

~~SECRET~~

THE WHITE HOUSE

~~SECRET~~

WASHINGTON

3684

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

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

PARTICIPANTS: The 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
John R. Bolton, Assistant Secretary of State for International Organizations
Thomas R. Pickering, US Ambassador to the United Nations
Nancy Bearg Dyke, Director for International Programs and Public Diplomacy, NSC Staff (Notetaker)

Javier Perez de Cuellar, UN Secretary General
Virendra Dayal, Chef de Cabinet, Under Secretary General
Ronald Spiers, Under Secretary General
Carl-August Fleischhauer, Under Secretary General and Legal Counsel
Jean-Claude Aime, Acting Assistant Secretary General
Alvaro de Soto, Executive Assistant to UNSYG
John Washburn, Director, Representation Unit
Lisa Buttenheim, First Officer, Executive Office of UNSYG (Notetaker)

DATE, TIME May 9, 1991, 12:15 - 1:15 p.m.
AND PLACE: State Dining Room

Following initial pleasantries:

Secretary Baker: About your support for any further resolution (in the UN Security Council re Iraqi refugees), it is critical to our effectiveness that you support our efforts publicly. So I would like to make that request of you. (Ø)

Secretary General Perez de Cuellar: Hmmm. (U)

~~SECRET~~

Declassify on: OADR

~~SECRET~~

DECLASSIFIED
PER E.O. 12958,
AS AMENDED
01 8/21/2009

~~SECRET~~

2

~~SECRET~~

Secretary Baker: I understand you may not be able to hold to a date (on Government of El Salvador and FMLN agreeing to ceasefire), but it would be useful to try because the FMLN gave the May 30 date. The constitutional argument they are making now is new. (Ø)

Mr. de Soto: They realize they were foolish to put a date out. The context has changed. (Ø)

Secretary Baker: Has there been any discussion with them on the SA-16? (Ø)

Mr. de Soto: They said the nature of the system is such that they don't have the infrastructure necessary. (Ø)

Secretary Baker: So they say they don't have it? (U)

Mr. de Soto: I have not asked. (U)

Secretary Baker: What they told you doesn't square with our information. It is shoulder-fired. (Ø)

Secretary General Perez de Cuellar: I sent an emissary to Bangladesh, and it is an extremely terrible situation. One country offered \$100 million. I expect my American friends to do better. (Ø)

The President: This is difficult on the heels of our Kurdish contributions. We are in for \$400-500 million. (U)

Ambassador Pickering: The Bangladesh government has asked for helicopter support. (U)

The President: Let's see if we can't help on that. (U)

General Scowcroft: I will call Secretary Cheney and General Powell. (U)

The President: On Cuba, it is important to take early and decisive action on the appointment of a Special Representative, as called for by the UN Human Rights Commission. The individual selected must be a strong and able proponent of human rights. (U)

Mr. de Soto: Cuba has to be persuaded to accept whomever the UNSYG wants. In the meantime our own informal channels are working. We should have someone who is a leading dissident. (Ø)

Secretary General Perez de Cuellar: My view is that quiet diplomacy works best. (Ø)

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

3

The President: Is there any hope for Cuba to join the rest of the world? All we see is hard line. (Ø)

We are still worried about Qadhafi in Libya. Are you following the situation? (Ø)

Secretary General Perez de Cuellar: We follow it very closely. (U)

For the Middle East, we have our emissary Brunner. I have refrained from asking him to go to the area. (Ø)

The President: Good idea. (U)

Secretary General Perez de Cuellar: Maybe he or I will go to the area after Secretary Baker's mission is complete. (Ø)

Secretary Baker: Don't hold your breath. (U)

The President: It is not all bad. (U)

Secretary Baker: There is some possibility of success. At some point it would be our idea to have a conference, something like Cairo 1977; like Geneva in 1973 but without the formal UN auspices. But, we are saying there should be some UN involvement with a UN observer you would appoint. We are implementing the UNSC resolutions. We are talking about bringing the parties together for direct negotiations. We have achieved agreement on the terms of reference: 1) a comprehensive settlement based on 242 and 338 without the qualifiers they always try to add; 2) some form of European participation. Israel resists any UN role. (Ø)

Israel is resistant to the meeting reconvening. Syria is resistant to the meeting not being a full-blown international conference and not continuing and continuous. We are trying to split the differences and overcome historical problems. Mubarak is strongly supportive. We know some of the parties like a joint Palestinian-Jordanian delegation. We hope to find solutions. (Ø)

The PLO should understand the necessity of letting this process go forward. There are very powerful influences at work with the PLO. Saudi Arabia is saying to the PLO: do not stand in the way if you want financial help from us. Syria and Jordan are talking to the PLO too. (Ø)

Secretary General Perez de Cuellar: I prefer not to be present, but I do not know what my successor would think. It is not right for the UN to just sit there. (Ø)

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

4

Secretary Baker: The UN attended the Cairo conference, I think. In 1973 it was a cosponsor. In 1977, the UN attended. (U)

The President: The big thing is to get progress. (U)

Secretary General Perez de Cuellar: Lebanon is still suffering. It is under full control of Syria. The key is withdrawal. (Ø)

Secretary Baker: I understand that by 30 June, Syria will withdraw from the Bekka Valley. (Ø)

The President: That would be good, would it not? (U)

Secretary General Perez de Cuellar: Yes. (U)

The President: Afghanistan. (U)

Secretary General Perez de Cuellar: It would be good to have a statement to provide important ideas about Afghanistan setting its own systems and stopping arms and leading them to an elected process. If they can agree -- the Mujahadin are always in conflict with themselves. It is hard to explain. There have been tremendous achievements in Afghanistan but nothing has happened now. (Ø)

Secretary Baker: We are "that far away" and it is the inability of the Soviet leadership to pursue as liberal a policy of new thinking as 6-9 months ago. We just need a date of weapons cutoff but they can't do it because the military won't let them. Gorbachev wants to do it -- to get rid of this. (Ø)

(Discussion followed on upcoming trip of Moiseyev -- that he is coming but not on Afghanistan and that we would be on the wrong side on this issue.) (Ø)

The President: Shevardnadze was here and careful to not appear to undermine Gorbachev. He is frank about his country. His institute is financed by the Soviet government. He asked about two things: arms control and \$1.1 billion credit for agriculture. We have problems with that. Those were the only two things we mentioned. (Ø)

Secretary Baker: He is a great friend of the UN -- very supportive. (U)

Secretary General Perez de Cuellar: Shevardnadze is mentioned as my successor. We have had UNSYGs from three regions but not Africa. (Ø)

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

SECRET

5

Ambassador Pickering: France will veto Shevardnadze because he doesn't speak French. (Ø)

The President: What is Abby Farah doing now? (U)

Secretary General Perez de Cuellar: He is a very able man. I am sending him to Iran to assess the damage after the Iran-Iraq war. (U)

The Western Sahara is doing well, thanks to your cooperation, which was very important. (U)

The President: There has been real progress on the Western Sahara problem. (U)

Ambassador Pickering: We would like to get the budget down. Every new budget from the UN is \$200 million! (U)

Mr. Bolton: It hurts us on the Hill if UN budgets are too high. It is a credibility of numbers. It is very important so we can maintain our record of paying arrears. (U)

Secretary General Perez de Cuellar: The UNSC thinks of solutions but not of the cost. (Ø)

Ambassador Pickering: We can try to fix that. (Ø)

The President: What is the status of our arrears? (U)

Mr. Bolton: We are on a track of repaying over five years. This year's payment is in Congress now for a reprogramming action. Because of currency shortfalls that caused us to apply part of the arrears to our regular assessment, our arrearage payment this year will be about 16.8 percent. (U)

The President: It is very bad for us not to pay. (U)

Ambassador Pickering: It will help with the UN's flexibility to have working capital if we pay. (U)

The President: Who is a problem on the Hill? (Ø)

Mr. Bolton: Neal Smith, chairman of our subcommittee. We also have a struggle with FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization). (Ø)

Ambassador Pickering: In 50 days, we are going to Congress on five UN operations: Western Sahara, Kuwait-Iraq, weapons of mass destruction (implementing UNSCR 687), El Salvador, and Angola. All are new operations and not in the budget. (U)

SECRET

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

SECRET

6

Mr. Dayal: It is difficult to run the place with no reserves.
(U)

The President: Are there ways to cut back on UN bureaucracy? (U)

Secretary General Perez de Cuellar: We have no reserves. (U)

Mr. Dayal: As I was telling Nancy, every time we have to start something, we have to have a new appeal after an assessment and we lose 2-3 weeks. Lives are lost in the process. We need to find a way to find reserves. (U)

Mr. de Soto: Whenever there is a composite operation, it has to be fielded from the existing secretariat, which is overstretched.
(U)

The President: Does the General Assembly have to concur in eliminating of agencies? (U)

Ambassador Pickering: To eliminate from the budget, the GA must take a positive step. (U)

The President: We are trying to handle relations with the Soviets so we do not inadvertently set them back. It is very difficult. I keep reminding his and Administration critics to not forget what Gorbachev has done about freeing Eastern Europe, etc. I am not sure where it will end up. His mistake was not letting political and economic reform proceed apace together. (Ø)

Secretary General Perez de Cuellar: I hope he will survive. (Ø)

The President: What do you think about Yeltsin? (Ø)

Secretary General Perez de Cuellar: He is a demagogue, not a statesman. I have a poor impression of him. (Told about incident in which Yeltsin wanted UNSYG to appear with him for press.) (Ø)

The President: I am very glad you came. You are a great representative for us and the United Nations. We want to be an active partner and carry our share of the load. (U)

-- End of Conversation --

SECRET

~~SECRET~~