MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Presentation of Credentials by Christos Zacharakis, Ambassador of Greece (U)

PARTICIPANTS: U.S.
   The President
   Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
   Curtis W. Kamman, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian Affairs
   Robert L. Hutchings, Director for European Political Affairs, NSC Staff (Notetaker)

Greece
   Christos Zacharakis, Ambassador

DATE, TIME AND PLACE: October 24, 1989, 3:00 - 3:05pm
   The White House

Following a reception in the State Dining Room, the President received the credentials of Ambassador Zacharakis in the Red Room. (U)

The President: How long have you been here? (U)

Ambassador Zacharakis: We have been here a month now. (U)

The President: There are important changes underway in Greece. (U)

Ambassador Zacharakis: Yes, in two weeks we will have our elections. (U)

The President: What are the polls saying? (U)

Ambassador Zacharakis: Our polls are not very reliable. People do not always say what they really think. At the moment, the polls are not much different than in June. If that proves true, it will be difficult to form a new government and difficult to take the steps that are needed in important areas. (U)

The President: We want to see relations improve and get stronger. (U)
Ambassador Zacharakis: I will do my best in my new capacity and also in my continuing capacity as negotiator at our base talks. We hope to conclude the talks, which now await only the political decisions. (U)

The President: On Cyprus, I confess that we are feeling some frustration. We would like to help, but it is hard to know what more can be done beyond supporting the efforts of the UN Secretary General. (Φ)

Ambassador Zacharakis: Let me say very respectfully that your intervention there would greatly improve U.S.-Greek relations. (Φ)

The President: Is there a feeling among the people of Greece that we are siding with Turkey? (Φ)

Ambassador Zacharakis: Indirectly, that is the case. We feel that Turkey is the aggressor and occupier. The fact that this is allowed to continue is interpreted as supporting the Turkish side. (Φ)

The President: I can see that. We will continue to try to help. I like the new President of Cyprus, who seems to be a serious man. There are also some indications that Turkey is ready to move, but we do feel some frustration. (Φ)

Ambassador Zacharakis: I lived in Cyprus for 11 years, from November 1974, just after the invasion, until January 1986. I also feel the frustration. (Φ)

The President: Mr. Ambassador, best wishes in your new assignment. (U)

-- End of Conversation --