

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

DECLASSIFIED
PER E.O. 13526
2015-0548-M (1.22)
KBM 9/9/2019

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with NATO Secretary General Solana
(U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Secretary General Solana

Notetakers: Doug Bayley, Jenny McGee,
Jim Smith and Roger Merletti

DATE, TIME April 26, 1999, 1:46 - 1:55 p.m. EDT
AND PLACE: The Residence

The President: Javier? (U)

Secretary General Solana: How are you? (U)

The President: Hey, I just wanted to talk to you before you
left. (U)

Secretary General Solana: Thank you very, very much. (U)

The President: I think you did a masterful job. These people
like and trust you. It's so important and so obvious. I think
we're leaving here in better shape. (U)

Secretary General Solana: There's no question about that. The
most important thing to me personally is we are constructing a
profound friendship. That will allow us to fight whatever
battle is necessary. After all, this is a business for human
beings. (U)

The President: I agree with that. Can you hold on a minute?
(U)

Secretary General Solana: Yes. (U)

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Classified by: Glyn T. Davies
Reason: 1.5(d)
Declassify On: 7/2/09

The President: Sorry. Let me ask you something. I want to take a day to think about all that happened here, and I would like to call you maybe tomorrow and just go over it. (C)

Secretary General Solana: Compare notes? (C)

The President: I need some time to absorb it. I have some ideas about what we should do now operationally, but also how to get out of this. I followed up as we discussed. Al Gore talked to Chernomyrdin today. (C)

Secretary General Solana: He did already? I talked to Strobe Talbott last night and had dinner with him. I think we will be in good shape. Let me say something very personal. I appreciate so much what you have done for the Summit, and before the Summit, and the friendship we built together. It's been something unforgettable for my wife and for me. I don't want to get sentimental on this point, but sometimes we have to tell each other the truth. We have a lot of things to do together, and we will do them. (C)

The President: And after I leave office, too. (C)

Secretary General Solana: Sure, sure. Life is very long. (C)

The President: I enjoyed being with you so much. (C)

(Power failure at 1351 EDT. Call reconvened at 1352 EDT.)

The President: Hello? We got cut off. I'm sorry. (U)

Secretary General Solana: Technology didn't work this time.
(U)

The President: I wanted to say it also meant a lot to me. I feel much closer to you, and I think it's a good thing you're there now. One of the things I'd like you to think about: I want to have time to think about this and call you back with some specific thoughts I have. Do you have a copy of *The Washington Post*? (C)

Secretary General Solana: I have a copy, but I have not read it. (C)

The President: There's an article in there by a man named Nicholas Gage. He wrote a famous English book called *Eleni*. It's about a young girl caught in war. He's an interesting man

and knows a lot about the Balkans. The specifics of the article, I don't know if they're right. He says we ought to have settled this thing with the Russians and get together a conference with the Serbs and all the front-line states. The idea that intrigued me is he had this idea, instead of doing what we planned to do which is settle Kosovo, to put them together. (S)

Secretary General Solana: The whole region? (S)

The President: That might be something to get Milosevic to take the NATO force. That way, he could see it as part of a larger force. (S)

Secretary General Solana: For the Serbs it would be very good.

The President: It would be part of a larger thing. It also solves something for us. Otherwise, we couldn't have Milosevic at a conference on the region. (S)

Secretary General Solana: I had given some thought to that idea before. That may be a good way out. (S)

The President: Now, many people would dislike that because they think we should demonize him, but the important thing is a good long-term solution. (S)

Secretary General Solana: Addressing the region as a whole will quiet those people. We have a problem bigger than Milosevic. It's a regional problem. If we were able to solve it, that would compensate. (S)

The President: That's my theory. There's another problem with it, though. We're racing against time, because the war crimes tribunal may indict him, and that will complicate things. (S)

Secretary General Solana: We can handle it, I think. (S)

The President: Are you sure? (S)

Secretary General Solana: Sure, we can handle it. If we agree, you and I, we can handle it. (S)

The President: We don't need to say that to anyone else. We would be vilified, both of us, you and I, if anyone heard us say it. Well, read it, and we'll talk again in 48 hours. (S)

Secretary General Solana: We don't need to say anything to anyone else. (S)

Secretary General Solana: Thank you, and all the best for our friendship. You know how much I value human relations whatever the third way, fourth way, and fifth way, it comes down to human beings. (U)

The President: You got it. Thank you, friend. (U)

Secretary General Solana: Thank you, and goodbye to Hillary. (U)

The President: Goodbye. (U)

-- End of Conversation --