

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting with Foreign Minister Jiri Dienstbier of Czechoslovakia (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Robert M. Gates, Assistant to the President and Deputy for National Security Affairs
Robert L. Hutchings, Director for European Political Affairs

Jiri Dienstbier, Foreign Minister
Rita Klimova, Ambassador to the U.S.
Dana Hunatova, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Michael Cermak, Advisor to the Foreign Minister
Ladislav Mravec, Deputy Chief of Mission, Czechoslovak Embassy
Vladimir Galuska, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

DATE, TIME April 16, 1991, 2:15 - 2:30 p.m.
AND PLACE: General Scowcroft's Office

The President dropped by during General Scowcroft's meeting with Foreign Minister Dienstbier. (U)

The President: Your President explained Slovak problems with high unemployment resulting from military plants closing down. (C)

Minister Dienstbier: We need help. If we survive the next two to three years, we will be fine. But we need very concrete help with specific problems -- markets for our agriculture and textiles, defense conversion, and the ability to sell our sport and hunting rifles. Progress in these areas would give our people hope. (C)

The President: I spoke about this in my speech on Saturday. Congress wants to help, and it will be easier for Czechoslovakia than for China. But I don't want to be too hopeful. We have a real problem with textiles in our Congress. (C)

Minister Dienstbier: We also would like to be involved in the reconstruction of Kuwait. (C)

The President: Your President mentioned that. What do you have in mind? (U)

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Ambassador Klimova: We could repair the water towers, which our country built, and also their pipelines and high tension power lines. (C)

The President: The reconstruction is going slower than we thought it would. (C)

Brent Scowcroft: It is getting a little better, but there is a lot of criticism for the government for being inept. (C)

Minister Dienstbier: In the short run, we need help in opening markets in the U.S. and Kuwait. I told Secretary Baker that Syria owes us \$1 billion. He said he would talk to Assad. (C)

Ambassador Klimova: We also have \$800 million in Iraq. (C)

The President: Don't hold your breath with this guy. That is why I have been so hectic. We want to get the refugees back into Iraq and give them security support. I just talked to the Secretary General about a major initiative. We have put in a tremendous amount so far. (C)

Minister Dienstbier: We also sent help, in cooperation with you. The problem is how to get it into the region. Maybe it could be done through Iran. (C)

The President: Germany is helping. I talked to Kohl about his efforts in Iran. We have problems with the Iranians, as you know. (C)

Minister Dienstbier: We went there a couple of months ago and talked with Rafsanjani and Velayati. (C)

The President: Do they want better relations with you? (C)

Minister Dienstbier: Yes. They are still very anti-American, but not so direct as before. They blame Saddam Hussein for American participation in the Gulf. (C)

The President: They were a problem during the war. They seemed almost to be for Saddam Hussein. (C)

Minister Dienstbier: They told me America wanted to get to the Gulf and that they will never learn. (C)

The President: The main thing is that we want to support Czechoslovakia in any way we can. How is President Havel's health? (U)

Minister Dienstbier: He had influenza, but it was nothing serious. We are preparing to negotiate about coming to the U.S. in September or October. (C)

Brent Scowcroft: We will work it out. (U)

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Minister Dienstbier: We are preparing a common declaration, which we would like to issue during his visit. (S)

The President: Are you going elsewhere -- to New York? (U)

Minister Dienstbier: Tomorrow I will go to New York and then back to Prague. I was there Thursday. Saturday I went to Kissinger's house in Connecticut, and on Sunday to Yale. I also went to the Senate and House. (U)

The President: Did you mention your trade problems? Some of our best friends in the Congress are the most protectionist. (S)

Minister Dienstbier: They seemed to be supportive. If we survive the next year, we will be all right. But we are now preparing three constitutions. (U)

The President: I have to go and take a call from President Ozal. Please give my best to your President. (U)

-- End of Conversation --

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