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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting with Askar Akayev, President of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
James A. Baker III, Secretary of State
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Robert Zoellick, Under Secretary for Economic Affairs and Counsellor, Department of State
Ed A. Hewett, Senior Director for Soviet Affairs, NSC Staff (Notetaker)
Demitry Zarechnak, Interpreter

Askar Akayev, President of Republic of Kyrgyzstan
Viktor Komplektov, Ambassador to the U.S.
Apas D. Dzhumagulov, Chairman of the Chuyskiy District Soviet of the People's Deputies of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan
Batyraly S. Sadykov, Chairman of the Oshsk District Soviet of the People's Deputies of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan
Evgeniy Zolotov, Interpreter

DATE, TIME AND PLACE: October 25, 1991, 1:25 - 1:40pm EST
The Oval Office

The President: I'm delighted you're here. I understand congratulations are in order for your election. I want to turn the meeting over to you for a discussion. How do you see the future? (C)

Clearly we want good relations with you and with the republic. The floor is yours. (C)

President Akayev: Mr. President. First I want to thank you very much for meeting with me. I come with instructions from President Gorbachev to hand over his message to you. (U)

The President: I won't read it now, but will afterwards. (U)

President Akayev: Mr. President, among all the maxims I've read in books, the most important is what Polonius told his son: "...[T]o thine own self be true, and it must follow, as the night the day, you cannot be false then to any man." (U)

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Mr. President, you have followed that principle throughout your life, as a pilot, a diplomat, the father of a big family, and now as President of the United States. I express the greatest respect and admiration for you and the wonderful things you are doing as leader of this country. (U)

Mr. President, Machiavelli said that the ends justify the means. You have formulated noble objectives. The world is kinder; America is gentler. We've been in the U.S. only one week. I see the face of America has become gentler. And after the brilliant victory over Iraq, the face of the world has become gentler. (U)

Mr. President, the fathers of America formulated a wonderful system of values drawn from those of Rome and Greece: freedom and democracy. The people of Kyrgyzstan know you've given life to those principles and they share your ideals. We have opted for a truly democratic society and path of development. We are committed to a civil and law-governed society. (C)

The main thing in my mind is to seek moral support. Since you agreed to meet me, I assume you are informed about democratic processes in the republic and that you support us. I express our appreciation for your support. (C)

The President: Thank you for your very generous words. How do you see economic matters developing in your republic? (C)

President Akayev: We are firmly embarked on establishing a market economy. We're committed to an extensive program of privatization, and to private interest -- indeed to private property in general. We are initiating a radical land reform. (C)

In 1990 and 1991 we created more than 600 private peasant farms, giving them the right to own land. Right now they account for only 4% of arable land. But in 1992, we want to have 6,000 farms, accounting for 20% of the arable land. And within three years we would like to have that figure up to 70%. I hope that we'll be able to fully deal with the food problem. (C)

The President: I am confident that private ownership will benefit the agricultural economy. You will see production go way up. (C)

Are you happy with your relationship with the center, and with Gorbachev? (C)

President Akayev: Yes, Mr. President. We stand for a new union, led by President Gorbachev. With great effort we signed a treaty on an economic commonwealth. I also propose that we should sign a treaty on defense and security. Control of the armed forces and nuclear weapons should be in one hand, that of President Gorbachev. (C)

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The President: We'll be talking about those nuclear issues when we meet with Gorbachev on Tuesday. Do you and Yeltsin see eye-to-eye on these matters? (C)

President Akayev: Yes. We signed an agreement with President Yeltsin on relations with Russia. (C)

The President: I am glad to receive the message, and it is appropriate that you bring it to me. I want to make the point the we will deal openly with elected leaders in the republics, not behind Gorbachev's back, and do it openly, without in any way weakening him. (C)

It is for you to work out your relations with the center, which you have done. We respect that. When you do that, it will be more clear for us what we should do with the center. (C)

I wish you well. What we discuss in Madrid will be of interest to all of the republics -- both the economic side and the military side, that is, nuclear weapons. (C)

I know you're on a tight schedule. I am delighted you came. Thank you for your hard work. (U)

All of us have tried to work with the Soviet Union. This is a two-way street. Take that message back. All of us -- me, Jim Baker, Brent Scowcroft, Ed Hewett -- want this to work. (C)

We're working together in the Middle East, as we did in the United Nations in countering Iraqi aggression. (C)

We're not looking for winners or losers in the republics. (C)

President Akayev: Thank you for this visit. I appreciate your good words about my President, Gorbachev. We all wish for progress in the the cooperative efforts to deal with problems you are trying to solve. (C)

-- End of Conversation --

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2000-0429-F

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Record Group/Collection: George H.W. Bush Presidential Records
Collection/Office of Origin: National Security Council
Series: Presidential Memcon Files
Subseries:

OA/ID Number: CF01728
Folder ID Number: CF01728-016

Folder Title:
[Memorandum of Conversations (Memcons) - July 1991-December 1991]: October 1991
