

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting with Manfred Woerner of NATO (U)PARTICIPANTS: U.S.
The President
Secretary of State James A. Baker, III
John Sununu, Chief of Staff to the President
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs
Alton Keel, Permanent Representative of the
U.S. to the North Atlantic Council
Robert Gates, Deputy Assistant to the
President for National Security Affairs
Assistant Secretary of State Rozanne Ridgway
Robert Blackwill, Special Assistant to the
President for National Security Affairs
(notetaker)NATOSecretary General Manfred Woerner
Deputy Assistant Secretary General W. Robert
Pearson
James Cunningham, Acting Director, Secretary
General's Private OfficeDATE, TIME April 12, 1989, 3:45 p.m. - 4:05 p.m.
AND PLACE: Oval Office

The President opened the discussion by noting that these were important times for the Alliance and thanked the Secretary General for the hospitality he had shown, while FRG Defense Minister, to himself and Barbara. (U)

Secretary General Woerner thanked the President for his remarks. (U)

The President asked the Secretary General what he would want concerning the NATO summit if he was the US President. For his part, the President said he wanted the NATO summit to be a big success. The US intended to have a leading role in NATO and hoped to strengthen NATO solidarity. Gorbachev had dominated headlines in Europe, causing strains over NATO defense issues in the FRG and elsewhere. The policy review, though it had been somewhat hampered by the Tower confirmation debate, was proceeding expeditiously. Dick Cheney was providing strong leadership at the Pentagon. *let*

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The President had talked with Chancellor Kohl and had some feeling for what he is facing. We did not want to push Kohl to the political brink; but we did not want to see NATO unravel. The key objective was to keep the Alliance together. What did the Secretary General think should be the next step? ~~(S)~~

Secretary General Woerner said that, from the President's perspective, he would think: (1) As the first summit for a new US President, the President would dominate it - it would be his summit. It would be the President's first appearance in Europe, and Europe expected clearcut leadership from a man who knows where he is going. If it was a success, it would be the President's success. If it was a failure, it would be the President's failure. (2) The comprehensive concept should be finished before the summit to keep SNF from dominating the agenda. The summit was a unique opportunity to address broader issues. We are in a historic situation and, although we are successful, public perception is that Gorbachev is driving history. The President could turn this public perception around. ~~(S)~~

Continuing, the Secretary General urged concentration on a political message pointing the way ahead, briefly citing our success, and then looking toward the future. The message would begin with the future role of NATO, as a source of stability and security enabling safe political change, especially since transition periods have been risky historically. NATO was an instrument for further improvement in East-West relations. The message would mention the need to do more on security and defense. It would also look at the future of Europe, including a sense of objectives and limits in prospective cooperation with Eastern Europe. There would be a section on arms control. The basic idea was not to challenge Moscow only on arms control, but instead stress the political battleground. We are setting the agenda on East-West relations by emphasizing security, a Europe of self-determination and freedom, free of the Berlin Wall and the Brezhnev Doctrine. If we accepted the offer of cooperation on global issues in Gorbachev's UN speech, we could cite concrete projects for further work. ~~(S)~~

The Secretary General concluded by saying that NATO needed US ideas, concepts, and cooperation. The US should not expect others to deliver much; they are waiting for the Americans. Turning briefly to the SNF issue, the Secretary General agreed we cannot push Kohl too far. ~~(S)~~

The President agreed that we could not let the success or failure of the NATO summit turn on the final word on SNF modernization. ~~(S)~~

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Secretary General Woerner said he was grateful for that answer. We do need a formulation on modernization and arms control. Kohl had to deal with Genscher; then he had to deal with the US. NATO was waiting for the Americans and the Germans to make a deal. The Secretary General would see Kohl next week; he would tell him this.

(S)

The President had the feeling that Kohl was in the midst of reshuffling his government, but this reshuffle had to be settled soon.

(S)

Secretary General Woerner said it would happen early next week; that was why Kohl could not provide an answer on SNF at this moment. The SNF decision was a coalition problem since the Liberals wanted no decision on modernization. There were only six weeks left until the Summit. We must get this done so we can finish work in the Alliance. We need to have early contact between the American Administration and the German government. The pieces of a possible compromise were already apparent: no immediate production/deployment decision; a commitment to keep the SNF forces up to date; no third zero; and an arms control perspective.

(S)

The President stated our continuing interest in high level discussions with the FRG but said the FRG had not been able to send a group to Washington to discuss the problem. He knew that Chancellor Kohl was aware of the seriousness with which the President viewed the problem. Kohl, however, felt the sand shifting under his feet.

(S)

Although he was aware of pressure from Capitol Hill, Secretary General Woerner did not think there was a need to endorse a new CFE approach at this time. This would weaken our current position just when the negotiations are beginning. The report from the Trilateral Commission was not bad. Some of their ideas could be useful in preparing for the summit.

(S)

The President commented that burdensharing had been an important subject in the campaign. There were several factors that drove someone like Bill Roth to advocate some US unilateral withdrawal. We can contain that pressure, but a successful Summit was vital. At some point, we needed to articulate a visionary goal for CFE, including the prospect for further reductions.

(S)

The Secretary General said this was true, as long as it did not undermine our current negotiating stance.

(S)

Secretary Baker asked if the Secretary General meant that a statement on the future of CFE was good as a long-term goal but not as an immediate negotiating prospect?

(S)

Exactly, Secretary General Woerner replied. We can have a bold vision, but the next step in CFE was another and more complicated

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matter. We also do not wish to weaken or destroy our present negotiating position. (C)

The President said it would be good to have a vision of a more peaceful world to offer. Gorbachev has, like a kind of surfer, caught a wave of public support. It would be nice to get agreement on a broad vision of our own. (C)

Secretary General Woerner said that would allow us to take the offensive. (C)

Secretary Baker agreed. He added, with respect to events in Poland and Hungary, that we would continue to welcome the Secretary General's ideas as we went along. (C)

The President thanked the Secretary General and said he looked forward to seeing him in Brussels. (U)

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