

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

9590

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Presidential Meeting with President Aristide
and Prime Minister Malval of Haiti (C)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Peter Tarnoff, Acting Secretary of State
Anthony Lake, Assistant to the President for
National Security Affairs
Samuel R. Berger, Deputy Assistant to the
President for National Security Affairs
Lawrence Pezzullo, Special Envoy for Haiti
William Swing, U.S. Ambassador to Haiti
Lawrence Rossin, NSC (Notetaker)

President Jean-Bertrand Aristide
Prime Minister Robert Malval
Foreign Minister Claudette Werleigh
Jean Casimir, Haitian Ambassador to the
United States
Frantz Voltaire, Chief of Staff to the Prime
Minister

DATE, TIME December 6, 1993, 6:30 - 7:15 p.m.
AND PLACE: The Oval Office

The President: I know this is a difficult period for all of you as it is for us. I appreciate the efforts you are making to work through this crisis. What can we do to increase the chances of your success? The United States remains committed to the restoration of democracy in Haiti and to President Aristide's return. I'm excited by Prime Minister Malval's new initiative and want to know what we can best do to help you in it. (C)

President Aristide: On behalf of the people of Haiti let me thank you again for all the support you have given to us. We thank you also for sending Ambassador Swing to us. In the name of the Haitian people I would like to be there to share their suffering. You have been by our side for a long time and I thank you for this. As you know there is genocide occurring in Haiti. The Haitian people have lost 4,000 of their number in the twenty-seven months since the coup and they continue to live in a climate of genocide. This continued after the signing of the Governor's Island Agreement on July 3. Justice Minister Guy Malary was shot right after you had encouraged the Prime Minister and his government on television. So I know you share Haiti's suffering. This is why I was not indifferent to the death of Antoine Izmyery. Also, I know your heart beats for the refugees.

DECLASSIFIED

E.O. 13526, Sec. 3.5 (b)

White House Guidelines, September 11, 2006

By: [redacted] NARA, Date: 10/8/2015

2013-0122-M (2.20)

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Declassify on: OADR

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

CONFIDENTIAL PHOTO COPY

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

2

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

It helps that there are no longer any at Guantanamo and I thank you for that. (C)

I don't want to take too long speaking but our people are dying at the hands of a few armed persons who staged the coup and are preventing an end to the violence, both in Haiti and at sea. As the Prime Minister said so well before leaving Haiti, Haiti will collapse if there is no solution to the crisis very soon. Please keep helping us, we need to save our country, of course by reconciliation and by restoring democracy, but we need concrete steps soon or we will lose too many people, in fact our entire country. We need a chance to succeed with you by our side. Haitians are dying standing up, as heroes. They are sending a historic SOS. (C)

Prime Minister Malval: Before I get back to the drama, I want to note that I've lost all my hair in three months in office. All of you have good heads of hair and I hope you will keep it through two terms! (C)

The President: Yours will grow back once the crisis is solved. (Laughter). (C)

Prime Minister Malval: We are in the midst of a national drama. We are trying our best to bring our country together and to develop compromises with the different forces. More and more, all are realizing that there is no future without an end to this crisis, and everyone, or nearly everyone, is in the mood for compromise. But those with the guns are the exception, because they realize that compromise implies that they must lay down their guns. (C)

At this point the U.S. government can say that "enough is enough," that it will not permit a band of thugs to bring the country to its knees and therefore that it will support this initiative to get Governor's Island restarted. We soon will have no hope in Haiti, no foreign exchange reserves, no jobs. A country with no hope will die or take to the seas. I want to bring hope back, that is the reason for my initiative. I want to invite your close aides to participate in this "gathering for national salvation." I will be pressing the army to provide security for the gathering so that you can feel safe sending representatives to it. (C)

The President: When will the gathering be held? (C)

Prime Minister Malval: We are working on it. It will be next week or the week after. We cannot wait longer than that, we have to grab the Christmas spirit and hope for a miracle by the end of the year. (C)

Ambassador Pezzullo: Another factor is the impact of the sanctions. Fuel will run out in mid- to late January. Smaller enterprises are already out of business and others are closing down. So there has to be a solution to the impasse soon. Haiti

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

CLINTON ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ PHOTOCOPY

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

CONFIDENTIAL

3

is going downhill. If the depression gets deep enough all Haitians will say there is no future. (C)

Ambassador Casimir: I want to thank you, Mr. President, for the humanitarian aid you have given to Haiti. We have a serious problem of lawlessness, however, which poses a problem for the distribution of aid. We cannot trust the military and we can't be sure the aid will reach the right people. USAID is sending people to study these problems and make arrangements for continued distribution. We must avoid the risk of diversion and of creating structures of oppression. But I do want to thank you for this help. (C)

Foreign Minister Werleigh: The Prime Minister spoke of the importance of maintaining hope among the Haitian people. I remember the joy Haitians felt in February 1991 as President Aristide was being inaugurated. There was that same joy before October 30, 1993 when President Aristide's return to Haiti was anticipated. Now there is much despair because he did not return. So the international community must send a strong signal that President Aristide is going to return to Haiti. (C)

Regarding the national gathering, we must have a security structure for it. It is important that the International Civilian Mission return to Haiti to monitor for human rights violations. Also it is important that you send police and military trainers to help us create the new army. I am convinced that if the UN Mission had come, our government would have been able to function and the Haitian people would now be secure. (C)

Ambassador Swing: Thank you, Mr. President, for having me here in this meeting. It is nice to see President Aristide again -- I bother Prime Minister Malval every day! I want to note the importance of the meeting the Prime Minister will have tomorrow with the UN Secretary General. It will give further endorsement to this effort to relaunch the Governor's Island process and renew progress toward reconciliation. The absence of the UN Mission and of the civilian monitors is palpable in Haiti, since there are no observers of abuses. So we need the national gathering to create the conditions in which redeployment of these elements can occur. (C)

Mr. Lake: That is why we find this initiative so hopeful, because it can create the conditions for deployment. After all given its mandate the UN Mission cannot invade Haiti. (C)

The President: The resolution of the Haitian crisis won't work without an international presence who can defend themselves (and therefore others as well). You deserve credit, President Aristide and Prime Minister Malval, for trying to work through this without asking the United States and the international community for a force first. If there is an agreement, then a force can be deployed and then the army won't be able to back out of its agreement like it did before. Prime Minister Malval, how do you see the odds for success? (C)

CONFIDENTIAL

CLINTON ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ PHOTOCOPY

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

4

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Prime Minister Malval: All the actors in Haiti including the army are desperate. There could be a split in the army; the hierarchy is afraid of this happening. I have no precise information on this but it could be a fear of theirs. (C)

I don't know if they will agree to this initiative. At our first meeting last week, General Cedras said he no longer felt bound by the Governor's Island Agreement. But at our second meeting he denied ever having said that. Cedras feels like he is in a bind and may conclude he has no other choice but to join this initiative. I'm not over optimistic but events are taking a toll on them, too, and may force them to cooperate. (C)

Mr. Berger: As sanctions put pressure on the military we want to minimize the suffering of innocent Haitians. Is our effort sufficient? Will the fuel distribution plan we have developed work? Will it permit us to keep sanctions on? (C)

President Aristide: I am convinced that you, who know Haiti, know the courage of the Haitian people. The Haitian people gave themselves for their first gift freedom. When they lost democracy, they lost their freedom, their dignity. They can regain their dignity in a peaceful struggle for freedom. That is why poor Haitians accept the need for sanctions. There is a lot of suffering; the people hope democracy will return. (C)

That is why I ask, with hope and respect, for a total embargo which I expect will be short-lived. People otherwise will say, "Why must I suffer if I cannot see the return of democracy coming on a clear date"? (C)

The President: The sanctions already are causing a lot of harm to Haiti. There really is not much more we can do. Ninety percent of what is still getting through is food. I think we should first see the reaction in Haiti to Prime Minister Malval's announcement. If we must impose comprehensive sanctions, let us do it in sorrow, when it is evident that this initiative has not worked. I think there may be a real positive reaction. Maybe people will listen and do the proper thing. So I don't rule out total sanctions, but let's see what happens in Haiti with this initiative first. (C)

You both are brave and I admire you and what you are doing. If we can get some agreement then we can get the force back in. Not as an invasion but to aid in the peaceful transition to democracy you are working to achieve. (C)

--- End of Conversation ---

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

CLINTON LIBRARY PHOTOCOPY

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~