

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting with Ruud Lubbers, Prime Minister of the Netherlands (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
The Vice President
Governor John H. Sununu, Chief of Staff
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Lawrence Eagleburger, Deputy Secretary of State
Marlin Fitzwater, Assistant to the President and Press Secretary
Robert D. Blackwill, Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
James Wilkinson, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian Affairs

Prime Minister Ruud Lubbers
Foreign Minister Hans van den Broek
Henry Wijnaendts, Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Ambassador Richard Fein

DATE, TIME AND PLACE: May 9, 1989, 10:00 - 10:15 am and 5:00 - 5:45 pm EST
The Oval Office and The President's Living Quarters

Prime Minister Lubbers began by saying preparations for the NATO Summit were the most important items and proposed that they be the subject of the afternoon discussion. (Ø)

The President asked Prime Minister Lubbers for his latest thinking on the environment. (Ø)

Prime Minister Lubbers replied that the U.S. environmental proposals were very much like those of his government. The Dutch want to strengthen existing organizations under the framework of the U.N. His government also wants an environmental convention and in the coming months will have to achieve practical steps toward that end, including in the U.N. General Assembly. (Ø)

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The President emphasized his personal commitment to sponsoring an environmental conference. The U.S. Administration is working to define its objectives, to fulfill this commitment to the American people. The President said he would be prepared to discuss this in July and to explain how best to use U.S. expertise, but he rejected Norwegian Prime Minister Brundtland's suggestion that 1% of GDP be put in an international fund. (Ø)

Prime Minister Lubbers noted that his government also had doubts about the financial aspects of the Brundtland idea. It is important not to overexcite the expectations of developing countries. (Ø)

The President observed that the U.N. General Assembly gets very emotional and said he would not look for help in that forum at this time. (Ø)

Prime Minister Lubbers conveyed greetings from Queen Beatrix before the morning meeting concluded. (U)

The President expressed his thanks and conveyed his respects. He then invited Prime Minister Lubbers to come to the residence at the end of the day to discuss SNF. (Ø)

The President began the late afternoon session by saying the U.S. wants the NATO Summit to be a success. The Administration is not dragging its feet with the Soviet Union. The U.S. wants to have good relations, wants perestroika and glasnost to succeed, and wants to go forward on a wide array of issues. On Central America, the President expressed the hope that Europe will speak out on the outrage in Panama and noted that U.S.-Soviet relations will be tempered by Soviet behavior in Central America. The President added that the U.S. welcomes change in the Soviet Union and is willing to sell grain to the Soviets. This, he said, brings the discussion to the topic at hand. (Ø)

The President said that it is essential that the NATO meeting be successful. He expressed concern about the Germans, noting that Chancellor Kohl cannot be allowed to drive NATO, but said the U.S. Administration would be talking with them further. The President said he had to be concerned about domestic support for U.S. troops in Europe. He has a responsibility to guarantee the safety of U.S. forces, and that entails continuing nuclear deterrence. The answer to the SNF problem lies in the success of conventional force reductions, which must be our priority. If Gorbachev is serious about reducing forces, he can take unilateral steps, given his superiority in conventional forces and SNF. SNF negotiations, however, would lead to a third zero, which would undermine U.S. capacity to keep troops in Europe. This is an absolutely critical issue which goes to the heart of nuclear deterrence. (Ø)

Prime Minister Lubbers noted that Foreign Minister van den Broek has been active on the SNF issue. Lubbers agreed with what the President said. The formal German position is risky and would endanger the NATO Summit. The first thing is to agree on what the Alliance has said in the past, and Lubbers said he thought Chancellor Kohl would take such a position. As to the follow-on to the Lance (FOTL) missile, the Prime Minister argued that if a decision on deployment is postponed until 1992, it would be unwise to make research and development only a U.S. decision. It would be better to have it a NATO decision. (S)

The President agreed absolutely. The U.S. cannot be seen pushing such a decision on Europe. (S)

Prime Minister Lubbers suggested a formulation providing for a decision on FOTL in 1991 or 1992, with research and development proceeding in the meantime. In the Comprehensive Concept, NATO should say that the Alliance will restructure and challenge the Warsaw Pact to reduce to NATO levels. Then, in a further phase, the Alliance would anticipate future SNF negotiations toward equal ceilings at lower levels above zero. This would also be considered in the context of the conventional balance in Europe. In sum, the Prime Minister proposed two preconditions: unilateral SNF reductions to our levels and progress in conventional talks. (S)

Prime Minister Lubbers said his government had put this position to Chancellor Kohl in a paper delivered the preceding Wednesday. The Chancellor did not give a direct reply but said he would study the proposal. Prime Minister Lubbers said he promised to be back in touch with Chancellor Kohl after speaking with the President. Prime Minister Lubbers added that Chancellor Kohl, whose call for SNF negotiations is very important for him domestically, said he wants an agreement before the NATO Summit. As to nuclear artillery, Prime Minister Lubbers said there was something strange going on. A year ago, many Europeans thought of phasing out nuclear artillery and updating Lance. The Dutch thought the key to the problem was this shift from shorter to longer ranges. Prime Minister Lubbers felt the European populations would have accepted this, but then the idea got around that it would be dangerous to phase out nuclear artillery completely. Now the Alliance needs a "perspective" on modernization and a "perspective" on negotiations -- a very delicate formula that mentions negotiations but postpones them. (S)

Foreign Minister van den Broek argued that the Alliance cannot phase out artillery until there is a firm FOTL decision. Europeans know that the U.S. fears that SNF negotiations would lead to a third zero. However, expectations of such negotiations were prompted by the 1987 Reykjavik communique, and the Germans use that language forcefully. Now the Alliance is saying that SNF negotiations do not make sense, that the Soviet side should

reduce to our levels. The Foreign Minister said that his government does not feel it is dangerous to give an SNF negotiating perspective so long as there are preconditions, though they will be hard for the Germans to accept. (S)

General Scowcroft asked about the timing of phasing out of nuclear artillery. (S)

Prime Minister Lubbers replied that the Alliance would reduce unilaterally the U.S. stockpile and challenge the Soviets to come down to our levels. Then the Alliance would say a phasing out of nuclear artillery could occur, if FOTL and tactical air-to-surface missiles (TASM) were modernized. Prime Minister Lubbers added that the U.S. is quite right to worry about a third zero, but the Alliance does not need nuclear artillery. (S)

General Scowcroft said it would be important, then, to have modernized SNF before eliminating nuclear artillery. (S)

Prime Minister Lubbers agreed, adding that it would be better to phase out artillery unilaterally, rather than through negotiations. This would be a good NATO initiative. (S)

The President asked for Dutch views of required NATO troop levels, including U.S. (S)

Director-General Wijnaendts supported the current NATO proposal. (S)

Foreign Minister van den Broek added that the focus should be on tanks and artillery rather than troop reductions. (S)

The President asked what Mrs. Thatcher had said (during the April 29 visit of Prime Minister Lubbers and Foreign Minister van den Broek to London). (S)

Prime Minister Lubbers replied that Mrs. Thatcher knows the Dutch paper and does not like it. She favors telling Chancellor Kohl he is totally wrong and that there will be no negotiations. At the same time, she did find some elements of the paper useful. Mrs. Thatcher agrees on the need to find a formula other than negotiations, favoring equal ceilings at lower levels but omitting any reference to negotiations. (S)

The President summarized the Dutch view: that this language is acceptable to the Dutch, but would not accommodate Chancellor Kohl. (S)

Prime Minister Lubbers confirmed that summary. The language is "one bridge too far" for Chancellor Kohl. (S)

The President, concluding the meeting, asked how much of Chancellor Kohl's problem would be helped if there were forward

movement in the U.S.-Soviet relationship. Would movement on START or CW help? (S)

Foreign Minister van den Broek replied that there is no linkage. Such moves would not help Chancellor Kohl. Foreign Minister Genscher wants SNF negotiations because he deeply feels a special German obligation to bring peace to Europe. Nothing else will satisfy him. (S)