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MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with President Francois Mitterrand of France

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Notetaker: Kathi Guekel and Jennifer Haskel

DATE, TIME: September 27, 1994, 2:38 - 2:57pm
AND PLACE: Oval Office

The President: Hello. (U)

President Mitterrand: Hello. Is it the President? (U)

The President: Yes, it's me. It's nice to hear your voice. (U)

President Mitterrand: Happy to hear from you. It's been a long time since we talked to each other. I want to focus this brief conversation on Haiti. What do you think of what's going on there? My second question is an interesting one. How's it going with Yeltsin? (U)

The President: Yes. First let me discuss Haiti briefly. Deployment of our forces is going well. We have about 15,000 in place now. So far we're having good cooperation from Haitian authorities. We have stressed to Cedras and Francois that we will not tolerate police violence such as occurred last Tuesday. We have put 1,000 military police on the ground. Tension appears to have receded, but the situation won't change overnight. We had the unfortunate incident at Cap Haitien last Saturday when our forces were fired on by local authorities and had to defend themselves. We hope that will not happen again. We've begun buying back weapons from non-military persons. I think that will help. (C)

President Mitterrand: Yes, yes. Do you think things will get back to normal in the next couple of days? (U)

The President: They're getting closer to normal. We have received good cooperation from Aristide and the military leaders. Our goal is to keep things as calm as possible. We've lifted unilateral sanctions, are restoring electricity, and restoring conditions of normal life. The next thing we have to deal with is the transfer of power on October 15th, and whether we can get amnesty through the Haitian Parliament. (C)

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President Mitterrand: Yes indeed. (U)

The President: So far Aristide's cooperation has been excellent. Cedras and his group have been good as well. Tensions will come if there is no agreement over amnesty. Perhaps we can work together on that. We're doing everything we can to return the country back to normal. We've begun returning Haitian refugees from Guantanamo Bay. We're training several hundred to be police officers as well. We have 28 countries working with us in the first phase to be police monitors. There's a good chance to maintain order there. (S)

President Mitterrand: Yes. We're waiting to send a certain number of units of Gendarmerie. (S)

The President: I received your letter on participation with police trainers and monitors in the multinational coalition saying you would participate when the UN took it over. (S)

President Mitterrand: And they're going to do that, are they not? (S)

The President: Yes. Now that we have peacefully deployed the multinational force, it's a good environment for police monitors. Most of the multinational forces, including police, will be in beginning this weekend through mid-October. We'll have to stay a couple of months. I hope you will reconsider moving your police monitors in the multinational force phase, like Canada. Canada is sending 100 police monitors to arrive as soon as Aristide returns. (S)

President Mitterrand: I will talk to the Prime Minister about this tomorrow. (S)

The President: Let's talk about Yeltsin now. (S)

President Mitterrand: Yes. Tell me what happened in your conversation. (S)

The President: Yes. First let me give you my general impressions, then three specific points. He clearly is in a stronger position politically and economically than when I went to Russia in January. (S)

President Mitterrand: Yes. (U)

The President: Inflation is down. Incomes are beginning to rise again. (S)

President Mitterrand: Yes, but I don't think he has a very good position in public opinion. (C)

The President: Yes, but he's in a less shaky position politically than before and he can make it into 1996. He thinks he's on an upturn now. One thing that could come of all this that concerns me, he's trying to minimize his opposition on the right by taking steps on his own to reassert Russia's status as a great power. He basically wants us to recognize his unilateral right to step in to resolve crises in the Newly Independent States, while at the same time pressuring us not to expand NATO. (C)

President Mitterrand: Yes, but it's difficult, isn't it? (C)

The President: Yes, and one part of this I think is his long-term calculation of Russia's economic interests. For example, he wants to settle Nagorno-Karabakh in part because of Azerbaijan's oil reserves. It isn't clear to me that he really wants to reassert effective control over all the republics. But it's absolutely clear he wants to be a great power to be reckoned with, and the best way to get that recognition is to be the dominant power in his own back yard. I think the trick is to find ways we can cooperate in other forums like expanding the G-7 to G-8 politically, and close cooperation on Bosnia and other areas. We should deal with things in his own back yard in a way that gives a large role but not a controlling one. (C)

President Mitterrand: Yes. (U)

The President: On Bosnia he raised again a proposal that heads of the Contact Group meet somewhere in Europe fairly soon with representatives of the parties to hammer out a solution. It seems like a high-risk approach. If we do it and the Bosnian Serbs still said no, what would we do? He pushed that on me again today. (C)

President Mitterrand: So you're not in a hurry to respond to that invitation? (C)

The President: No. Let me say that you probably know the Bosnian government suggested that lifting of the arms embargo not be implemented for four to six months. I don't think we have that much time before the situation comes apart. Sarajevo is close to being totally cut off again. (C)

President Mitterrand: I think the UN force should intervene because we announced they would and if they don't, it will undermine the prestige of the United Nations. (C)

The President: We should intervene to protect Sarajevo... (C)

President Mitterrand: Into the exclusion zone...the 20 km zone. It seems to me, seeing the same television pictures again -- people starving, shelling, killing children -- psychologically, it will have a negative impact on the image of the United Nations. (C)

The President: I agree. The problem with the Yeltsin idea is that there's a very low chance of success and a high level of embarrassment. We don't have enough leverage for Yeltsin's idea. It's better keep working to pressure the Bosnian Serbs through Serbia and monitors on the border, rather than have another meeting of heads of state. (C)

President Mitterrand: Yes, well good. Thank you for that background and for giving me a feel for the situation. I will call you from time to time. (C)

The President: I'm very glad to talk to you any time. Yeltsin is leaving tomorrow evening. If you have any more thoughts about what to do next in Bosnia, I'll be very glad to hear from you. (C)

President Mitterrand: Yes. I will surely call you. Good luck. (U)

The President: Thank you very much. Good bye. (U)

-- End of Conversation --