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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Not H.S.

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting with Gerard Collins of Ireland (U)

PARTICIPANTS:

U.S.

The President

James A. Baker, III, Secretary of State

Richard A. Moore, Ambassador to Ireland

John H. Sununu, Chief of Staff

Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs

Robert M. Gates, Assistant to the President
and Deputy for National Security Affairs

Raymond Seitz, Assistant Secretary of State

Robert D. Blackwill, Senior Director,
European and Soviet Affairs, NSC Staff
(Notetaker)

Ireland

Gerard Collins, Foreign Minister

Padraic McKernan, Ambassador to the U.S.

Noel Dorr, Foreign Ministry Secretary General

Padraig Murphy, Foreign Ministry Political
Director

DATE, TIME January 12, 1990, 9:45 a.m. - 10:10 a.m.
AND PLACE: Oval Office

The President: I'm glad you are here, both because of our bilateral relationship and because of your role in the EC Presidency. I hope you have good talks here. We are fascinated by the changes underway in the EC and want to be a cooperative partner. We have trade concerns; Europe does too, but we must solve them in a civil way. Agriculture will be difficult. We will oppose isolationism. We do not think our mission is done, either in the military or in the economic sense. (Ø)

Foreign Minister Collins: I am pleased that you could see us. I will be having a good talk with Secretary Baker. Eastern Europe is changing by the day. Thinking of your Boston speech and Secretary Baker's address in Berlin, it is time we looked at the communication links between the U.S. and the EC and whether the tools of the EC are sufficient for events in Eastern Europe or in U.S.-EC relations. Then, of course, there is the situation in the Soviet Union itself. (Ø)

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We want to follow up on Secretary Baker's Berlin speech. I appreciate your sensitivity regarding the impression that you are seeking a 13th seat at the table. The Twelve will meet in Dublin next week to discuss Eastern Europe. (Ø)

The President: But who knows what will happen in Eastern Europe by next week, and its strategic impact. I am delighted that you are taking on this renewed responsibility. Secretary Baker's speech is the best guide on how we see this. Europeans want to see us involved in the future of Europe. We have some domestic pressures to leave Europe, but there is no way that is going to happen. We are going to stay in Europe and we can manage it domestically. (Ø)

Foreign Minister Collins: There is a desire in Europe for the U.S. to stay involved, as in the G-24 and the EBRD effort. (Ø)

The President: We have enormous debt problems in Argentina and Brazil, and a new situation in Panama. We have real resource problems. It is a fascinating time, but I am optimistic. (Ø)

Foreign Minister Collins: I was impressed by your meeting in Malta. (Ø)

The President: I was impressed by Gorbachev's manner at Malta -- calm and determined. We are trying to avoid complicating his problems, including in the Baltic states. We have an emotional, wonderful Baltic population here, but we have to facilitate change rather than set it back. Some call it timid; I call it a calm and reasoned approach. (Ø)

We don't see it as our role to set timetables on German reunification. We have NATO and Helsinki guidelines. There is a question of whether you go out and advocate it. We must not be inflammatory. Sometimes it is what you don't do that makes the difference. (Ø)

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