

THE WHITE HOUSE

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MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telephone Conversation with Prime Minister
Andreotti of Italy

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Prime Minister Andreotti
Notetaker: Heather Wilson

DATE, TIME January 26, 1990, 3:22 - 3:40pm EST
AND PLACE: The Oval Office

The President telephoned Prime Minister Andreotti concerning the present situation in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, and the Vienna conventional arms negotiations. (S)

The President: Hello. How are you? (U)

PM Andreotti: Thank-you, well. (U)

The President: I wanted to talk to you today about the way the political situation is developing in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, and how these events relate to our position in the talks on conventional arms. I have talked to Kohl, and will be talking to Mitterrand, Thatcher and others. (S)

You are familiar with our proposal on the table for both the United States and the USSR to have no more than 275,000 troops stationed in Europe in the mid-1990s when CFE is complete. (S)

Given the changes in Eastern Europe, the Soviets have been hinting that 275,000 is unrealistic. I think they are correct. In fact, Moscow may be moving toward proposing a number well below 275,000. (S)

I think we must be out in front on this issue. If we stay with a higher ceiling, it will seem to the East Europeans as if we were trying to keep Soviet troops where they are not wanted. (S)

However, nothing we do should complicate or delay achieving CFE in 1990 and I think we should redouble our efforts to conclude that treaty. (S)

We have been working with our military and I have concluded that a force of 195,000 U.S. troops in the Central Zone in Europe in

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the mid-1990s is a significant and sustainable level to maintain forward defense and implement the NATO strategy of flexible response. After a careful review of our defense needs, I have concluded that we should propose that we seek to conclude in a manner which does not delay the CFE negotiations, an agreement that sets a negotiated ceiling on U.S. and Soviet stationed forces in the Central Zone at 195,000. (S)

Given the changes in Eastern Europe and the Eastern European calls for Soviet withdrawal, there is great pressure on me to cut defense spending. Putting force plans into a negotiated process will help preempt calls for even greater reductions coming from the Congress, and elsewhere. (S)

I think a proposal like this, if Allies will agree to it, will agree to it, will also help Gorbachev. This would facilitate Soviet reductions beyond 275,000 to 195,000. I think that a new approach like this, and I hope that you will be able to support it, will be absolutely crucial to manage the changes now underway. I do not want to see CFE overtaken by events. Our publics must continue to see this process as relevant, and responsive, to the opportunities now before us. (S)

I would ask you to study this. I am sending Eagleburger and Gates to Europe and I would like to ask you if you could receive them early next week, because I would like to announce this on January 31 in my State of the Union speech. I think it is important that the West get out in front of this process. (S)

PM Andreotti: First, I would be very happy to see Mr. Eagleburger next week. (S)

The President: Good. (U)

PM Andreotti: As far as the contents are concerned, I can tell you, as a former Minister of Defense for eight years, I agree with your proposal. As far as its technical aspects, the 195,000 deterrent force as opposed to a 275,000 force is more or less the same. Politically, it is a very important sign to show faith in Gorbachev's attempts to change. There is only one more thing to be determined. It seems to me that the reduction in forces is a very important point for Gorbachev. It will release a large number of personnel. Can we find out if Gorbachev wants to do this? (S)

The President: Yes, in fact we have reason to believe that the Soviets might be going to propose this themselves. (S)

PM Andreotti: Fine, then. I have no difficulty. (S)

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The President: If you are willing, I will ask General Scowcroft to arrange an agreeable time for Eagleburger and Gates to see you. They will be seeing the Federal Chancellor Tuesday afternoon. If possible, perhaps you could see them before that. (S)

PM Andreotti: I have no problems at all. I will be in Rome the whole week and the weekend. And what did Chancellor Kohl think?

The President: I think it is fair to say that Chancellor Kohl agrees with us. He was very enthusiastic. I would ask you to hold this in total confidence. It is important for us to consult and then have the matter be announced on January 31, if that can be done. (S)

PM Andreotti: That is fine. No problem. My best wishes to you. (U)

The President: I look forward to talking to Eagleburger when he returns. I value your judgment on this, especially since you were a Defense Minister for eight years. (S)

PM Andreotti: Have a pleasant afternoon. (U)

The President: I hope to see you in March. (S)

PM Andreotti: Yes, I look forward to seeing you. (S)

The two parties said good bye. (U)

-- End of Conversation --