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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Plenary Meeting with President F.W. de Klerk
of South Africa (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
James A. Baker, III, Secretary of State
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs
Robert M. Gates, Assistant to the President,
and Deputy for National Security Affairs
Robert Kimmitt, Under Secretary of State for
Political Affairs
Herman J. Cohen, Assistant Secretary of State
for African Affairs
William L. Swing, U.S. Ambassador to South
Africa
David C. Miller, Jr. Special Assistant to the
President and Senior Director for African
Affairs
Robert C. Frasure, Director for African
Affairs, NSC (notetaker)

Frederik W. (F.W.) de Klerk, President
Roelof F. (Pik) Botha, Foreign Minister
Pieter Koornhof, South African Ambassador to
the U.S.
Neil P. van Heerden, Director-General of
Foreign Affairs
Lukas D. Bernard, Director-General, National
Intelligence Service
Johannes P. Roux, Director-General, Office of
the State President
Derek W. Auret, Chief Director, Department of
Foreign Affairs
Andre Kilian, Director, Department of Foreign
Affairs

DECLASSIFIED
PER E.O. 12958,
AS AMENDED
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JL 8/21/09

DATE, TIME: September 24, 1990, 11:35 a.m. - 12:10 p.m.
AND PLACE: The Cabinet Room

The President and President de Klerk met with their senior staffs
in the Cabinet Room and proceeded thereafter to the Old Family
Dining Room for a working luncheon. (U)

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The President: I want to start by saying how pleased we are to have President de Klerk here. This is an important visit. I have great respect for what the President is trying to do. I have no hesitancy in saying that. There are some out there protesting but don't be deterred by that. I live in the White House and see that every day. (U)

You are welcome here. (U)

People sense the changes in South Africa. I want to be a part of that. I want to stay out of the way but if you need help, let me know. You have my telephone numbers. It's a new era. I talked to you both before and after the Mandela meeting. (Ø)

President de Klerk: Thank you very much. I would like to say how much we appreciate the warmth and the logistics of the visit. I appreciate the status of the visit. It will have a very positive effect in South Africa. The U.S. will be seen to be sympathetic to the process. (Ø)

I want to reiterate to you we recognize your courage in the Gulf crisis. We support you. (Ø)

We used our time together as an opportunity to get across a true picture of the process and the problems. Maybe we could concentrate now for moment on the regional role. Mozambique is struggling to get on its feet. Angola has internal strife. I just saw Savimbi and he is positively inclined. He is insisting on some form of recognition. He is prepared to talk about a truce. I concluded that if it is handled correctly, a breakthrough is possible. There is a great concern on Savimbi's part about the bona fides of Dos Santos. (Ø)

Returning to South Africa, the problem is not to find a constitution, but to get consensus on what the corner stones should be. An example is the economic issue. The ANC, the PAC, and the trade unions must be moved away from socialism. We in South Africa share the problems of Africa; poverty, illiteracy, and urbanization. We need to create a half million jobs a year. A 5.5% growth rate is needed. A new school is built every day. A one billion dollar fund has been set up separately as a way of uplifting our Third World people. (Ø)

If we are to succeed, we need a broad consensus on the economic foundation. It is not the heritage of apartheid. We are part of Africa. The time has arrived for a reevaluation of the situation in South Africa, in southern Africa. If the downfall comes, it will be caused by rising expectations. (Ø)

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The President: This is fascinating. When will the Front Line countries who know what is happening in South Africa be publicly able to encourage others to have more commerce with South Africa? When can a Kaunda or someone say, "The situation is clear, this is the time to move ahead." (Ø)

President de Klerk: It is not easily done without Mandela. Already their trade with us is growing. But the rhetoric is still there. (Ø)

Foreign Minister Botha: They have always insisted that sanctions are not for them. (Ø)

The President: Because they cannot afford to do it? (Ø)

Foreign Minister Botha: In Madagascar they told us not to create a black majority government. Chissano says to us he is against sanctions. Only Mugabe still displays hostility on our Marshall Plan for the region for the eleven states. He is holding back. Kaunda took the lead in their last meeting. (Ø)

The President: Thank you. That is most interesting. Mugabe started being pretty forthcoming toward us. But then he pulled back. (Ø)

President de Klerk: The Front Line States will be influenced by international reactions. I'm aware of your impediments, of your legislation. Europe can take the lead on this. (Ø)

The President: Jim Baker is going to go into the details of this. We do want to move forward. We want to find a way to facilitate things. (Ø)

Secretary Baker: We are still fighting efforts to reinterpret things. We will say we cannot move the goalposts. (Ø)

President de Klerk: We appreciate that. (Ø)

The President: Some groups still want to punish South Africa. But basic public opinion in this country is moving on this. I took some flak on calling for a peaceful solution with Mandela. Jesse Jackson jumped on me. But Mandela talked about that when he went back to South Africa. There is not much guts anymore in the movement to ratchet down South Africa. The tone is much better now. (Ø)

President de Klerk: I think the basic crisis for American opinion makers is that they have been supporting for decades those who were deprived. The door is now open. We are talking about equal opportunity now. What do these movements believe in?

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That is now the question. ANC policies militate against your own economic values. Mandela is moving but it is hard. What do they believe in? They must moderate their opinions. (S)

Foreign Minister Botha: The U.S. cannot agree with the ANC on anything. Qadhafi is their comrade in arms. They cannot even condemn Saddam Hussein on the Gulf. Mandela is tied up with things you don't believe in. (S)

The President: Castro is another one. (S)

Foreign Minister Botha: Mandela is going to visit him. Once we took the stand against apartheid, we were in step with you. (S)

President de Klerk: We are in step with America now. (S)

Secretary Baker: When Mandela was here we were interested in taking about the next steps. With whom will you be engaged? (S)

President de Klerk: Thank you for your help with them on the Constituent Assembly issue. They don't talk about that much anymore. Mandela wants the process to succeed. (S)

Mandela's main approach is that he sees it as us and them. Our approach is that the process must be fully representational with all leaders and groups involved. There is a debate now inside the ANC on a black election to produce legitimate leaders. When we raised it some months ago, it was seen as a racist move. Now it is a viable alternative. (S)

Another alternative which would be unnecessary if all of this works out would be a wise men group. I'm drawing them into a parallel situation for discussion. It would consist of homeland leaders, radicals, and others. It is possible at the right time to form a working group of all. (S)

We could get six or eight people together on how to take it further. (S)

We have also asked the law commission to do a study. At the right time it could come together. (S)

We are in an inbetween situation at the moment. (S)

The President: Can I suggest we walk over to the lunch now? (S)

President de Klerk: Yes. A final point. Mandela's Cuba visit was postponed because of the violence. (S)

-- End of Conversation --

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