

**Bob Dole**



**NEWS  
FROM:**

**U.S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS  
SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER**

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## **DOLE-YELTSIN BACKGROUNDER**

### FROM MOSCOW TO WICHITA

Senate Republican Leader Bob Dole first met then Russian Republic President Boris Yeltsin on a visit to Moscow on September 4, 1990. As early as 1989, Dole warned that it would be a mistake for the United States to put all its stock in then Soviet President Gorbachev. In April 1990, Dole said "I wouldn't preclude any outcome inside the Kremlin, from Gorbachev's personal authority to his ouster." Convinced Yeltsin was an important player in Soviet and Russian politics, Dole first invited Yeltsin to visit America at their Moscow meeting.

#### January, 1991 - Dole: Direct Aid to Republics, Bypass Kremlin

On January 15, 1991, Dole introduced the first legislation to provide American aid directly to democratically-elected governments at the republic level in the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, rather than sending aid through communist central governments. "U.S. Foreign aid policy has lagged far behind in meeting the demands of the changing world," Dole said. "This bill seeks to add flexibility to our foreign aid policy so that we can more effectively help build democracy and free market economies in other countries." Dole's legislation was unanimously approved by the Senate on July 29, 1991. "The real hope for democracy's ultimate victory in the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia is the survival and growth of democratic republic governments," Dole said at the time. "It will be possible now to back our rhetoric in support of democracy with tangible support."

#### June, 1991 - Yeltsin Visits Dole in Washington; Cowboy Hat and Belt

While many American officials feared offending Gorbachev, Dole renewed his invitation for Yeltsin to visit America in a joint invitation with the Senate Majority Leader in April 1991.

On June 18, 1991 -- exactly one year to the day before he arrives in Wichita -- the first freely and popularly elected President of the Russian Republic, Boris Yeltsin, arrived in Washington. The only elected U.S. official to meet Yeltsin at Andrews Air Force Base was Senator Dole. During Yeltsin's Washington visit, Dole advised the Russian president to urge the White House to deal directly with the then-Soviet republics.

It was on June 19th, 1991 that Yeltsin first got a taste of Kansas. At a meeting in Senator Dole's office, the Senator presented President Yeltsin with a white cowboy hat and leather belt, complete with a Kansas State seal belt buckle and "Boris" etched in the back. Dole also arranged for Yeltsin to meet with 70 Kansans touring the Capitol as part of a 4-H conference. It was during Yeltsin's 1991 Washington visit that Senator Dole first invited the Russian President to visit Kansas.

#### August, 1992 - Dole on Coup: Yeltsin, "Man of the Hour"

In the immediate aftermath of the failed hardline Soviet coup in August 1991, Dole said "Boris Yeltsin is the man of the hour, he is the 800-pound gorilla. And he is the one the Soviet people are looking to for leadership."

On May 21, 1992, Russian Ambassador to the U.S. Vladimir Lukin informed Senator Dole that President Yeltsin had accepted Senator Dole's invitation to visit Kansas on June 18th. "President Yeltsin is eager to see what makes America great, and I can't think of anything better than bringing him to Kansas," Dole said.

#### 1872 - Russian Grand Duke Buffalo Hunts in Kansas

The last Russian leader to visit Kansas was Alexis, the Grand Duke of Russia, who journeyed around Kansas by train to hunt buffalo with George Armstrong Custer and Buffalo Bill Cody as guides.

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