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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with French President Francois
Mitterrand on February 15, 1993

PARTICIPANTS: The President
President Francois Mitterrand of France
Interpreter: Marcel Bouquet
Notetaker: Tony Wayne

DATE, TIME February 15, 1993, 10:08am - 10:20 am
AND PLACE: Oval Office

President Mitterrand: Hello, Francois Mitterrand here. (U)

The President: Mr. President? (U)

President Mitterrand: Is that President Clinton? (U)

The President: Yes, it's me. (U)

President Mitterrand: Good morning. I am very happy to hear you. I am at your disposal to discuss whatever you like. (U)

The President: Thank you. I know you just had a long journey to and from Indochina. (U)

President Mitterrand: Yes, it was a very interesting trip. It allowed me to raise consciousness so one could see the changes going on in Vietnam. Cambodia was very interesting, but there is no assurance that the war will end soon. The leader there is very picturesque and interesting. I hope we will have the opportunity to discuss this at length sometime. (U)

The President: Yes, I would like to speak with you briefly about the situation in Bosnia. I sent you a message last week, but we could not speak. It is essential that the United States and France work together closely in finding solutions. We deeply appreciate the leadership which France has shown in this crisis. Ambassador Bartholomew, whom I have asked to work on this full time, just returned from Moscow where he had good talks. We think it is important to bring the Russians along, which I think you agree is important. But I wanted to hear your thoughts on our position and where we go from here. (U)

President Mitterrand: You informed me of you principle points: the basic structure of the Vance-Owen plan is fine, but you would make adjustments. I agree that is not the best possible plan,

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but it is the only one available. I want to add that we must review the possibilities for changing the plan, which I agree could be helpful. I also think there might need to be exchange between Croatian and Serbian territory. According to my talks with the two presidents that might be possible. It may be necessary to unify or link the zones which both control. Also, the plan does not contemplate returning the territory which the Moslems have lost and continue to lose. But at least the plan lets them recuperate 20% of the territory lost. I think that is reasonable. It will allow the Moslems to have a homogeneous territory -- a joint territory which they do not have now. We cannot forget that this does not exist or pretend that it does. Now, they only have isolated points, mainly cities. So we must encourage all parties to talk, to negotiate about this. The Moslems need to know that Bosnia will remain a unified state. I think we could give assurances to President Izetbegovic of Bosnia on this. Of course, if we broke Bosnia into ten different (independent) provinces that would be unacceptable. So your proposal and thoughts accepting in general the Vance-Owen plan with a few changes is acceptable. The question is what changes to make to the plan. (Ø)

The President: Thank you very much for your thoughts. I'd like to have a chance to confer with Ambassador Bartholomew after his contacts and consultations and then I'll be back in touch with you with some specific changes. In the meantime, we will proceed along the lines discussed. The U.S. is prepared to play its part in enforcement of a plan. We will encourage the Bosnians to negotiate in good faith and ask our friends to encourage Serbia and Croatia to do the same. I am delighted that you think we are moving in the right direction. (Ø)

President Mitterrand: I resisted considerable pressure here from people who wanted France to undertake a ground operation. I see no advantage in that for anyone. (Ø)

The President: I agree. (Ø)

President Mitterrand: It is a difficult situation there as no one tells the truth. The three communities have been through centuries of struggle and hatred. You cannot trust what they say. (Ø)

The President: I agree, but we need to try to contain the conflict and to stop the bloodshed. (Ø)

President Mitterrand: Your objectives are the same as ours, and I appreciate your willingness to be involved in the solution. (Ø)

The President: I am eager to have an early meeting with you. My people are trying to identify some dates. I look forward to having the opportunity to meet with you soon. (U)

President Mitterrand: Thank you. There are important issues which we could work on together. I too look forward to an early meeting. (U)

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The President: Good-bye, au revoir. (U)

President Mitterrand: Good-bye. (U)

-- End of Conversation --

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