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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting with Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar of the United Nations (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
James A. Baker, III, Secretary of State
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs
Thomas Pickering, US Ambassador to the UN
John Bolton, Assistant Secretary of State
for International Organization Affairs
Nancy Bearg Dyke, NSC Staff (Notetaker)

Javier Perez de Cuellar, UN Secretary General
Virendra Dayal, Chief of Staff
Ronald Spiers, Under Secretary General
Alvaro de Soto, Executive Assistant to UNSYG
Jean Claude Aime, Acting Assistant to UNSYG

DATE, TIME October 1, 1990, 10:55 - 11:35 a.m.
AND PLACE: 38th Floor Office, United Nations

Secretary General de Cuellar: You are most welcome here. You are an old UN hand. There are many reasons for us to be most pleased. There has been some positive action here on the Middle East. (U)

The President: Did you hear anything from Jordan yesterday? Do you see any option for further diplomatic action? (Ø)

Secretary General de Cuellar: No diplomatic option, only military options. I don't see anything that gives me a chance of doing anything. Because of public opinion, there is no effort to find a solution. Morocco and others have tried with no success. I tried, and nothing came of it. (Ø)

The President: The UN has played a very useful role. The world understands and knows you have tried and has seen the almost frantic shuttling of King Hussein. I don't think there is a feeling yet around the world that peace is not possible. My concern is holding the world together on these sanctions. (Ø)

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Secretary General de Cuellar: He can do a U-turn all of a sudden. He did a U-turn on Iran and gave them everything they wanted. He doesn't care about public opinion. He doesn't need to save face. He looks at his interests; doesn't inspire confidence. I'm still hopeful the sanctions will be felt by him. (Ø)

The President: Yemen has backed away a little. (Ø)

Secretary Baker: Have you had a chance to talk to Iraq regarding the French proposal? (U)

Secretary General de Cuellar: I talked to the French Ambassador. The French have made statements through the press: "There has been no particular contact between France and Iraq except normal diplomatic dialogue. Our charge keeps contact in Baghdad regarding French citizens in Iraq." The French have said that any useful discussion would have two conditions: 1. Iraqi troops must leave Kuwait. 2. Let the hostages go. (U)

The President: But what about returning the legitimate rulers of Kuwait? (Ø)

Secretary General de Cuellar: That is not in there. (Ø)

The President: We have op-ed writers in the US that would go along, but I think we have to do what the UN set out to do. We won't back away. We want a peaceful resolution, but we may be faced with provocation. (Ø)

Secretary General de Cuellar: Yes. There are rumors about nuclear devices that could be launched from a plane. (Ø)

The President: We are well aware they have used chemical weapons. I would discount the nuclear. How do you see the Israeli card? (Ø)

Secretary General de Cuellar: Levy came to see me. They are being careful to be low key. I don't know what he will say to the General Assembly today. There is always a chance of an Iraqi strike. There are a lot of negative possibilities. Saddam Hussein is clever, criminal. (Ø)

Secretary Baker: How do you see Arab governments reacting if Iraq did an unprovoked attack on Israel? (Ø)

Secretary General de Cuellar: I don't see any Arab government that would come to the defense of Israel. What about combining the French initiative with an Arab initiative? The situation is extremely explosive. If I had something to say I wouldn't

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hesitate to go (to the region). Tariq Aziz is afraid to say anything in front of me. (S)

The President: Some think the sanctions are having a major effect. I don't know if it is true. The UN position is good; there is provision for humanitarian aid. (S)

Secretary General de Cuellar: It is important to monitor closely. (U)

The President: The US has a lot at stake. We have many soldiers there. It is working well in terms of hospitality. Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and others are willing to see a fast military end to this. (S)

I trust King Hussein. He is honest. Israel is on one side of him; Iraq on the other. The King will honor what he said. (S)

Some feel it is too early for action. (S)

General Scowcroft: I think they know we are ready. (S)

The President: You can tell Velayati I see a new world as including better relations with Iran. We gave that message two ways. It was received seriously, but word came back that it is not time yet. But the response from Velayati and Rafsanjani was serious. They have right wing problems and can't move forward. Do you think the Iranians are complying with blockades? (S)

Secretary Baker: The Turks and Syrians think they are complying. (S)

Secretary General de Cuellar: Can we move to Central America? We are stuck on the negotiations. The FMLN told me they won't leave now. We need more from them. I told him (Cristiani?) he should have a multiparty delegation. It would add to their credibility. (S)

On Afghanistan, we have a group of countries to help us, and they are trying to have influence. (S)

The President: Let me ask Jim to bring you up on our Congressional action. (U)

Secretary Baker: Congress will adjourn between October 15-19. Then we'll know about aid to El Salvador. Either we will negotiate or have a vote. We have a sense of the FMLN stalling. I agree that Cristiani is acting in good faith. He knows about our desire for movement on the Jesuit case. They must move. If the FMLN is at the table and negotiating, then aid will be

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released. Mexico, Venezuela, and Spain have agreed to act as friends of the UN Secretary General. Tell the FMLN to negotiate in good faith and to not start an offensive. If the FMLN agrees to a ceasefire, it gives a better environment to look at direct talks. (S)

The President: I am embarrassed about the back money for the UN. I am continuing to try with Congress. You've done a good job on the Hill. We'll keep struggling. (U)

Secretary General de Cuellar: We know you have been trying. (U)

Mutual thanks for conversation. (U)

-- End of Conversation --

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