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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting with Manfred Woerner, Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
James A. Baker, Secretary of State
John H. Sununu, Chief of Staff
William H. Taft, Permanent Representative to the North Atlantic Council
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Robert M. Gates, Assistant to the President and Deputy for National Security Affairs
Robert D. Blackwill, Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Raymond Seitz, Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian Affairs

Manfred Woerner, NATO Secretary General
W. Robert Pearson, Deputy Assistant Secretary General
James Cunningham, Director of Private Office
Roland Wegener, Deputy Director Private Office

DATE, TIME May 7, 1990, 10:05 - 10:45am EST
AND PLACE: Oval Office

The President: It's good to see you. First, can we talk about dates for the NATO Summit? (U)

Secretary General Woerner: Thank you. Your speech came at the right moment. It has made a great impression in Europe. It opened the way for the success of our Ministerial meetings. We now have developed the structure for the NATO Summit. As to timing, this morning at NATO there was general support for holding the Summit on the 5th and 6th of July. (U)

The President: I want to be flexible. The 4th is our holiday. But we could leave that night. I could then go from London to Houston. (U)

Secretary Baker: Chancellor Kohl would like to hold the Summit after the Soviet Party Congress which begins on July 2. (U)

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The President: We can sign off on July 5 & 6. Our fallback could be 15-16 July. Does everyone agree on London as the site, including the Canadians? (Ø)

Secretary General Woerner: No one supported the Canadian proposal. (Ø)

The President: How should the substantive discussions go at the NATO Ministerials? (Ø)

Secretary General Woerner: We would work at the Summit in July on the four topics you listed in your speech: NATO's new political mission, conventional defense and arms control, the role of US nuclear forces in Europe, and the Alliance's ideas for the future of the CSCE. We would finalize NATO's views on these subjects. There should be as many clear statements on these topics as possible. We should not give a sense that we are studying these problems, drifting. (Ø)

The NPG and DPC meetings will review our military strategy. The Summit should announce our position on the substance of the SNF arms control negotiating position. There has already been enough work to prepare our arms control offer. We need to move, after your speech, to a proposal that would get rid of land-based missiles and address nuclear artillery. We do not want to use the Summit to open up questions for six or eight months in which NATO's role is being challenged. (Ø)

I have recently visited France. They want to restrict NATO's political role. They are in favor of NATO but see limits on NATO's political cooperation rather than possibilities for improvement. They want political cooperation to be in the EC. We should not let the French use the Summit for those ends. Your speech set the stage. We should reach a Summit Declaration that finishes the question of why NATO is necessary. NATO should not be questioned any longer. This can be done. It needs extensive work but it can be done. (Ø)

The President: Who did you see in France? (U)

Secretary General Woerner: Foreign Minister Dumas and Defense Minister Chevenement. They want to restrict NATO to being a military alliance with no real political decisionmaking role. NATO for them is an instrument of American influence. We can drag them along if we don't construct the Summit around what NATO will do in the future. Now NATO must act. (Ø)

The President: I agree. (Ø)

Secretary General Woerner: The press is now concentrating on TASM. I said look, we need a nuclear requirements study. I avoided being pinned down on the TASM issue. The tactical situation is such that I strongly advise you not to make TASM an issue at this moment. The German elections would concentrate on that. That would be

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dangerous. (Ø)

After the elections, there is no problem. If we make TASM a domestic German political issue, it will be like FOTL was a year ago. We should keep open the TASM issue through study and finalize the commitment next spring, after we are out of the German elections. This is my tactical advice. We need to handle this in an elegant way. The Summit should give a political message, include an arms control offer, indicate our objectives for CFE II and for CSCE. That would be a major accomplishment. (Ø)

Secretary Baker: And it could point the way for our ongoing review of military strategy. (Ø)

The President: President Gorbachev needs to be convinced NATO isn't dangerous in the new era. That is a big assignment, especially among his military. (Ø)

Secretary General Woerner: In Soviet eyes, especially from the military perspective, they see NATO as the enemy. We have to transmit a new message: NATO is a force for peace and European security, in cooperation with the Soviet Union. We want a partnership in a cooperative structure. (Ø)

Secretary Baker: They are beginning to realize that there could be no US presence in Europe outside of NATO. And they want that presence. (Ø)

The President: The agenda you have outlined is just right. There is a lot of work to do, but it is damned important. (Ø)

Secretary General Woerner: How did your meeting go with President Mitterrand? (Ø)

The President: Good, but maybe he's only telling us things to make us feel good. Or he may be leaving it to the French bureaucracy, which only wants to stiff us. We have to keep pressing them. (Ø)

Secretary General Woerner: What do you think about German unification? (Ø)

Secretary Baker: My view is that this is the most sensitive issue for the Soviets, especially in advance of the Party Congress. They are trying to buy time. They are being schizophrenic: first they want a package deal, then they say they can accept unity now and give sovereignty later, which of course is a non-starter. I was encouraged about what is going to happen because of Allied solidarity, but not encouraged about the Soviet Union. They have a real problem there with public opinion. They don't have any cards, only Four Power rights. They have little leverage, so ultimately they will have to come along. (Ø)

The President: Might we change the name of NATO to reflect a new mission, to help take heat off the Soviets? It may be cosmetic, but it might help show the soviets that NATO isn't only military

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and only hostile. (Ø)

Secretary General Woerner: The name is not as important as the substance if they believe we are really changing our strategy. (Ø)

The President: That too, but names matter; let's think about it. Maybe that great word "stability" is in there, to take away the connotation of NATO as an enemy to Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. I hope they come around on this. (Ø)

Secretary Baker: The Poles raised the point with me that if the Soviet withdrawal from the GDR will be paid for by the Germans, why shouldn't they pay for withdrawal from Poland too? (Ø)

Secretary General Woerner: The Poles, the Czechs, and the Hungarians are having trouble explaining why they are in the Warsaw Pact. (Ø)

Secretary Baker: CSCE can help. (Ø)

Secretary General Woerner: We have to persuade the Soviets that CSCE is a place for them too. (Ø)

Secretary Baker: The Soviets dropped their demand to synchronize German unity with progress in the CSCE at the Two Plus Four meeting, but they will still make the argument that they need a new European security structure. (Ø)

The President: Our long-range goal is work on the shift from a confrontational to a cooperative image for NATO. (Ø)

I hope I can get Lithuania solved. It is causing major problems, and it will cause more if we can't make progress. (Ø)

Secretary General Woerner: Do the Soviets appreciate how restrained you have been? (Ø)

The President: I hope so. (Ø)

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