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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting with Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar of the United Nations (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
James A. Baker III, Secretary of State
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
John R. Bolton, Assistant Secretary of State
for International Organizations
Thomas R. Pickering, US Ambassador to the
United Nations
Nancy Bearg Dyke, NSC Staff (Notetaker)

Javier Perez de Cuellar, UN Secretary General
Virendra Dayal, Chef de Cabinet, Under
Secretary General
Ronald Spiers, Under Secretary General
Carl-August Fleischhauer, Under Secretary
General and Legal Counsel
Jean-Claude Aime, Acting Assistant Secretary
General
Alvaro de Soto, Executive Assistant to UNSYG
John Washburn, Director, Representation Unit
Lisa Bittenheim, First Officer, Executive
Office of UNSYG (Notetaker)

DATE, TIME May 9, 1991, 11:35 a.m. - 12:00 Noon
AND PLACE: Cabinet Room

The President: Mr. Secretary General, we are so glad to have you and your colleagues in the White House. We talked in the Oval Office about Iraq and El Salvador. I want an open and frank discussion among us on all subjects of interest. (U)

Discussion on Iraq:

Secretary General de Cuellar: Thank you for the opportunity to meet and compare notes about subjects of concern. I told you in your office on the idea of sending a UN force to northern Iraq that Iraq does not want a UN presence on its territory. (Under

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Secretary Marrack) Goulding was there and had two days discussion. He got a very clear no -- no UN presence. Then on the other side, I must study carefully the situation. I can't send a police force on my own authority. So I have my limitations and the response of Iraq, which make it impossible. Also, there is the problem of security of the relief people. I have to report to the UNSC. They could say I am exceeding my authority. So could the General Assembly. I have to protect myself from criticism. (C)

The President: The US position is: The UN has done a superb and historic job during the Gulf crisis. We are very supportive of what you did in Iraq. In my view, by enhancing the political/peacekeeping function the UN offers great hope for the future. We want to get out of Iraq. People were dying and we responded. No one else could respond massively as we did. People are coming down from the mountains now. So far, there has been no confrontation with Iraq. They probably feel we are interfering in their internal affairs, but someone has to save the people. Obviously some security is required for the UN workers. (U)

Our goal is to get out as soon as possible. It is the international responsibility to protect these people. We will look into another resolution if that is what you are convinced is required. Iraq is in no position to exact demands from the world after what they have done. We will continue to save lives. We will go to the UNSC and ask for a new resolution. The same coming together will be required as for the Gulf. I wish the former resolutions could come together instead of having a new one. (C)

Secretary Baker: We will have to approach this with care and prudence and split the difference between security for the refugees and humanitarian relief so we get no veto or opposition on the basis of interference in internal affairs. This is humanitarian relief. The UN cannot get its relief people in if there will not be security. We will have to do quiet consultations with the Perm Five before we say anything publicly. (C)

Secretary General de Cuellar: Sadruddin has been in Iraq. He did a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Iraq is pleased but it is not enough to cover the needs of the population. (C)

Mr. Dayal: Sadruddin will be in Baghdad on Sunday and discuss on Monday how far he can go. (C)

The President: Without a further UNSC resolution? (C)

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Mr. Dayal: Yes. (U)

Secretary General de Cuellar: In the framework of the MOU, we will see what he can obtain. (C)

The President: I would like to turn to implementation of UNSC Resolution 687 and make a few comments. The Iraqis have grudgingly accepted 687 in principle. I hope this bodes well for Iraqi compliance with the requirements. I want to compliment the UN on the job it has done so far. Elimination of weapons of mass destruction is an extensive and difficult job. We will continue to support the Special Commission with experts, logistics and specialized equipment no one else can provide, and will encourage other countries to provide both cash and in-kind contributions.

(C)

I am not certain how the implementation will work out but I am convinced we will not let up on sanctions except for humanitarian relief which is provided for. I owe it to our coalition partners to say this to you and to them. I don't know the future of Saddam Hussein but we are not going to lift the sanctions if he is there. (C)

Secretary General de Cuellar: Implementation of UNSCR 687 is being coordinated by (Under Secretary) Ron Spiers. (U)

Ambassador Spiers: Sanctions cannot be lifted until the US agrees; it is vetoable. We have to keep watching whether the sanctions deteriorate. On implementing 687, it is going pretty well. The Special Commission will have a big job. There is a discrepancy between what Iraq declared and [REDACTED] It is less a problem on nuclear than on chemical. (S)

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The President: At what level is the UN dealing with the Government of Iraq on this? (U)

Mr. Dayal: We have to get the Special Commission on the road and have it do its best in Iraq to straighten this out. They have to deepen contacts when they get there. (C)

Ambassador Spiers: There is a potential problem on 687 -- financing. When we add it all up, it will be very expensive. Voluntary funding may not work. (U)

The President: How much? (U)

Ambassador Spiers: Destruction of chemical weapons can be very expensive. [REDACTED] it could be \$100 million. We could have a real environmental problem if we burn the weapons. Until we know the situation, it is hard to know the cost. (C)

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The President: What about the other parts of 687? (U)

Ambassador Spiers: Those are easier. Boundary demarcation and other efforts will cost something, but there are not the same uncertainties as with the Special Commission. On claims, the UNSYG must recommend the percentage taken on each barrel of oil Iraq sells. (U)

Ambassador Pickering: We agreed among the Perm Five that until there is agreement to lift the sanctions, there will be no percentage. (C)

Secretary General de Cuellar: To recommend, I need information from the World Bank, etc. (C)

Mr. Fleischhauer: The UNSYG is called on to set the upper ceiling and the UNSC sets the actual figure. The UNSYG has initiated consultations with international financial organizations on this. (U)

Discussion on El Salvador:

The President: El Salvador was discussed in the Oval Office. We are very concerned that the momentum from partial agreements not be destroyed by either side of the political spectrum. The danger is from extremists. I hope all of us will insist on early and intensive negotiations to get a ceasefire agreement, not just leaning on Cristiani or the FMLN. Cristiani is elected. That gives him standing different from the FMLN, and so he cannot be asked for all of the concessions. It is in everyone's interest to get on with the ceasefire. CAP (President Perez of Venezuela) is very interested in it. We respect the UN role and we know it is extraordinarily difficult. Some suggested that we meet individually with the FMLN. I don't want to undermine the Cristiani government. I would be interested in your assessment. (C)

Secretary General de Cuellar: As I told you in the Oval Office, I think what was obtained in Mexico is important. The Constitutional changes are extremely helpful. We have to build on as much as we can. You have no direct dialogue with the FMLN, and we are unfortunately the spokesman for the FMLN. Alvaro de Soto has my full confidence, and he relays what the two sides say to each other. We have to be aware of everything being negotiated in Central America. Something has to be done very soon. There is a meeting next week. (C)

Mr. de Soto: The parties agreed to an organizing meeting early next week to discuss resumption of talks and the agenda. The two

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main issues are reduction of the armed forces and the ceasefire. The FMLN has agreed to leave some items pending till after the ceasefire under certain conditions: 1) Maintenance of the military status quo -- neither side can try to regain lost ground. This is hard to translate onto a map. 2) The FMLN insists that this phase from ceasefire to demobilization should be treated as a transitional phase with the FMLN part of the Salvadoran people and the FMLN being a party that should have access to the media, and that areas they control not be changed. It is hard to set a time frame. The FMLN is committed to the negotiations. GOES has a list of the terms. This requires more than just a simple ceasefire. (C)

The President: What does the FMLN want? (C)

Mr. de Soto: Open, democratic, pluralistic El Salvador -- level playing field, no repression. (U)

The President: So, the main problem is the Army? (C)

Mr. de Soto: Yes, the government has lost some of its central control. (C)

Secretary Baker: (speaking to de Soto) It seems to me, as I mentioned on the phone, there has been good progress; the UN has done a good job; the parties have come some way; there is still much to be done. 1. Once you engage in substantive negotiations, can you craft with the Friends of the UNSYG (Venezuela, Mexico, Colombia, and Spain) that this is a one shot, before the military or someone blows it up? 2. Do you have a peacekeeping force ready, so it can be inserted immediately, so there is no time lag? 3. What about human rights monitoring? (C)

Mr. de Soto: The FMLN accepted reluctantly. What must be understood is that the FMLN is five separate and distinct movements, and all keep up with negotiations and talk among themselves and with their people within the country. (C)

Secretary Baker: Cannot the other side be told by the Friends that they have to stay at the table until the negotiations are completed? We are in danger of losing this. (C)

Mr. de Soto: We can try. They have been reluctant in the past. (C)

Secretary Baker: If the FMLN leaves the table, others will stay and be seen to stay. (C)

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Mr. de Soto: If this is cooked with a deadline from the outside, they will view it as a setup to blame them for failure. On peacekeeping, it is very difficult for us to move a single military person without UNSC approval. It takes time and budget. Until a ceasefire is in place and a budget is worked out, it is hard to approach the UNSC. (C)

Secretary General de Cuellar: They need to sit around the table with their friends. I am prepared to work in that direction. (C)

The President: We can continue our discussion over lunch.

-- End of Conversation --

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