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NEWS

U.S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

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## CLINTON/YELTSIN SUMMIT

### CLINTON GOES TO VANCOUVER WITH GOP SUPPORT; AMERICA'S INTERESTS IN RUSSIA ARE CRUCIAL

For more than 40 years American and Soviet leaders have stared across the negotiating table at each other as adversaries, each side armed with huge weapons systems specifically designed to destroy the other.

Tomorrow, in his first foreign summit, and less than three months in office, President Clinton will look across the table at President Yeltsin as a friend and partner, the engine of change in one of the most dramatic national transformations in history.

During his campaign, President Clinton used the slogan "it's the economy, stupid" to concentrate attention on domestic issues. Attention to foreign policy, foreign assistance and foreign trade became a liability.

I believe President Clinton's excellent speech at Annapolis yesterday confirmed President Bush's claim that yes, it's the American economy but it's also the Russian economy, the Japanese economy, and the economies in many places where the United States has interests.

#### America's Crucial Interests

And whatever the arguments may be about a plan for economic assistance to Russia, no one can say our interests there are anything less than crucial.

The President has outlined the situation to members of Congress in the past week in a series of meetings and in a briefing with Secretary Christopher. I met with the President yesterday, along with the distinguished Majority Leader and the House leadership, to hear the President's plans directly. President Clinton has also met with former President Nixon, a true expert on Russia, to solicit his valuable counsel and I would like to commend the Administration for its efforts in consultations.

There is no lack of good ideas on how to foster democracy and economic growth in Russia and there is no doubt that the U.S. Treasury is not big enough to finance all of these plans.

#### The Limits of America's Influence

President Yeltsin is dealing with profound economic, political and ethnic crises as the Russian people recover from 70 years of communist oppression. I believe we must first of all be modest in our estimates of how much influence we can have on this situation. The turmoil in Russia may well continue for years, may well outlast President Yeltsin and succeeding leaders and could turn violent in the Russian federation and in neighboring states as well.

We should also recognize that the roots of democracy and economic freedom are growing in Russia from hundreds of cooperatives and small businesses started in the past two years and from the tremendous desire of the Russian people for progress.

#### Ways to Nurture Russian Reform

I believe we can nurture those roots in practical and economical ways that will rebound to the benefit of this country. Here are a few ideas:

-- Russia was once an excellent cash customer for American products and it's wealth of natural resources will make it a good trading partner again. Let's recognize that and get on quickly with a debt relief plan.

-- The Administration should also construct a barter plan over the next few years, trading American grain and processed products for natural resources.

(more)

-- Use the sale of food products in Russia to set up special ruble accounts which can be used by pay for local costs of agricultural education, grain storage, food processing, child nutrition, environmental improvement and other worthwhile projects.

-- Push the private sector -- both Russian and American. The last thing we need in Russia and the republics are offices full of bureaucrats. We need business people, farmers, bankers and others on the ground with solid records of achievement.

-- Set deadlines in Washington for getting things done. Don't let a dozen or more government agencies get stuck in endless debates.

-- Make sure Russia does its part. President Yeltsin needs to make foreign investment easier, do something about inflation and produce a plan to repay debt to the U.S. government and private American companies.

-- Make sure Europe and Japan are carrying their share of the burden. We need a lot more action from those countries and a lot fewer meetings in Paris and other fine places.

#### Support Russia's Risk for Democracy

Boris Yeltsin visited my home state of Kansas less than a year ago. The admiration I had for him then has grown along with my admiration for the Russian people.

A lot has been made about whether we help Yeltsin or help Russia but that shouldn't be the argument. If Russia prospers, whoever is in charge will benefit. That's a political fact in Russia and anywhere else.

But it was Yeltsin who took the risk, who faced down the hardliners and who repudiated socialism and communism. We need to show the Russian people that the risk was worth taking.

#### Bipartisan Support for President

I've told President Clinton that he has bipartisan support in Congress for assisting Russia and neighboring states because it is in our national interest. Senators Nunn and Lugar have already demonstrated this on the Senate floor.

There is a great deal at stake in the Vancouver summit and I want President Clinton to know that he goes there with strong Republican backing.

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