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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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KSH 9/7/2019

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting with NATO Secretary General Solana

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Madeleine Albright, Secretary of State
William Cohen, Secretary of Defense
Samuel Berger, Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs
Strobe Talbott, Deputy Secretary of State
Jim Steinberg, Deputy Assistant to the
President for National Security Affairs
Robert Hunter, U.S. Ambassador to NATO
Walter Slocombe, Under Secretary of Defense
for Policy
John Kornblum, Assistant Secretary of
State for European Affairs
Alexander Vershbow, Special Assistant to the
President and NSC Senior Director for
European Affairs, NSC (Notetaker)

Javier Solana, NATO Secretary General
Sergio Balanzino, Deputy Secretary General
Gebhardt von Moltke, Assistant Secretary
General for Political Affairs
Antony Cragg, Assistant Secretary General
for Defense Planning and Policy
Jorge Domecq, Director of Private Office
Hoyt Yee, Deputy Director of Private Office
Jaime Shea, NATO Spokesman

DATE, TIME July 7, 1997, 7:05-7:35 p.m.
AND PLACE: Palacio de Congressos, Madrid

The President: First, I want to thank you for the magnificent
job you have done in preparing for this Summit and handling all
NATO issues. We're glad to be here and anxious to get going.
(U)

Secretary General Solana: Thank you for all the help that you
and your team have given to me. I hope I can say the same thing
in two days. (U)

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2

The President: This is objectively a huge event. We have created an encouraging situation for all the parties involved. Everyone is ahead of where they were when they arrived in terms of the Partnership for Peace and the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council. We have established relationships with Russia and Ukraine, and there is the decision of Spanish government to rejoin the military command; I hope we can work out the details. The real question is how can we get out the right message and come to the right political decisions, ones that project an image of unity and strength. We don't want a message of division coming out of Madrid. (C)

Secretary General Solana: Let me tell you where we are now, although I think your team already has a lot of the information. A drafting committee is working now to resolve all the issues in the communique other than those relating to the open door. We hope tonight to have a clean text of the communique except for the open door. Tomorrow, we will have a short opening session and then a working session. I hope that it will be in restricted session from the beginning, but this will be difficult since France wants to begin at two-plus-nine. This risks having everyone fix their initial position and it could waste a lot of time. But I have so far been unable to convince the French to go straight into a restricted session, two-plus-two. I would like to have about an hour of discussion in restricted session and then give instructions to foreign ministers to put ideas on paper in a single paragraph. If they can get it right, we will be in good shape. My aim is to finish the whole process before lunch rather than have the question linger all day. At the same time, it is possible we will not finish by lunch and ministers will have to work over lunch. We will then have a second restricted session after lunch. This will mean a lot of time will have passed before we get to internal adaptation and other subjects.

I have spoken with all the Prime Ministers and Heads of State or their representatives. They all claim to be in a position to maneuver. I did not have such a good conversation with Prime Minister Chretien -- he was not very positive. I was unable to reach Chancellor Kohl, who has the flu, but spoke with Bitterlich. He said that Kohl is open to any solution; I urged Bitterlich to get to the point as quickly as possible. I also spoke with Levitte, who said he would work on language during the day and send it to me. However, I have not yet received any text from him. Chirac will only arrive at 9 o'clock and go straight to the dinner. He wants to speak to me there and perhaps we will have some other discussions on the margins of the dinner. (C)

Assuming the French are open to compromise, we then have to assure that our decision is communicated effectively to the world. The U.S. idea of having this done in a statement in the

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3

presence of all the Heads of State and Government has caused problems with some countries, but we will see if we can work it out. If we finish before lunch, we could do the statement at the family photo, without taking any questions. We would simply announce the decision on three and our philosophy of the open door. This is the dream scheme. If we cannot finish before lunch, we will have to see how to handle it in the afternoon.

(C)

As I told Madeleine Albright yesterday, it is important to talk to as many countries as possible so that the opening interventions are constructive. There is not much point in restating initial positions. Everyone needs to show a readiness to find a consensus. If we have a tour de table and then someone counts the votes, inappropriate conclusions could be drawn, calling for some kind of mathematical compromise. Therefore, it is important to begin with a constructive attitude from the beginning. We will continue to work at dinner and afterwards. That sums it up. The situation is not brilliant. (C)

The President: If it works, it will be brilliant. It would be great if we could finish by lunch. How long do you think it will take to complete the accession talks? (C)

Secretary General Solana: I think we can finish the talks by December, if we do it properly. If everyone takes a constructive attitude, there is not that much to discuss. (C)

The President: So this will mean that we will be able to ratify during 1998? (C)

Secretary General Solana: That is right. Ratification should begin in January or February, with the aim of having it completed in all 16 countries by 1999, so that we can have a Summit in Washington to celebrate the 50th anniversary of NATO and its opening to new members. (C)

The President: We need to get the NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council up and running as well. We had a good start in our meeting in Paris. (C)

Secretary General Solana: I received a letter from Primakov suggesting three things. First, that there be a brief meeting of the Permanent Joint Council at the level of Ambassadors before the summer break. The most important issue for this meeting would be to resolve the procedures for the operation of the Council. Then Primakov wants a ministerial meeting by September, possibly in New York around the time of the UN General Assembly. This has both advantages and disadvantages. It would be very easy to do since all the Foreign Ministers would be in New York.

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4

But holding the meeting on the margins of another event could cause the meeting to be seen as less important than it should. Nevertheless, we have said that we are prepared to have some meetings outside of Brussels, although we must make clear that this is not a precedent. Otherwise, we will be having NATO-Russia meetings at the OECD, OSCE and other venues. We should keep it separate and have real meetings that are focused just on the NATO-Russia relationship. We have not yet answered Primakov, but I suspect that allies will agree to his idea of a preparatory meeting in July and a ministerial in September. The issues Primakov mentioned for the agenda are reasonable: Bosnia, peacekeeping, etc. There are still procedural problems to resolve, in particular, how the three person-chair will operate. NATO's latest proposal is reasonable. There will be a co-chairmanship at ministerial level meetings. There are signs that this approach goes in the right direction. The Russians will probably accept the Secretary General chairing meetings at the ambassadorial level in practice, but he will not want that written down. (C)

The President: Where are we on Spain's integration into the military command? (C)

Secretary General Solana: Remember that I do not represent the government of Spain! I think you will hear something positive from the Prime Minister. He would like to make a statement at the summit, if there is enough substance to justify it. I believe he will make a statement that is not definitive, but says that if things go in the right direction, Spain is not going to change its mind on integration. It would be good if he could go farther, but the UK is not prepared to agree because of a small problem with respect to a little piece of rock in the Mediterranean. (C)

Regarding France's integration, the last time we met, we agreed it would be a good idea to put into the communique that the military structure should be finished by some specific date. We cannot let this process run on and on and permit Spain and France never to take decisions. It will become increasingly weird if we are inviting new members to join the Alliance but the military structure that they are joining is unknown. Therefore, we need to finish more or less at the same time that we finish the accession talks. (C)

Samuel Berger: Would that target date be in the communique? (C)

Secretary General Solana: I will try to do that -- or you should do so. It would be good if the United States pushed it. (C)

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5

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Secretary Cohen: I have said publicly that we hope to resolve the command structure by end of the year. (U)

Samuel Berger: The French have indicated an interest in resuming negotiations on reintegration after Madrid. One of their reasons is a concern that all the hats will be passed out and their reintegration will not be a meaningful one if it happens after that. (C)

Ambassador Hunter: There is an end-of-year deadline in play and the French have not yet rejected it. (C)

Secretary General Solana: On other issues, we need to make the EAPC a real success. It is our responsibility to put enough meat on the bones. We have to make sure that it is different from the NACC, for example, through enhanced programs under PFP. The most important issue is the Ukraine relationship. We also have problem with respect to Bosnia. (C)

Secretary Albright: We are in favor of a stronger statement on Bosnia in the communique. (C)

Secretary General Solana: I am absolutely sure that allies will agree with your text, but do you want to make the whole statement about Mrs. Plavsic? I think that something more about overall implementation should be added. (C)

Secretary Albright: There is additional material in the regular communique that we can move into the statement on Bosnia.

Secretary General Solana: What we say on Plavsic should be broader. (C)

John Kornblum: The whole issue could be broken out of the communique... (C)

Alexander Vershbow: ...with the two texts put together. (C)

Secretary General Solana: That would be good, so it is not just about Plavsic. (C)

Secretary Albright: She is all we have at the moment! (C)

Secretary General Solana: That is my other concern. We have to have a tough private conversation about war criminals. If we cannot say we will isolate Karadzic, people will ask what more we will do. (C)

The President: The more we speak about this, the worse it is, no matter what happens. In this area, no news is good news. (C)

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6

Secretary General Solana: In 1998 we will have to work out a strategy for dealing with all these complicated issues, but we can see how things evolve. (C)

Samuel Berger: Did I understand you correctly that Levitte said he was working on a compromise text? (C)

Secretary General Solana: Yes. But it is possible that President Chirac said that it was not good enough, so he is reworking it. Bitterlich is a real opportunist. Levitte has been sounding more constructive. (C)

Samuel Berger: Levitte always sounds constructive. (C)

Secretary General Solana: I expect that the French language, if it is ever presented, will contain names and dates. (C)

The President: I think the Germans are the key. (C)

Secretary General Solana: I think so as well. It will be difficult if the Germans do not want to say anything. Kohl has stated that he prefers three but could live with four or five. This is not good. It would be better if he said he preferred three and urged that allies work on the open door. The British are at the other end of the train -- they do not want fixed dates. (C)

The President: The British really prefer three and no one else. (C)

Samuel Berger: They can support an open door, but without names or dates. (C)

The President: I think we will need more to help the French get out of the hole. I want a result in which Jacques Chirac can say that he won. We do not need it to look like a defeat. (C)

Secretary General Solana: It would be good if we could work on the basis of their language, assuming it is reasonable. (C)

The President: When do you think you will receive it? (C)

Samuel Berger: I will be seeing Levitte tonight. (C)

-- End of Conversation --

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