

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting with Douglas Hurd, Foreign Secretary  
of the United Kingdom (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President  
James A. Baker, Secretary of State  
John H. Sununu, Chief of Staff  
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President  
for National Security Affairs  
Robert D. Blackwill, Special Assistant to the  
President for National Security Affairs  
(Notetaker)  
Raymond Seitz, Assistant Secretary of State  
for European and Canadian Affairs  
  
Douglas Hurd, Foreign Secretary  
Sir Antony Acland, Ambassador to the U.S.  
Sir Patrick Wright, FCO Permanent  
Undersecretary  
Stephen Wall, Private Secretary to the  
Foreign Secretary

DATE, TIME January 29, 1990, 3:05 - 3:40 pm EST  
AND PLACE: The Oval Office

The President: Jim Baker has filled me in on some of your  
discussions. The floor is yours. (Ø)

Secretary Hurd: During lunch at Chequers, I talked to the Prime  
Minister. Your CFE manpower idea was an important part of the  
conversation. (Ø)

The President: Here is our view. There is so much change in  
Eastern Europe. We should seize the opportunity to make things  
better for the world. How do you facilitate change in Europe?  
Without asking anyone in NATO to manage my domestic political  
problems, I do have to manage this country. That is what I am  
trying to do with this new CFE manpower idea. It is complicated.  
But I am glad we are wrestling with the problem. (Ø)

Secretary Hurd: I question how firm a floor this 195,000 figure  
is likely to be. I discussed this with Jim Baker. We need to  
work these things through together. (Ø)

The President: We should have discussions. Perhaps we should  
talk about hypothetical challenges. What do we do if the Soviet's  
announce total withdrawal from Eastern Europe? The world has  
changed in a dramatic way since the NATO May summit. (Ø)

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there could be a reversal in the Soviet Union. We need intimate discussions between our two governments. (Ø)

Secretary Hurd: We also need to talk about issues like: how does the military strength envisioned in CFE relate to NATO military doctrine? (Ø)

The President: And about whether NATO military doctrine needs to be changed. (Ø)

Secretary Hurd: Do you think your new figure of 195,000 will hold? (Ø)

The President: I don't know, but it is our intention to stick with it. The Congress may want to have a different figure because they think peace is at hand. But having a level that we can defend is our best approach. (Ø)

Secretary Baker: We have had substantial discussions on the Hill about our domestic bases, and Congress will try to keep those bases open at the expense of the troops in Europe. (Ø)

The President: But, at the same time, we all wish to take advantage of opportunities, but not do anything foolish. (Ø)

Secretary Hurd: People in the United Kingdom will begin to focus on the BAOR. Our forces are in the FRG through treaty agreements. There could be an unraveling. (Ø)

The President: How are domestic politics in the United Kingdom? (Ø)

Secretary Hurd: So far, so good. Labour is trying to shed its previous positions, but pressure will mount from them on the defense budget. And, in the meantime, it gets harder to train our forces in the FRG. (Ø)

The President: I think our defense budget situation is manageable, but the pressures to cut it are tremendous. And the other allies? (Ø)

Secretary Hurd: The Belgians are on the move in the wrong direction. The French are reluctant to change their approach. (Ø)

The President: Is everyone worried about Germany? How do you and the Prime Minister see it? (Ø)

Secretary Hurd: She is reluctant to endorse unification, a reluctant unifier. Not against, but reluctant. She sees things that need to be sorted out. Will Germany be part of NATO or not? Will East Germany be in the EC? What about Russian sensitivities? We need a framework in which these issues can be discussed. (Ø)

The President: Do the Prime Minister and Mitterrand see eye to eye on the German question? (Ø)

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Secretary Hurd: When they meet, yes. But granted, he is more reluctant to express his concerns. (Ø)

The President: This is good politics. (Ø)

Secretary Hurd: You should worry about the Lafontaine victory in Saarland. He won't want to answer the awkward questions. (Ø)

The President: What are the differences between the positions of Genscher and Kohl? (Ø)

Secretary Baker: The Oder-Neisse line. The SPD is now zeroing in on the question of immigrants and taking on the CDU policy on benefits for refugees. (Ø)

Secretary Hurd: I was in the GDR last week. The SPD in East Germany is highly organized for the March elections, but may not get a majority. Kohl will think about this. (Ø)

Secretary Baker: How do you keep the FRG in NATO? We need a framework to accomplish this. (Ø)

The President: What does Kohl say? (Ø)

Ambassador Acland: If we could work out a specific strategy to keep a united Germany in NATO, would it be beneficial? (Ø)

Secretary Baker: Yes. (Ø)

The President: Yes. (Ø)

Secretary Hurd: We feel Germany in NATO is absolutely crucial for our security. (Ø)

Undersecretary Wright: That may be true for the Soviet interests as well. (Ø)

The President: I don't detect any desire for U.S. isolationism in the Soviet Union. (Ø)

Chief of Staff Sununu: There is no common voice from Moscow. They are groping for an argument. (Ø)

The President: We are under difficult pressure, but not neoisolationism. As you look at our budget debate, you will hear the kind of concerns we must address on the Hill. (Ø)

Secretary Hurd: You had a success over there on the Hill on China. (Ø)

The President: A success of a sort. Congress will wait to see what happens, to see if we "fail." But a win like this does help in managing relations with Congress. The Chinese students have been a very effective lobby. But at least we have weighed in with Congress effectively. (Ø)

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Secretary Hurd: How are you finding the Congress? (Ø)

The President: Difficult, prickly, there is not much goodwill there. But we have to try to keep lines of communication open. (Ø)

Secretary Hurd: We have prickly problems over Hong Kong. The Chinese are determined to keep political command when they take over. (Ø)

The President: Has the Hong Kong situation retrogressed with China since your agreement? (Ø)

Secretary Hurd: Yes, although their reactions to developments come and go. On the boat people, we are in a different situation. (Ø)

The President: I hate to have any differences with the Prime Minister; I hope the boat people issue can be resolved. (Ø)

Secretary Hurd: We hope for, if not a sense of agreement, at least understanding on your part. (Ø)

The President: Could anything happen in the U.N. to persuade the Vietnamese to stay home? (Ø)

Secretary Hurd: No, that is not likely, although in the long run we are somewhat optimistic. (Ø)

The President: I feel the same way, but it will be a long, painful process. Right now, the Vietnamese seem to be going in the wrong direction. (Ø)

Secretary Hurd: Do the Chinese understand the division of power in the United States? (Ø)

General Scowcroft: They are learning fast. (Ø)

The President: The existence of a geopolitical Chinese card is less clear to some, but I believe it still should have some weight. (Ø)

Secretary Hurd: On Hong Kong, we have something in place, but the prospects are high that China will completely throw it away. We in the U.K. are going to have a hell of a time. We may need to ask for your help from time to time. (Ø)

The President: We don't have clout with China now, but we will keep plugging away. I appreciate your visit. Please tell Margaret we will hold the line on this 195,000 figure. And we do want your views on Germany. You know we are trying to improve our relations with the EC. (Ø)

Secretary Hurd: We will do what we can to help. (Ø)

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