

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting with NATO Secretary General Javier Solana

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Madeleine Albright, Secretary of State
Samuel R. Berger, Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs
James Steinberg, Deputy Assistant to the
President for National Security Affairs
Donald K. Bandler, Special Assistant to the
President and Senior Director for European
Affairs, NSC Staff (Notetaker)

Javier Solana, NATO Secretary General
Jorge Donnay, Director of Private Office of
the Secretary General
Hoyt Yee, Deputy Director of Private Office
of the Secretary General

DATE, TIME July 16, 1998, 10:45 - 10:55 a.m.
AND PLACE: Oval Office

Secretary General Solana: I am glad to have another chance to visit with you. The NATO summit is coming closer and I know it will be a great event. (U)

The President: Yes, I am very excited about the summit and looking forward to it. (U)

Secretary General Solana: Of course we have lots of work to do between now and then, especially on Kosovo and Bosnia. I think we can make real progress on both by the time of the April summit. This will show again that NATO is a real success. (U)

The President: We should also aim to resolve problems between Greece and Turkey by then. (C)

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Reason: 1.5 (d)

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Secretary General Solana: That may be possible. (U)

The President: You're doing well working with them, for example on confidence building measures, and should keep it up. (C)

Secretary General Solana: We've made progress on some measures, but need more. (U)

The President: I know the mood is not easy. During the Cardiff EU negotiations to improve Turkey's accession prospects, I phoned Prime Minister Simitis. I got in 45 seconds, he responded for 45 minutes. We have a large Greek community here in the United States. Some of them are upset at my efforts to try to work things out through compromise, but I have to do it. (C)

Secretary General Solana: I agree. I just returned from Kiev, where I had a long talk with Kuchma. The situation in Ukraine is very bad, and he knows it. I know Al Gore is going to visit there soon. We may have to do something urgent about the declining situation in Ukraine. I am not sure it will hold together; the economic and political situation is dramatic. This is a country we cannot ignore, especially because of its relationship to Russia. (C)

The President: I am also very worried about this. A significant part of the problem is the government's lack of capacity to get help from others and use it effectively. If you have ideas you should let us and others know. I have supported Kuchma in the G-8 and in other ways. I like him and want him to make it. (C)

Secretary General Solana: You are going to Russia.

The President: I hope things are in better rather than worse shape when I get there. (C)

Secretary General Solana: We need to clarify the Kosovo problem with them. I hope you can do that. (C)

The President: Much depends on what they think our goals are. They don't want a successful pro-independence movement because of the precedent it would set for Chechnya. They are constantly concerned about the impulse for independence and the impact that could have on their neighborhood. (C)

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Secretary General Solana: You're right. Well, I hope we can have the main building blocks for the NATO summit in place by the December Council meeting. (S)

The President: That would be excellent. Don't forget to let me know if you have any specifics on Ukraine or Greece-Turkey-Cyprus. And I look forward to seeing you again soon. (S)

-- End of Conversation --

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