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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: The President's Meeting with Berlin Governing Mayor Walter Momper

PARTICIPANTS: U.S.
The President
James Baker, Secretary of State
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs
Ambassador Robert Blackwill, Senior Director,
European and Soviet Affairs
Charles Thomas, Deputy Assistant Secretary of
State for European Affairs
Harry Gilmore, U.S. Minister, Berlin

Berlin
Governing Mayor Walter Momper
FRG Ambassador Juergen Ruhfus
Wolf Calebow, Counselor, FRG Embassy

DATE, TIME April 19, 1989, 2:00 p.m. - 2:15 p.m.
AND PLACE: Oval Office

After opening pleasantries, the President said he was anxious to hear about the situation in Berlin. (U)

Governing Mayor Momper began by inviting the President to Berlin. The government and people of Berlin would like the President to come, he said, to demonstrate America's commitment to Berlin. Even the "alternative" parts of the Senate [referring to the environmentalist "Alternative List" in coalition with Momper's Social Democratic Party (SPD)] would like the President to come. (Ø)

The President thanked Momper very much for his generous invitation. He then inquired whether Momper was pleased so far with the cooperation of the Alternatives. (Ø)

Momper replied in the affirmative. So far they are very reasonable: on the questions of Allied status and a visit of the U.S. President, they have been quite moderate. (Ø)

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The President noted that many of the Greens have been ahead of their time on environmental issues, but their security concerns are radical, and harder to handle in the NATO context. (Ø)

Momper replied that they are changing. He said that Undersecretary of State Kimmitt emphasized that one of the President's key issues will be the global environment. This will help with the Alternatives. (Ø)

The President said that his Administration will push on the environment. The U.S. wants to help Brazil, for example, with some sort of environmental set aside. The Administration is going to try to stay out front, to make the environment a real priority. (Ø)

Secretary Baker noted that the U.S. is adding environmental concerns to its agenda with the Soviet Union. (Ø)

Turning to Eastern Europe, Mayor Momper said he liked the President's speech in Detroit and the signal that the U.S. supports change in Eastern Europe. Berliners, Momper added, have a special interest in East-West issues and to the improvement of the situation in and around Berlin. The President's speech really encouraged the people and government of Berlin. (Ø)

The President noted that the U.S. will continue to differentiate between those countries that move toward pluralism, and will have no anti-Soviet cast to its policies. Americans have an affinity and a cultural closeness to Eastern Europe, and do not want to see people crushed under tanks, as in 1956. The President added that the U.S. is limited by budget problems, but it will do everything possible. But perhaps Berlin does not have budget problems. (Ø)

Mayor Momper replied that his government is trying to cut 8 per cent from the budget, excepting personnel, but it is a real struggle with the Alternatives. Aid from the Federal government in Bonn helps, he said; and in any case Berlin wants to make its contribution and lend its know-how to East-West cooperation. (Ø)

Secretary Baker asked how Momper sees events in Poland and Hungary affecting the GDR. (Ø)

Momper observed that the GDR is far behind the times. There is movement, though not yet open, in East German society. There have been some improvements in information policy and a "small perestroika" in economic matters, but even the Soviets are unhappy with the lack of change in the GDR. After Honecker, who is 75, there may be fundamental change. At the moment, however, no one, including Moscow, is really sure how glasnost will affect the German national question in the GDR. (Ø)

The President said he wondered whether the older leaders in the GDR -- those in their seventies -- would like to return to a unified Germany. (Ø)

Momper replied that this was more true of the younger generation in the GDR. (Ø)

The President then asked how young people in Berlin feel about the Wall. (Ø)

Momper observed that Berliners are accustomed to the Wall. They feel its presence, but young people do not want Berlin's government to tell the GDR to take down the Wall. Rather, Berliners want more open contacts so there will be more sharing of their cultural heritage. They do not like the Wall but have learned to live with it. (Ø)

Before the President concluded the meeting, Secretary Baker observed that this is why Gorbachev's "European house" is such an empty concept. Europeans cannot move from room to room. (Ø)