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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Luncheon Meeting with Prime Minister Lothar de Maiziere of the German Democratic Republic (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
The Vice President
James A. Baker, III, Secretary of State
Nicholas Brady, Secretary of the Treasury
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Robert Gates, Assistant to the President and Deputy for National Security Affairs
Richard C. Barkley, Ambassador to the GDR
James Dobbins, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian Affairs
Robert Hutchings, Director for European Political Affairs, NSC Staff
Gisela Marcuse, Interpreter

Lothar de Maiziere, Prime Minister
Sylvia Schultz, Head of the Office of the Prime Minister
Fritz Holzwarth, Political Counselor to the Prime Minister
Thilo Steinbach, Director for Foreign Policy, Office of the Prime Minister
Matthias Gehler, Government Spokesman
Norbert Reemer, Minister Counselor of the Embassy of the GDR to the U.S.
Joachim Keitz, Interpreter

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PER E.O. 12958,
AS AMENDED
ON 8/21/2009
2000-0429-F

DATE, TIME: June 11, 1990, 12:20 - 1:03 p.m.
AND PLACE: Old Family Dining Room (U)

The President: Did you give a speech in New York or were you just there on a visit? (U)

Prime Minister de Maiziere: I was visiting. I have an appointment with the UN Secretary General tomorrow. (U)

The President: He is a good man. We like him. (U)

Prime Minister de Maiziere: Tonight I will give a lecture at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service. (U)

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The President: You mentioned your meeting in Moscow with other leaders of Eastern Europe. There are differences, though. Hungary seems to want to move away sooner. (Ø)

Prime Minister de Maiziere: Our joint declaration was the lowest common denominator. Hungary would like to quit the Warsaw Pact very soon. The same goes for Czechoslovakia. Bulgaria is different; it has a number of motivations. The Poles think of German unification in terms of their own security. (Ø)

The President: Are they still worried? I thought they understood that a unified would recognize the border. (Ø)

Prime Minister de Maiziere: I don't think policy-makers are so concerned, but they have to take into consideration the general public. It is a question of the best approach. The Poles favor a bilateral treaty, which would be initialed now and signed later. (Ø)

The President: Are you comfortable with your formulation on that point -- that the two German parliaments and Governments issue a declaration now, and then sign a treaty later? (Ø)

Prime Minister de Maiziere: I cannot see the unambiguous pluses or minuses of either procedure. The outcome will be identical. The difference is related to the mass media. I would like an approach that could eliminate differences. (Ø)

The President: I thought the Poles had been reassured. (Ø)

Secretary Baker: They still would like to move faster than the Chancellor would. There are issues besides the border issue. There is also Article 116. (Ø)

Prime Minister de Maiziere: This is a decisive problem. The Poles have a right to secure borders, but they do not have the right to determine the Constitution of a united Germany. There is Article 116, which says that those who were at one time German citizens have the right to claim German citizenship. The Poles fear that Germans living there have not only a claim to citizenship but also to certain territory. Something can be done, because Article 23 of the Federal Constitution, covering this possibility, will be deleted after unification. (Ø)

Secretary Baker: The Poles have the additional concern that they fear all those eligible will claim German citizenship because of the better pension benefits. (Ø)

Prime Minister de Maiziere: I feel they are also not secure about their eastern border. When they talk about western border, they mean all borders. (Ø)

Secretary Baker: Mr. President, the next meeting of the Two Plus Four will be in Berlin. Then we will meet in Paris in July, and the Poles will attend. (Ø)

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The President: May I make a comment on "parallelism"? We think it would be bad, when discussing troop limits, to draw a parallel between U.S. troops and Soviet troops. If ours are not wanted, they will be out. The difference is that theirs are not wanted. We have to make sure this issue doesn't come up of equating our troops with theirs. It worries me that Gorbachev, not wanting to be seen in defeat, might call for equal cuts in U.S. and Soviet forces. If you believe stability is best kept by U.S. troops remaining, I hope you can help. (S)

Prime Minister de Maiziere: Gorbachev made us understand that he continues to base his calculations on some form of parallelism. He agrees that U.S. troops are important for the security of Europe as a whole, but he says why shouldn't it be the same way for Soviet troops! (S)

The President: The answer is that they're not wanted, but we must be careful telling him that. (S)

Prime Minister de Maiziere: The Soviet troop presence is highly differentiated. In Hungary they are a result of Stalinism, but in the GDR it is on the basis of World War II. Gorbachev stressed this. He also mentioned tremendous unemployment in the USSR. They are having problems with troops withdrawn from Afghanistan, and on top of this they face withdrawals from the GDR. (S)

Secretary Baker: Mr. President, may I pick up on what you said in the Cabinet Room concerning Two Plus Four? We think it very important as a matter of German sovereignty to refer political-military issues to the proper fora. For example, force levels in central Europe should be referred to Vienna. A security role for CSCE should be referred to the CSCE process. When we come to Berlin in a week and a half, I hope we can convince your Government to get unification done and then get to these other issues in the appropriate fora. (S)

Prime Minister de Maiziere: There is no need to convince me! (S)

Secretary Baker: We are working on your foreign minister through you. (S)

The President: I'll work on mine if you'll work on yours. (S)

Prime Minister de Maiziere: At the Moscow talks, the main reason given for maintaining the political structure of the Warsaw Pact was that it has a mandate at Vienna as negotiator. For example, should the Hungarians leave the Pact, who would be their negotiator? In future negotiations, CSCE should be added. A Warsaw Pact committee was appointed to revise the treaty. The word revise is very important: it includes everything from the continuing existence of the Pact to the possibility of leaving. Hungary made it clear that it should take effect by January 1991 and that by 1992 at the latest, Hungary would no longer be a member. We raised the question of what the new structure should

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be later. Warsaw Pact members should be integrated into an all-European solution. (S)

Secretary Baker: Mr. Prime Minister, are you supportive of the suggestion your foreign minister made in Copenhagen that a special zone should be created in central Europe? (S)

Prime Minister de Maiziere: I never support plans or programs of which I am informed through the press. (S)

The President: Another question: how did you find Gorbachev? Was he confident? After his very successful visit, he went back to face problems like Yeltsin's comments. (S)

Prime Minister de Maiziere: I had the impression that he viewed the Summit as very successful. He said it marked the transition from confrontation to partnership. In this context, he gave us a quite optimistic view, but that doesn't change his domestic problems. Hundreds of thousands are leaving the Party, which is fragmenting into particular groups. The Party Congress in early July will be very important, because there is no integrative structure in the Soviet Union except the Party. There is no Church, as in Poland. The Soviet Union has no experience with multiparty democracy. He fears this might collapse. And there is also the economy. (S)

The President: Have you met Yeltsin? (S)

Prime Minister de Maiziere: No. I have the impression he is pursuing a Greater Russian line. (S)

The President: It will be interesting to see how he handles the federation meeting. On Lithuania, Gorbachev talked about the right to secede but also about his obligation to uphold the Constitution. (S)

Prime Minister de Maiziere: It will be important to create a new kind of liberal federation, because too early a dispersal would add to his difficulties. There are the exaggerated centralistic structures of the past that pose a problem. A balancing of interests is essential. (S)

Secretary Baker: Can you share with us your timetable for unification and all-German elections? (S)

Prime Minister de Maiziere: We must reach an agreement with our coalition partners. After the Economic and Monetary Union takes effect, we will discuss it. The Social Democratic Party is thinking of a longer period. A two thirds majority in parliament is required, because this means changing the Constitution. However, we feel the timing should not be determined by wishes but by objective criteria. There will be an additional, complicated discussion on the State Treaty about the conditions under which the various States of the GDR can accede through Article 23. We also need good results of the Two Plus Four. An early announcement of a deadline might bring pressure to bear on

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the negotiations when pressure is not the best means. (S)

Secretary Baker: Is there a possibility of all-German elections before 1 February? (C)

Prime Minister de Maiziere: I wouldn't rule it out. (U)

The President: Are the people enthusiastic? (U)

Prime Minister de Maiziere: There are differences. Some want it tomorrow, others would prefer more time. After the past six months, we no longer dare to indulge in prognostication. (U)

The President: Do you have other meetings this afternoon with our officials? (U)

Prime Minister de Maiziere: We will meet with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the House Foreign Affairs Committee, as well as with trade and industry leaders. I will also give a talk at Georgetown tonight and will visit the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. (C)

Secretary Baker: Are you suffering from jet lag? (U)

Prime Minister de Maiziere: I was warned beforehand, but I didn't feel anything. (U)

The President: May I suggest that we have our coffee in the other room and have eight minutes of music to relax, because we have a distinguished musician in our midst. (U)

Prime Minister de Maiziere: Thank you very much. This is really a treat. Last night I met Mr. Perlman. (U)

-- End of Conversation --

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