME TIME IN MARCH. IT IS VERY UNLIKELY INDEED THAT THE CONGRESS WOULD PREFER ELTSIN TO GORBACHEV. BUT ELTSIN'S VISIT TO NO 10 COULD COINCIDE WITH HIS ELECTION CAMPAIGN. THIS IS NOT A REASON FOR THE PRIME MINISTER REFUSING TO RECEIVE HIM: THERE ARE OF COURSE PLENTY OF PRECEDENTS FOR RECEIVING PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES FROM OTHER COUNTRIES. BUT THE PRESS HANDLING, AND ANY PRIVATE MESSAGES SHE CHOOSES TO SEND TO MR GORBACHEV, WOULD BECOME VERY IMPORTANT IN SUCH A CONTEXT.

BRAITHWAITE

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Prime Minister

Let us wait until after the 25 Feb rally. mt

I asked Rodric Braithwaite to consult Gorbachev's office privately about your seeing Yeltsin. In the light of their reaction, I think you should see him: but we should tell the press afterwards that you reiterated your

danger for what Mr. Gorbachev is doing.

Hope to see Yeltsin? C023/2