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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting with Manfred Woerner, Secretary-General of NATO

PARTICIPANTS: The President
James A. Baker, III, Secretary of State
John Sununu, Chief of Staff
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Ambassador William H. Taft, IV, Permanent Representative, U.S. Mission to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization
James Dobbins, Acting Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian Affairs
Barry F. Lowenkron, NSC Staff (Notetaker)

Manfred Woerner, Secretary-General, NATO
Roland Weggenger, Director, Private Office
Christine Shelley, Deputy Director, Private Office

DATE, TIME

AND PLACE: June 25, 1991, 2:45 - 3:15 p.m.
Oval Office

The President: Welcome Manfred, glad to see you again. Jim, Dick and Brent have been keeping me up to date on the wonderful job you've been doing. (U)

Secretary-General Woerner: Thank you. I'm delighted to see you again. (U)

The President: I have only one question to ask you regarding the future of security arrangements in Europe, and that is, do we have a French problem? If we do, how do we handle it? We keep getting reverberations that the French are saying the right things on NATO, but then not following through. I need your advise on this. The bottom line from our perspective is that, for us to be strong participants in NATO, we need a strong Alliance and a strong commitment by all NATO members to the Alliance. (S)

Secretary-General Woerner: The biggest problem facing the French is that they themselves do not know what they want. This is why it's so difficult for us to work with them on a solution to

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address their concerns. I must say, however, that the French did cooperate at the NAC, and that the decisions taken at the Copenhagen meeting went a long way toward solving this problem. Overall, we've had a great month. We reached an Alliance decision on force posture at the DPC. Eight days later NATO agreed to the core functions, specifically, that NATO would remain the essential forum for consultations and agreement related to security as written in the Washington Treaty. We've agreed on a clear set of principles on the indivisibility of security. In exchange, we offered the French our support for a European security identity inside this NATO framework. (S)

The President: But all of this sounds vague. (S)

Secretary-General Woerner: The French know what they signed up to. That much is clear. (S)

Secretary Baker: What is not vague is that NATO has agreed that it will remain the primary forum for consultations and agreements. (S)

General Scowcroft: But the French are still griping about this agreement. (S)

Secretary-General Woerner: The French have not yet come to grips with what role they are to play in Europe, and what a European security identity will look like. I'm confident, however, that we won't get major difficulties from the French. We have defined what NATO's functions are, and we have agreed to support a European security identity in a NATO framework. If we had allowed the French to establish a European security and defense identity including a competitive military structure, we would be facing a lot of danger today. But, I think that's behind us now. What do you think Jim? (S)

Secretary Baker: I think a lot depends on French thinking on what a European security identity should be. For example, the French signed onto NATO's liaison with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, but they did so only half-heartedly. We have to remember, however, that we got what we absolutely had to have: NATO agreement on the core functions. (S)

The President: Is there any way that the French could work on some of our other allies, like the Germans, to try and backtrack on these agreements? (S)

Secretary-General Woerner: Chancellor Kohl is fine on these issues. (S)

The President: I'm not worried about Chancellor Kohl. (S)

Secretary-General Woerner: Do the French really want a European force and a European command? Do they know what this force is supposed to do? I don't see any unity of views in France. Yesterday's meeting between President Mitterrand and Prime

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3

Minister Major produced no concrete results on European security identity. I don't think that this issue will be solved by the December EC Summit. (S)

Secretary Baker: How do you explain the French pushing for their idea of a European confederation without checking first to see if the Czechs supported it in the first place? (S)

Secretary-General Woerner: The French pushed the Confederation idea to restrain growing German influence in Eastern Europe and to reduce American influence in Europe. When he visited NATO, President Havel asked me whether I knew what the French were up to in proposing the Confederation idea since he did not know. Can we turn the discussion to NATO Summit preparations? (S)

The President: What are the dates for the summit? (U)

Secretary-General Woerner: November 7-8. What we have been doing in NATO is building blocks: revising our strategy and force structure, defining our relations with Eastern Europe, adopting core functions of the Alliance and agreeing on principles framing a European security identity. In my view the Summit must bring the transformation of the Alliance as mandated by the London summit to a conclusion, put all of the elements in our approach into an overarching political statement, and demonstrate NATO's new role in meeting future security challenges. But I also have a special plea. I'd like the Summit to go beyond blessing the work we have done in the Alliance. I'd like us to be able to unveil some new initiatives. (S)

As I see it, the Rome Summit declaration should have six elements. First, we need to state what the threat is. When I made my rounds on the Hill, I was asked repeatedly by Senators and Congressmen who have supported NATO in the past, "Who is your enemy?" We need to answer that question. Second we need to finalize the transformation of the Alliance, in particular, point out what has changed in NATO. Third, we need to spell out our relations with other institutions such as the UN, CSCE, and WEU. Fourth we need to articulate the challenges of the future, such as crisis management, arms control and proliferation. Fifth we need to articulate our vision of the Trans-Atlantic community within a new world order. I made this point in my meetings with the Congress; that a new international order can only revolve around the Trans-Atlantic axis. Jim's speech in Berlin was an excellent example of this theme. Sixth, we need to make concrete proposals. The London summit succeeded because we had concrete ideas to offer to the East. Maybe we could announce a significant reduction of nuclear forces, or a 50% reduction in conventional forces -- something we're doing anyway -- or present our ideas on CFE II, the next phase of conventional arms control. (S)

Secretary Baker: What is the time frame for CFE Ia? (U)

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Ambassador Taft: It's got to be finished by March of next year.
(U)

The President: What are we doing in CFE Ia? (S)

General Scowcroft: We're dealing with manpower levels. (S)

The President: Well Manfred, your agenda is a good one. We'll study it. (U)

General Scowcroft: How should we handle SNF? (S)

Secretary-General Woerner: We need to put it under arms control as stipulated in the London mandate. (S)

General Scowcroft: We're not enthusiastic about SNF arms control. (S)

Secretary-General Woerner: Neither am I. One possibility would be to get the Soviets to accept the idea of minimum nuclear deterrence. (S)

Secretary Baker: Is there any way we can avoid dealing with it at the NATO Summit? If there is a way to slough it off? (S)

The President: How do we handle Gorbachev if he wants to come to the Summit? (S)

Secretary-General Woerner: There's been speculation that I invited him. These stories are unfounded. We have a standing invitation to Gorbachev to come to NATO. When I was in Prague I talked to Kvitsinsky who told me not to expect Gorbachev or Bessmertnykh to come to NATO until the status of the Warsaw Pact was resolved. (S)

Secretary Baker: That's easy. The Warsaw Pact is about to hold its own funeral. (S)

The President: It's best if Gorbachev comes to Brussels. (S)

Secretary-General Woerner: If Gorbachev gets to Rome it'll be his summit, not ours. One possibility would be to meet him in Rome after our summit. But, I still don't want him to come to Rome. He'll distort the summit. (S)

The President: His attendance makes our argument that we need a strong NATO much weaker. It'll be harder to make the case for a strong military alliance against a Soviet threat if Gorbachev himself is attending our summit. He'll come to the G-7. He'll do a good job. He always does. But he won't get any money from us. I don't want him to use the G-7 as a springboard to go to the NATO Summit. (S)

Secretary-General Woerner: If we can avoid it we should. (S)

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The President: The idea of Gorbachev going to Brussels is a good one. Have all the heads of Eastern Europe gone to Brussels yet? (Ø)

Secretary-General Woerner: Havel has, Walesa is coming July 2nd, followed by Antall of Hungary. (U)

The President: What about Jim's buddies in Albania? The reaction to his visit was absolutely incredible. (Ø)

Secretary Baker: I found out just three days ago that Albania is the only East European country with nuclear weapons of its own. (Ø)

The President: Amazing, Albania of all places. (Ø)

Secretary-General Woerner: Really? (Ø)

Secretary Baker: Relax Manfred, they don't even have cars in Albania. (Ø)

Secretary-General Woerner: What we're seeing is Albania not just joining Europe, but the world. (Ø)

The President: Is there any role for NATO in the Yugoslavia crisis? (Ø)

Secretary-General Woerner: Highly unlikely. There is a certain risk that the Serbs will use force, and always the possibility of the Soviets being "invited in" to help. I doubt it, but we can't exclude it. I don't think there will be a spill-over to other countries. (Ø)

The President: We're not doing contingency planning. We're not thinking of intervening. (Ø)

Secretary Baker: Once the shooting starts, and I think it will, it'll be a mess. The Serbs have armed the Serbian minority in Croatia, and the Croats have armed their own party. (Ø)

Ambassador Taft: And on top of that we'll likely have a refugee crisis. (Ø)

Secretary Baker: Yes, and it will involve the Albanians, the Greeks, all of Yugoslavia's neighbors. (Ø)

Secretary-General Woerner: If they use military force we have to make it clear that there are limits to what the Yugoslav army can do. (Ø)

Secretary Baker: There is the equal danger of various gangs starting to shoot at each other. (Ø)

Secretary-General Woerner: There is no way to prevent it. (Ø)

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6

Secretary Baker: The Yugoslavs will use their army. NATO will not get involved. The emergency mechanism of CSCE will likely be used. (S)

General Scowcroft: And do what? (S)

Secretary Baker: Nothing. (S)

Secretary-General Woerner: Is there something we can do with the Soviets? (S)

Secretary Baker: We passed a strong resolution in the CSCE meeting in Berlin, but I fear the political demands in Yugoslavia are so great, that we may be unable to stop this crisis. (S)

The President: The emotions are too high. (S)

Secretary-General Woerner: I understand you'll be going to Greece and Turkey. Both Ozal and Mitsotakis have told me they're prepared to deal on Cyprus and on the bilateral problems. (S)

The President: If we make progress on Cyprus, then some of the other tensions between the two will be reduced. We've got a good relationship with Ozal, especially given Turkey's support in the war, and Mitsotakis is favorably disposed to us. But Ozal is not terribly strong domestically right now. That's an understatement. It may constrain his freedom to move on these issues. But, we'll try. Well, Manfred. Good to see you. Keep up the good work. (S)

Secretary-General Woerner: Thank you Mr. President. (U)

-- End of Conversation --

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