

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

## MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: President's Meeting with Gro Harlem Brundtland, Prime Minister of Norway (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President  
James A. Baker, III, Secretary of State  
John H. Sununu, Chief of Staff  
Marlin Fitzwater, Assistant to the President and Press Secretary  
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs  
Robert M. Gates, Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs  
Robert D. Blackwill, Special Assistant to the President for European and Soviet Affairs  
James Wilkinson, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs

Gro Harlem Brundtland, Prime Minister  
Kjeld Vibe, Ambassador  
Arne Strand, State Secretary  
Morten Wetland, Special Advisor to the Prime Minister

DATE, TIME May 3, 1989, 10:00 - 11:00 am EDT  
AND PLACE: The Oval Office

The President congratulated Prime Minister Brundtland on being honored for her work on the environment. He said he also wanted to mention preparations for the NATO Summit, which should be a demonstration of strength and resilience. The President said he welcomed changes in the Soviet Union and noted what a promising era this is, adding that Secretary Baker would be meeting with Foreign Minister Shevardnadze the following week. The U.S. will be prudent, but there will be no foot-dragging. (Ø)

The President noted that people are looking at the NATO Summit with great interest. While there are differences on short-range-nuclear forces (SNF), the U.S. and Norway share a commitment to extended deterrence, no "third zero," and flexibility on a follow-on to the Lance missile. However, the U.S. believes that early SNF negotiations with Moscow would be a serious mistake that could undermine peace. The West should concentrate instead

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on the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) talks and the need to reduce overwhelming Soviet conventional advantages. The President said he wanted to make clear the U.S. position on this and to ask Norway's support for holding the line against early SNF negotiations. (S)

Prime Minister Brundtland replied that in her press conference yesterday she had said the NATO Summit should seek common ground. This is important at the first summit of an American Administration and especially so on the 40th anniversary of NATO. As to the SNF discussions of last week, Chancellor Kohl used the word "linked" with regard to conventional and SNF negotiations. This view was based on the 1988 NATO summit, which affirmed the need for a mix of conventional and nuclear forces, and to modernize where necessary. This points toward common ground. (S)

Prime Minister Brundtland said the question is how to phrase the Alliance's willingness eventually to negotiate SNF. The Prime Minister agreed a "third zero" would be dangerous, recalling a discussion she had in 1987, after the Reykjavik summit, with Mrs. Thatcher about the dangers of a "third zero" and the problems with INF [intermediate-range nuclear forces]. It is difficult in a European debate to explain why it is dangerous to discuss these matters with the East. The Prime Minister said that it is possible to negotiate with Moscow in this area without going to a "third zero." She disputed the logic that negotiations would lead to a "third zero," saying this view was overly fearful. The question is the phrasing in the Summit communique, which should avoid conflict within the Alliance. It is possible to avoid saying no to negotiations without going into them immediately. (S)

The President replied that a "third zero" is unacceptable. It would leave the U.S. in a position that no President could tolerate. It would also be unacceptable to the American people. (S)

Secretary Baker added that a decision has been taken on a follow-on to the Lance missile that handles the political problem in Bonn. The issue is when to get to negotiations. The U.S. believes it would be difficult for any European government to avoid a "third zero." There is also the situation in the U.S., where there is a continual fight with public opinion and the Congress to maintain hundreds of thousands of U.S. troops in Europe. There is some public sentiment to bring them home. We need the follow-on to Lance to protect our troops. The Administration made this clear to Ministers Genscher and Stoltenberg. It is more than an issue of military strategy; domestic political concerns are also at work. (S)

The President said the U.S. has been restrained but that he is getting annoyed by faits accompli and public posturing by others.

The U.S. is not going to tolerate this much longer. The President emphasized that the U.S. must state forcefully its position, and that he wanted the Prime Minister to hear this from him. The U.S. wants the Alliance to be strong. The President said he would negotiate with Gorbachev one-on-one and that he knows the man. However, the President said that he wants to do this with NATO together. (S)

Prime Minister Brundtland said that the Alliance must find a common platform. (S)

The President replied that he had tried, but was confronted with a complete reversal and public faits accompli by Bonn. (S)

Prime Minister Brundtland agreed that the situation was unfortunate, but the clock cannot be turned back three weeks. (S)

The President said Allied leaders cannot simply complain about domestic politics and pressures, either. The President said he would go up ten points [in public approval ratings] if he were to announce that he was pulling U.S. troops out of Europe. (S)

Secretary Baker added that Allied leaders cannot play politics with the future of Europe. The U.S. will not. (S)

Prime Minister Brundtland asked about Secretary Cheney's comments on Gorbachev. (S)

The President said he would explain the U.S. position. The U.S. wants to see perestroika succeed. Nobody knows whether Gorbachev will succeed. Secretary Cheney expressed a personal view that he might not. The President said he was not going to make foreign policy based on a presumption that Gorbachev will succeed. The U.S. will have good, sound, and forward-looking proposals for Gorbachev, but the U.S. will not be naive. The President pledged that concerns of the security of the West will remain uppermost in his mind. (S)

Prime Minister Brundtland said that the West needs to test Moscow without taking real risks. (S)

Governor Sununu noted it would be equally self-serving if the U.S. suggested unilateral reductions for short-term reasons. (S)

Prime Minister Brundtland countered that in Europe these are long-term trends in favor of negotiations. The U.S. should not misunderstand. (S)

General Scowcroft argued that there is no rationale for negotiating for lower levels of SNF. (S)

Prime Minister Brundtland asked how the U.S. answers those who say 50/50 is better than 1400 to 88. (Ø)

General Scowcroft replied that 88 is much too low given the conventional imbalance. (Ø)

Prime Minister Brundtland agreed that the emphasis must be on conventional forces. (Ø)

Secretary Baker observed that if SNF negotiations begin, the focus would be shifted away from the conventional negotiations that have just been launched. The approach should be to see results in conventional talks before looking at nuclear systems. The Germans want NATO to study how best to begin SNF negotiations because Gorbachev says the conventional bridge has been crossed. The U.S. does not agree. (Ø)

The President asked that if Gorbachev is so great, why do the Soviets need such conventional superiority? What does this say about real Soviet intentions? (Ø)

The President, turning to another subject, said that the U.S. is now speaking with one voice on Central America. It would be useful if Scandinavia would take a hard look at how to bring democracy to Nicaragua. If Scandinavia then concludes that Ortega will bring Swedish-style democracy, fine. (Ø)

Prime Minister Brundtland said that she had talked with Ortega the previous Friday, after a briefing from the American Embassy, and told him that everyone would be studying closely the Nicaraguan election to see if it is fair and follows through on the peace plan. The Prime Minister said she wanted the President to keep the pressure on Ortega, to push Nicaragua to become a democracy. She said she was uncertain whether Ortega has democratic inclinations. (Ø)

Secretary Baker asked whether the Prime Minister had told Ortega that further economic assistance would be tied to movement toward democracy. (Ø)

Prime Minister Brundtland replied that she had done so. Norway will give 30 million Norwegian Kroner at a pledging conference in Stockholm, but would not offer easy access to Norwegian money in the future. She added that the Soviets like to make the connection between Afghanistan and Central America. Does the U.S. agree? (Ø)

The President replied that he does not believe in spheres of influence; he believes in democracy. (Ø)

Prime Minister Brundtland, before the meeting concluded, noted that there had not been much time to discuss the matter, but that there was a need for U.S. leadership concerning the international

environment. The Prime Minister hoped this effort could be advanced at the Economic Summit and at NATO as well. (Ø)