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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting with United Nations Secretary  
General Perez de Cuellar (P)

PARTICIPANTS: The President  
James Baker, Secretary of State  
John H. Sununu, Chief of Staff  
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President  
for National Security Affairs  
Thomas Pickering, US Ambassador to the  
United Nations  
John Bolton, Assistant Secretary of State  
(International Organizations)  
Nancy Bearg Dyke, National Security Council  
(Notetaker)

Perez de Cuellar, Secretary General of  
the United Nations  
Virendra Dayal, Chef de Cabinet,  
United Nations  
Marrack I. Goulding, Under Secretary General  
for Special Political Affairs  
Ronald Spiers, Under Secretary General for  
Political and General Assembly Affairs and  
Secretariat Services, United Nations  
Luis Maria Gomez, Acting Under Secretary  
General for Administration and Management  
Alvaro de Soto, Executive Assistant to the  
Secretary General

DATE, TIME September 25, 1989, 12:20 - 12:50 p.m.  
AND PLACE: The Indonesian Lounge, United Nations

The President expressed his pleasure at being back at the UN, then referred to the tragedy of Colonel Higgins, expressing appreciation for what the Secretary General has already tried to do. (U)

The Secretary General introduced the subject of peacekeeping, and the two exchanged comments about the increased budget requirements to support new and continuing peacekeeping requirements around the world. (U)

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8/21/2009

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The President: We want to try to help on peacekeeping. (U)

Secretary General: With new operations in Central America, Cambodia, and the Western Sahara, we will have 12 peacekeeping operations. (U)

Secretary General: Regarding Cambodia, they are now asking me to send UN observers based solely on the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops. The danger is that significant hostilities will resume. (Ø)

The President: That would be bad. We were disappointed about the conference in Paris. Sihanouk took a strange turn at the end. (Ø)

Secretary Baker: Sihanouk did not carry the case very well. (Ø)

Secretary General: He may have been too shrewd for his own good. (Ø)

Secretary Baker: The Soviets are very interested in pushing us with respect to a moratorium on arms deliveries to the Cambodian resistance. Shevardnadze raised it in Wyoming. (Ø)

Secretary General: I do not know if the Chinese are interested in halting arms shipments to the Khmer Rouge. (Ø)

Secretary Baker: They may want to move in the direction of only a partial settlement, but that may make it more difficult in getting an overall internal political settlement. (Ø)

The President: Is there anything on the UNGA agenda that affects the Chinese -- anything re Tiananmen Square? Are you hearing anything in the halls? (Ø)

Secretary General: Anything on that would likely occur in the Human Rights Commission in February. (Ø)

The President: We are cautious on China and are trying not to harm the "sensitive" interests of China in our public statements. There are steps we need to take regarding the military relationship. We are concerned about what happened but we do not want to shove them into isolation. So, I wondered about any initiatives that might come forth at the UNGA. (Ø)

Secretary General: A very difficult situation. (U)

The President: I did learn something from the Chinese: "standing with hands in sleeve." Sometimes it does not hurt to stand on

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the sidelines and not do anything for a time. We do not want to isolate China. (Ø)

Secretary General: I would like to thank you for the support we are receiving from your country for UNTAG and UNAVEM. (U)

The President: It has to be there. (U)

Secretary General: There are continuing threats to free and fair elections in Namibia. A demonstrably free and fair election is necessary. We will try to sustain what we have begun in Namibia. (U)

Secretary Baker: We are very supportive of your position. (U)

The President: Very. (U)

The President: What will happen about the PLO in this session? What if the whole session is dominated by this? (U)

Secretary Baker: The problem has been more in the collateral agencies, such as World Health Organization (WHO). It is less likely to come up in the Security Council because of the veto. (Ø)

The President: But it could come up in the General Assembly. (Ø)

Secretary General: They are observers now and they may push to become state observers, if they can get it. (Ø)

Mr. Dayal: They have not shown their hand at all in this session. (Ø)

Secretary General: The PLO will try to see what the reaction is. They may ask for a visa. (Ø)

The President: We will get back to Ambassador Pickering with our position. I know it would be an easier question if they applied later if at all. (Ø)

Secretary Baker: The timing is important. If we can get Israel to pick up on Egypt's proposal, we will be better off. Having the PLO issue come up now would not help. (Ø)

Secretary General: Maybe in November. If I can, I will argue with them not to press their case right now. (Ø)

The President: Afghanistan. (U)

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Secretary General: Things are improving and much depends on the Soviets. We are trying to put a delegation together for discussions to obtain a national consensus. (Ø)

Secretary Baker: It is hard to generate a national consensus that way unless there is agreement in principle about the transfer of power. I do not think the AIG will be willing to sit down until then. (Ø)

Secretary General: Any solution requires a unified resistance. Otherwise, you have the same scenario as Cambodia. (Ø)

Secretary Baker: We are more and more interested in looking at avenues for a settlement. (Ø)

Secretary General: The time will come when the Soviets' friends will be willing to make a deal. Right now, Najibullah is mightier than before. (Ø)

The President: Yes, he has more stature now. (Ø)

Secretary Baker: We were closer last February to a solution than we are now. (Ø)

Secretary Baker: On the PLO, I would like to reiterate a critical point. We want the Israeli election proposal to move along. If action were taken that gave the PLO increased status at the UN, we flag for you the problems it raises for the US. (Ø)

UN Staff: Everybody knows this at the UN. (U)

Mr. Dayal: They have arrived at a strange status short of a state. (Ø)

Secretary General: I will use my small influence. (Ø)

The President: Nicaragua. (U)

Secretary General: We are involved. 1) We are monitoring the elections. 2) We are sending a group of observers to be sure the territory cannot be used against another country. Spain, Germany, Canada, and Venezuela will participate. 3) Disarming and repatriation is more complicated. We have the Contras on one side; the FMLN on the other. (U)

Secretary General: All in all, things are moving in many countries. Are you very concerned about Panama? (U)

Secretary Baker: We took a multilateral approach for Panama and we were very disappointed about the OAS. (U)

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Secretary General: Some former American administrations were distrustful of the UN and went to the OAS. The OAS showed a real lack of resolve on this. (Ø)

The President: We wish there were a quick solution but there is not. We will keep making the effort. We do not have an argument with the Panamanian Defense Force. We are not sure they believe it, and we need to get the message to them better. All will sigh a great sigh of relief when Noriega leaves. As Secretary Baker said, we tried the OAS but the effort fell apart and we are getting the flak for it. (Ø)

Secretary General: What is needed is a target of democracy. At the end of this year, all will be democracies in South America. (U)

As both the President and the Secretary General rose, the meeting was concluded with appreciation on both sides. (U)

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