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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting with Cornelio Sommaruga, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Ambassador Jonathan Moore, US Coordinator for Refugee Affairs
Richard Shubert, President of the American Red Cross
Nancy Bearg Dyke, NSC Staff (Notetaker)

President Cornelio Sommaruga
Andre Pasquier, ICRC/Geneva, Director of International Operations
Fred Isler, ICRC/New York, Acting Chief Delegate

DATE, TIME May 15, 1989, 2:05 - 2:15 p.m.
AND PLACE: The Oval Office

The President welcomed President Sommaruga and told him of his great respect for the ICRC. (U)

President Sommaruga said ICRC views the President as a real Red Cross supporter, and he noted his appreciation for US support. (U)

The President asked how the work of the ICRC is going around the world. (U)

President Sommaruga said that regional conflict solutions have given the ICRC more to do. In Afghanistan, ICRC representatives have been visiting prisoners of war held by the government, but the Mujaheddin has not let ICRC visit Soviet POWs in their hands. (f)

The President expressed an interest in helping and said he and General Scowcroft would talk about it. (f)

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President Sommaruga brought up the subject of southern Sudan and noted that the situation is improving. There is a truce and humanitarian assistance is better and more possible now. ICRC is working with the United Nations. Fifteen planes are working there now. (U)

President Sommaruga continued by observing that ICRC is still present in the Philippines, at the Cambodia/Thai border, in Namibia, and in Mozambique. Also, ICRC is in El Salvador and Nicaragua. He noted that there are many needs in Central America. (U)

President Sommaruga said that the support of the USG is good but it could be more, and he hoped that despite budget difficulties, the President could ensure that the percentage for ICRC is in keeping with the US size and status. (U)

President Sommaruga turned to the subject of Protocol I of the Geneva Convention. He hoped that the US can ratify it. (U)

The President said he would have to check where the issue of Protocol I stands. (U)

President Sommaruga invited the President to visit the ICRC in Geneva, if he is in Geneva. (U)

The President said he would like to do that. (U)

The President and President Sommaruga shook hands and the meeting ended. (U)

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