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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: President's Meeting with President
Mario Soares of Portugal (S)

PARTICIPANTS: U.S.
The President
James Baker III, Secretary of State
John Sununu, Chief of Staff
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs
Marlin Fitzwater, Assistant to the
President for Press Relations
Robert Zoellick, Counselor-Designate of the
State Department, Notetaker
Sophie Porson, Interpreter

Portugal
President Mario Soares
Dr. Enrico de Melo, Deputy Prime Minister
Joao Diogo Nunes Barata, Principal Secretary
to the President

DATE, TIME February 23, 1989, 6:05 p.m. - 6:25 p.m.
AND PLACE: American Ambassador's Residence, Tokyo, Japan

The President and President Mario Soares of Portugal met for 20 minutes on February 23 at the American Ambassador's residence. The tone of the meeting was warm, reflecting the overall good relations between the two countries. The two leaders focused their discussion on regional issues, in particular Angola and Mozambique. (S)

The President began by saying he enjoyed meeting with Soares very much and looked forward to learning his views on many issues. (U)

President Soares said he also appreciated seeing the President during his brief visit to Tokyo. He said he believed there were no outstanding bilateral problems between the U.S. and Portugal. In fact, he continued, Portugal and the U.S. were allies and friends, and relations were moving along very smoothly. Reminding the President that Portugal watches Africa very closely due to ties to its former colonies, Soares said he would like to discuss African issues. (S)

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The President said he wanted to ask particularly about Angola. He said he was pleased with the Angola Accords but would be interested in Soares' view as to what would happen in the region over the next year. (S)

President Soares replied that he was convinced the Cubans would withdraw both their military forces and their civilians from Angola (he said there were 13,000 civilians in Angola now, including, for example, teachers and nurses). This would create a vacuum. Soares said Angola's major problem would be to organize its future. Angola needs national reconciliation to ensure peace between the MPLA and UNITA. He thought both parties would need to be pressured to achieve an agreement. Otherwise, he said, Angola could not move forward. (S)

President Soares told the President he had recently met Fidel Castro in Caracas at the inauguration of President Carlos Andres Perez. He found it curious that Castro was furious with the Soviets and was leaving Angola with ill will. Soares said the situation would create a lot of problems because Cuba would have 50,000 armed people coming home. (S)

The President asked the reason Castro was angry at the Soviets. Was it perestroika, Soviet Latin America policy, or lack of Soviet Economic support for Cuba? (S)

President Soares answered that, to begin with, Castro was being forced to leave Angola by the Soviets, and he was well aware that it would create a big problem in Cuba to have the troops return home. Castro, he said, does not like perestroika in the least and has said so frequently. Soares mentioned that Carlos Andres Perez had asked Castro why he did not launch his own perestroika. Castro retorted that Perez should try it on Venezuela first, adding that he had his perestroika in the mountains 30 years ago. (S)

Secretary Baker asked Soares if the Cuban troops would indeed return to Cuba. (S)

President Soares admitted it was a problem and said no one knew the answer. The Brazilian general overseeing the Cuban withdrawal in Angola said he knew the Cubans would leave but did not know where they would go. Soares said we need to follow this very closely. (S)

The President sought Soares' views on Jonas Savimbi and asked what type of following he had. (S)

President Soares stated that Savimbi is a major tribal leader, a person with enormous charisma. He also enjoys substantial weight in regions of Angola outside his own. Soares said that even people who do not support Savimbi rely on him to pressure the MPLA. For example, there are dissidents within the MPLA who are pressing for a more liberal evolution in Angola. They view Savimbi as an ally who pushes the MPLA to move in the direction they prefer. Soares also congratulated the President on his

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statement of support for Savimbi, saying it was very important to the continuing evolution within Angola. He said it might strengthen moderate elements in the MPLA, such as Foreign Minister Van Dunem. (S)

The President asked who the radical elements in the MPLA were. (S)

President Soares said there was a theorist named Lucio Lara and another hard-liner, former Foreign Minister Paulo Jorge. (S)

The President then asked whether Dos Santos was a figurehead. (S)

President Soares said Dos Santos was not a figurehead. He was just not very assertive or extroverted. He said Dos Santos had demonstrated little influence within the MPLA so far, but seemed to be gaining stature. Soares said he saw Dos Santos as a moderate with whom Portugal could maintain a dialogue. (S)

President Soares mentioned he was concerned with the situation in Mozambique. He said it differed with Angola because it lacked a strong anti-government movement. Soares said Renamo does not have much strength and is inspired by South Africa. (S)

The President replied that some in the U.S. see Renamo as pro-democracy. He said our government did not see it that way and viewed Renamo as opportunistic and brutal. (S)

President Soares agreed that Renamo was very brutal. He described it is an artificial creation of certain elements within South Africa, although he was careful to add that he did not think the South African Government was behind it. (S)

The President asked why Soares was more concerned about Mozambique than Angola. (S)

President Soares said it was due to the poverty and hunger there. Angola was relatively wealthy because it had oil. Mozambique had less of everything and thus was less developed. (S)

President Soares also said that the northern half of Mozambique was bordered by three landlocked countries which, to secure access to the sea, threatened Mozambique. He said this was not a new danger. (S)

Turning to Central America, the President said he was still concerned with the Sandinistas. He had a feeling more people in Europe now understood that the Sandinistas were not freedom-loving democrats but were totalitarian Marxists. He asked Soares if there had been a change in European public opinion concerning the Sandinistas. (S)

President Soares replied that there had been a change, and that people had a clearer view of the Sandinistas. European friends of the Sandinistas had not perceived the totalitarian danger at the start but it was clearer now. Soares said he still thought,

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however, that many Scandinavians and Germans entertained illusions about the Sandinistas. (S)

President Soares told the President that Ortega and the Sandinistas were in an extremely difficult situation. Inflation, he said, was around 2,800 percent, which he thought was why the Sandinistas were now promising serious elections. He concluded we need to maintain pressure on them. (S)

The President said the conversation was stimulating and useful. (U)

President Soares said he had just wanted to call on the President to congratulate him on the election. He said the President was a good friend of Portugal. (U)

The President asked if there were any problems with the follow-on to Lajes. (S)

President Soares said there were no problems and that it was being dealt with productively on a government-to-government basis. (S)

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