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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting with Prime Minister Jan P. Syse of Norway (U)

PARTICIPANTS: U.S.
The President
The Vice President
James A. Baker, III, Secretary of State
John H. Sununu, Chief of Staff
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Robert M. Gates, Assistant to the President and Deputy for National Security Affairs
Robert D. Blackwill, Special Assistant to the President for European and Soviet Affairs
Raymond G.H. Seitz, Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian Affairs
Loret Ruppe, Ambassador to Norway

Norway
Jan P. Syse, Prime Minister
Kjeld Vibe, Ambassador
Kai Eide, State Secretary, Office of Prime Minister

DATE, TIME February 23, 1990, 10:10 - 10:40 a.m. EST
AND PLACE: The Oval Office

The President and Prime Minister Syse met in the Oval Office at 10:10 a.m. (U)

The President: I am anxious to get your views on the future of Europe. I will tell Helmut Kohl that we must keep in touch with all the NATO Allies. The U.S. recognizes that all the countries of the Alliance have a stake in this process. (Ø)

Prime Minister Syse: We feel strongly about this. We have no choice about unification. It is more important than ever that we keep the Alliance going and Germany within the Alliance. (Ø)

The President: Is there still a strong feeling in Norway about German unification? On a scale of 1 to 10, where would concern in Norway be? (Ø)

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Prime Minister Syse: It is way down, but still there. So we stress we have to keep them within the Alliance. I read about Tehran in 1943 and the idea of dividing Germany into four parts. Winston Churchill said that would last about 50 years. So I am glad that you are so strong for the Alliance. (Ø)

The President: In Jim Baker's talks with Shevardnadze and Gorbachev, he made clear Germany should be in NATO. (Ø)

Secretary Baker: So did Chancellor Kohl when he was there a day or two later. I got the distinct feeling that they haven't excluded Germany's being in NATO, which might be stabilizing. But now domestic politics in the Soviet Union may complicate this. (Ø)

Prime Minister Syse: Is there a relationship with Soviet forces in Eastern Europe? (Ø)

The President: I can't believe Poland will want Soviet troops to stay in Poland, after what they have been through. (Ø)

Brent Scowcroft: Poland wants assurances that they will have security guarantees. (Ø)

Secretary Baker: Including Poland's current borders. (Ø)

Prime Minister Syse: We are disturbed about Soviet military capacity on our borders. We won't cut our defenses. (Ø)

The President: We could use more of that thinking here, especially on the Hill. When I am asked who's the enemy, I say apathy, unpredictability, complacency, and innocence. It really helps to have a friend like you making the right arguments on the Hill. I appreciate it. (Ø)

Prime Minister Syse: We are eager to get a reduction of Soviet naval forces. (Ø)

The President: That's a tough one. We are a maritime power with global interests that have nothing to do with the Soviet Union. Jim Baker made that clear to the Soviets. We are in a battle here and will be under increasing pressure to negotiate on navies. (Ø)

Prime Minister Syse: We understand, but still worry about the Kola naval base. (Ø)

Secretary Baker: If we get into naval arms control, we will weaken the U.S. and the West. (S)

The President: How do we get the Soviets to accommodate the Prime Minister? (S)

Mr. Eide: START will reduce their naval nuclear presence in the North, but we have a domestic political problem. (S)

Prime Minister Syse: Perhaps "new thinking" will bring a change in the traditional Soviet position. (S)

The President: What is your view of how the Baltic situation will resolve itself: total independence? (S)

Prime Minister Syse: The Soviets want a federated state but in the long run the Baltic States will get their independence. If they lose the Baltic States, we worry that they will build up even more in the Kola Peninsula. We are about to invite the Baltic states to be observers in the Nordic Council. (S)

The President: How do the Norwegian people feel about Gorbachev? (S)

Prime Minister Syse: Good, but we will remain vigilant. We will have a 2.5% increase in our defense budget. I hope our opposition will stand firm on this. (S)

The President: Are you and Schluter close on these issues? (U)

Prime Minister Syse: Yes. (U)

The President: Give him my best. Koivisto has been helpful to me as astute observer of the Soviet scene. (S)

Prime Minister Syse: He knows the Soviet Union. (U)

The President: Are there any bilateral problems? (S)

Prime Minister Syse: I don't think so. Let me say a few words about naval logistic support, which is a domestic political issue. It is important to secure bipartisan support for this. Our Defense Minister will visit in March. This is a very important question, and we are dealing with it in a positive way. (S)

Brent Scowcroft: We are committed to the program, as you know. (S)

The President: Good. We will work at the details. (Ø)

Prime Minister Syse: On the Kola Peninsula, there is one important question -- pollution. I hope you will keep that in mind when discussing environmental questions with the Soviets in the future. (Ø)

The President: We will. We are very interested in this subject. We have tremendous research programs and new legislation here. (Ø)

Prime Minister Syse: On the Bergen Conference on environment, we would like EPA Administrator Reilly to go. (Ø)

The President: We will let him know you raised the question. I think he is planning to go, but I don't want to commit him here. (Ø)

Prime Minister Syse: We Norwegians are very strong supporters of you and your new Atlanticism. (U)

The President: I appreciate that. (U)

Prime Minister Syse: EFTA and EC are also major domestic issues. (Ø)

Secretary Baker: It would be helpful to us, in your discussions with the French, if you could stress the need to strengthen the political dimensions of NATO. (Ø)

-- End of Conversation --