

Withdrawal/Redaction Sheet

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11b. Memcon	Meeting with President Mario Soares of Portugal [FOIA restrictions redacted] (3 pp.)	6/26/89	(b)(1)	S

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 P-5 Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA]

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON



MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting with President Mario Soares
of Portugal (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Lawrence Eagleburger, Acting Secretary
of State
Robert M. Gates, Deputy Assistant to the
President for National Security Affairs
James Dobbins, Acting Assistant Secretary
of State for European and Canadian Affairs
Adrian A. Basora, Director for European
Economic Affairs, NSC (Notetaker)

Mario Soares, President
Joao Bastos, Ambassador of Portugal
to the US
Joao Nunes Barata, Chief of Cabinet of the
Office of the President

DATE, TIME June 26, 1989, 5:05 - 5:40pm EDT
AND PLACE: The Oval Office

The President opened by expressing his appreciation for Portugal's close alliance with the US, particularly on NATO issues. (S)

President Soares responded that Portugal was geographically the closest European neighbor of the US and so it was appropriate that it should be our closest friend. (S)

The President turned to Central America, noted Soares' strong commitment to democracy, and mentioned the remarkable change in European assessments of the Sandinistas. He stressed the importance of having the Central Americans pressure the Sandinistas for a free election. (S)

President Soares agreed and said it was essential that something happen in Nicaragua. Given the reforms in Eastern Europe and elsewhere, Central America was one of the few places in the world where there had been no change, and the time was now propitious. (S)

The President pointed out that if Noriega is permitted to get away with stealing an election and beating people it will be hard to get the Sandinistas to conclude that they must reform. (S)

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2012-1600-MR
MM 11/3/2016

President Soares responded that Noriega should be condemned and said that the Sandinistas were in a weak position. (S)

The President appreciated Soares' position and said he would welcome his ideas over the coming months. (S)

President Soares turned the conversation to China, saying Portugal was concerned because of its responsibilities for Macao. He summarized the Portuguese role there and the differences with Hong Kong, particularly regarding local democratic institutions. It was impossible for Portugal to control the large inflow of Chinese into Macao; this was a problem for the Chinese government. Portugal had an ongoing dialogue with Canton and Beijing on this and had to be careful in its public posture given its special responsibilities in Macao. One interesting indicator was that Taiwanese investment had continued to flow into Macao despite recent events. (S)

The President replied that it sounded as if Portugal was handling the situation well. (S)

President Soares said there would be pressure at the Madrid EC Summit to adopt a harder line. (S)

The President said it would be easy to raise the rhetorical level and to crack down on the economic front, but he did not want to hurt the very people who had benefitted from the reform process in China. There was great public emotion in the US, and the President felt it himself, but it was important to remain calm while strongly criticizing excesses so as not to hurt the Chinese people or discourage resumption of the reform process. (S)

President Soares agreed. In a brief reference to Argentina, he added that Menem was in fact better than his press image and had put together a solid, broad-based cabinet. (S)

The President, turning to Angola, praised the persistence of ex-Assistant Secretary Crocker under criticism and said that Savimbi's decision to accept reconciliation with Dos Santos seemed like the right solution. However, he was interested in Soares' view. (S)

President Soares recalled that in Tokyo he had congratulated the President on not dropping Savimbi, but he had not expected such rapid positive movement as had occurred since then. The Zaire meeting had been a surprise, as had been the sudden change of tone toward Savimbi on Angolan government radio. But any lasting solution required getting rid of the hard-line Marxist-Leninists in the MPLA. Portugal had tried the same solution 14 years ago with a meeting between Holden Roberto and Savimbi, and there had been a million dead since then. Hopefully it would work now. If so there could be an economic recovery in which Portuguese

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knowledge of Angola and US investment interest might combine to help the process. (S)

3.3(b)(6)



The President then asked Soares' views of Savimbi. (S)

President Soares described Savimbi as a great African tribal chief, an able military leader and an educated man with long political experience and high standing among African leaders. He also had good relations with the Catholic Church, which would play an important role. There were also other moderating forces within UNITA. (S)

President Soares ended by saying he hoped to see the President in Portugal. (U)

The President responded that he had enjoyed his last visit there greatly and would like to go again, but it would not be possible on his upcoming trip to Europe. (U)

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