

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting with Francesco Cossiga, President of ItalyPARTICIPANTS: The President
James A. Baker, III, Secretary of State
John Sununu, Chief of Staff to the President
Marlin Fitzwater, Assistant to the President
and Press Secretary
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs
Maxwell Rabb, U.S. Ambassador to Italy
Philip Zelikow, NSC Staff (notetaker)
InterpreterFrancesco Cossiga, President
Giulio Andreotti, Foreign Minister
Rinaldo Petrignani, Ambassador to the U.S.
Sergio Berlinguer, Secretary General of
Quirinale Palace
Giovanni Dominedo, President's Diplomatic
Adviser
Ludovico Ortona, President's Spokesman
InterpreterDATE, TIME May 27, 1989, 12:32 p.m. - 1:09 p.m.
AND PLACE: Quirinale Palace, Rome

President Cossiga welcomed the President on behalf of his government and people. He was touched that the President chose to begin his first visit to Europe as President in Rome. He praised, as well, the exemplary performance of Ambassador Rabb.
(U)

The President thanked President Cossiga and joined in his praise for Ambassador Rabb. He said the choice of Rome as the first stop on his trip was no accident. Relations between America and Italy had never been better. In his briefings for this trip, the President had noticed that hardly any issues seemed to divide the two countries, an indicator of the excellent state of the relationship. (U)

The President asked if, incidentally, President Cossiga could fit an official visit to the United States into his schedule during

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the fall, perhaps in October. Such a visit could keep attention focused on the fine relationship between the United States and Italy. (U)

President Cossiga expressed his gratitude for the invitation and said he would certainly come. The Foreign Ministry and the State Department would agree on the date and work out the details. (U)

The President noted that many Americans were already preparing for the 500th Anniversary celebration of Columbus' voyage of 1492. There was great interest in this celebration in the United States as well as in Latin America and the Caribbean. (U)

The President, continuing, said he had already discussed the NATO Summit with Prime Minister De Mita and Foreign Minister Andreotti and there was no need to review the subject again. The President did, however, want President Cossiga to hear directly that he, the President, welcomed the changes in the Soviet Union. The policy reviews, which were proper and prudent for a new Administration, were mostly finalized. The United States was prepared to move forward in a realistic way with Moscow. (U)

The President did think a word of caution was still in order. A foreign policy must be based on reality, not on the charisma of a new leader. As Commander-in-Chief, the President felt a profound responsibility for the lives of soldiers and sailors, so when he put forward arms control proposals he wanted to be sure that they would enhance peace and not threaten it. The President observed that the Alliance was on the winning side and its values were prevailing. There was less of a threat to peace. There was, therefore, no reason not to move prudently. Those were the views the President would take to the NATO Summit. (U)

The President added that euphoria about Gorbachev caused some people to feel there were no problems anymore. The President was sorry to say that there were still problems. Yet, as the President had himself told Gorbachev, no one in America wanted perestroika to fail. Secretary Baker had met Foreign Minister Shevardnadze and the Soviets knew that the US supported reform in the Soviet Union. The US and Italy were entering an exciting new era. (U)

The President thanked the Government of Italy for its helpful decisions on Alliance issues, such as the transfer of the 401st Tactical Fighter Wing. Italy had shown real leadership. The President could still remember how Italy's war against domestic terrorism and the freeing of Colonel Dozier had shown strength and earned the respect of all Americans. (U)

President Cossiga thanked the President for his comments. He understood why the President had carefully examined his policies

before taking action. President Cossiga believed that, in ordinary life, prudence and care are major virtues. (Ø)

President Cossiga remarked that the NATO Summit would be an important celebration of the Alliance's great success. The Allies had demonstrated that, without firmness, there might not be any glasnost and perestroika in the Soviet Union today. There were certainly important changes occurring in the USSR. It was too early to foresee the outcome. (Ø)

President Cossiga recalled that he had recently travelled with Foreign Minister Andreotti to Poland. They were able to meet freely with people from the whole range of political and social life. At an Italian Embassy reception, which Jaruzelski attended, were guests who, during the period of Stalinization, had been sentenced to death. This symbolized the important changes now underway. Poland needed Western support. (Ø)

The President asked President Cossiga for his opinion of General Jaruzelski. The President commented that, when he had met the General, Jaruzelski had made an unexpectedly favorable impression. (Ø)

President Cossiga replied that, during his recent visit to Poland, he spoke to General Jaruzelski for hours. President Cossiga believed that General Jaruzelski had qualities that were not immediately apparent. He also thought General Jaruzelski was determined to pursue a new course and that, without General Jaruzelski, Poland could not have proceeded as far as it had. President Cossiga thought that General Jaruzelski was responsible for getting the Communist Party to sit at the Roundtable with Solidarity and accept the outcome of the negotiations. General Jaruzelski, President Cossiga thought, was a man who had suffered for measures he had had to implement in the past. History would be more generous to the General than recent critics. It was very likely that General Jaruzelski's role had prevented a repetition of Soviet intervention as in Hungary and Czechoslovakia. President Cossiga thought the winds of freedom were blowing in Poland. The just-passed laws on religious freedom were of great importance. The officials of the Church in Poland had also displayed great insight and prudence. President Cossiga left Poland convinced that, if economic and political reforms did not progress, all the recent achievements would be jeopardized. (Ø)

The President said he had talked with General Jaruzelski long before the Roundtable negotiations and had urged him to be more forthcoming with labor. General Jaruzelski had cited some extreme demands from the union leaders, such as a call for five years paid maternity leave. The answer was obvious: the President advised General Jaruzelski to recognize free unions and then negotiate with them, but the President had not realized that labor was making such tough demands. (Ø)

President Cossiga said that it was difficult to predict how the Opposition would ultimately express its views. Solidarity was just the peak of the iceberg. Yet Poland could not turn back now. (Ø)

Secretary Baker asked if Poland would be in a political position to sustain the economic changes that must be adopted in order to move forward. In the 1970's, credit had been made available and that did not work. The US could not repeat that example unless Poland made the free market reforms needed for real growth. (Ø)

President Cossiga said he was convinced that the political leadership and the new Opposition could support the needed changes that would allow them to receive aid from the West. Poland was no longer asking for more money. They were asking for Western businesses to invest in Poland and teach the Poles how a market economy works. (Ø)

Secretary Baker asked how companies would be assured of being able to keep their profits. (Ø)

President Cossiga responded that laws were the guarantee. Still, the opportunities for investment were not there yet, though Fiat chairman Agnelli's interest in Poland was a promising sign. (Ø)

The President said he was looking forward to his visit to Poland. (U)

President Cossiga said the Poles were looking forward to the President's visit as well. He said his Polish police escorts had all still been wearing the tie pins received during the President's trip to Poland as Vice President. It was a small point, but a revealing one. (U)