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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting with Sir Anerood Jugnauth, Prime Minister of Mauritius

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Lawrence Eagleburger, Acting Secretary of State
John H. Sununu, Chief of State
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Robert M. Gates, Assistant to the President and Deputy National Security Affairs
Herman J. Cohen, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs
Penne Percy Korth, U.S. Ambassador to Mauritius
Robert C. Frasure, NSC Director for African Affairs (Notetaker)

Sir Anerood Jugnauth, Prime Minister
Cassam Uteem, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economic Planning
Beergoonath Ghurburrun, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economic Planning
Madan Dulloo, Minister of Agriculture
Bhinod Bacha, Home Secretary
Chitmansing Jesseramsing, Mauritius Ambassador to the U.S.
Sir Indur Ramphul, Governor of the Bank of Mauritius
Benoit Arouff, Chairman, Mauritius Export Development Investment Authority

DATE, TIME June 5, 1991, 12:05 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.
AND PLACE: Old Family Dining Room

The President: Secretary Cohen has just confirmed to me that those categories of textiles can be shifted. (C)

I want to hear your views on South Africa. How do you see the situation? (C)

Prime Minister: We have a long tradition of contact with them, of trade in particular. (C)

General Scowcroft: Have you followed sanctions against them? (C)

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Prime Minister Jugnauth: Yes, to some extent. But there have been lots of advances. (Ø)

Mr. Gates: Is the use of South African Airways a violation of sanctions? (Ø)

The President: We are pleased by the fact that Mandela is out of jail. (U)

We are also pleased by the fact that they are talking, despite the stones in the road. (U)

I am operating under certain specific legal restraints on sanctions. There are certain requirements before I can lift them. I think they have met three out of five. (Ø)

What is left, Hank? (U)

Assistant Secretary Cohen: The two laws have to come off the books and the rest of the political prisoners have to be released. (Ø)

The President: My view is that as soon as that happens, we should promptly release the sanctions. (Ø)

They are counter productive and shouldn't have been there in the first place. (Ø)

We need to get back to a normal political exchange. (Ø)

Prime Minister Jugnauth: Are you preparing for it? When will it happen? (U)

The President: Hank? (U)

Assistant Secretary Cohen: Probably the end of June. (U)

The President: We are impressed by de Klerk and his colleagues. (Ø)

And we are disappointed by ANC rhetoric. (Ø)

I know they felt they had to oppose us on the Gulf war, but they went too far on it. Just like King Hussein of Jordan. (Ø)

We have our differences with the ANC, but I have lots of respect for Mandela. (Ø)

Prime Minister Jugnauth: I agree with you. I have met with de Klerk. He is sincere. (Ø)

Acting Secretary Eagleburger: Can the ANC/Buthelezi differences be contained? (Ø)

Prime Minister Jugnauth: It's a big problem. The Blacks must get together. (Ø)

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The President: The ANC always blames the government for the problem. That's not fair. (Ø)

Let's talk about the Middle East for moment. (Ø)

Before the war, we said the U.S. would be prepared to address the Palestinian issue, and we are. I believe we have credibility on this issue in various governments. (Ø)

In my view, we saved Israel from Saddam Hussein. I think the people in Israel are more inclined to make peace than their leaders are. (Ø)

We have differences with Syria. But we worked with them on the war. I think we broke some ice. We can be helpful as a catalyst. (Ø)

On Jordan, I was terribly disappointed in the position that King Hussein took. We had a friendship. I hope we still do. But he went too far. He choose the wrong horse. He made a mistake. (Ø)

King Hussein is important to a peace agreement. I have no lasting hard feelings. But he went too far. Perhaps he thought he had legitimate points to make. But we have to work with him despite the high profile differences we had during the war. Nonetheless we are prepared to hold out the hand to him. (Ø)

There is the problem of reaching agreement on this nature of a conference. But we are making progress despite what you read in the papers. (Ø)

We have sent some letters which we hope will be a catalyst. Someone has to do this. We must work at it with out allies. We are trying to make things better. (Ø)

I would love to hear your views on all of this. (U)

Prime Minister Jugnauth: Thank you. We believe that there cannot be peace without the establishment of a Palestinian homeland. The U.S. is in the position now to get Israel to make concessions. Is that possible now? What do you think about it? (Ø)

Acting Secretary of State Eagleburger: We have tried to solve the Palestinian question for forty years. It is not easy. (Ø)

The President: No one has to talk us into addressing the Palestinian issue. But it is more complicated than pressing Israel. We do believe in Palestinian rights. (Ø)

But excuse my interruption, Larry (U)

Acting Secretary of State Eagleburger: Mr. President, I always excuse you when you interrupt me. (U)

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The PLO has suffered some real blows. But they are not irrelevant. (Ø)

Prime Minister Jugnauth: Arafat made a mistake. (Ø)

Acting Secretary of State Eagleburger: Secretary Baker has identified more clearly with the Palestinian people than any of his predecessors. But we are not close to closure on a conference. Everyone must make compromises. (Ø)

The President: How do you see it? What is the mood of your Muslim population on the issue? (U)

Prime Minister Jugnauth: To tell you the truth, many see it as a case of double standards. (Ø)

The President: You mean over the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait? (Ø)

Prime Minister Jugnauth: Yes. Of course they agree it should be condemned. Still, many people forget that was the cause of the war. (Ø)

Acting Secretary of State Eagleburger: Has it cooled down among your people? (Ø)

Prime Minister Jugnauth: Yes, but for the Palestinian question. (Ø)

The President: Concerning Saddam Hussein, I want to make clear I think he is an immoral man. He was wrong. And there won't be normal relations with Iraq while he is still there. (Ø)

Just look what he did to the environment. And he raped and brutalized the people of Kuwait. There will never be a normal relationship so long as that man is there. (Ø)

We are concerned about the Iraqi people. But just look at the way he has diverted relief food to Tikret, his home town. (Ø)

We will start over when he is gone. (U)

Secretary Bacha: Mauritius is not really part of the Muslim world. But we believe there must be a Palestinian homeland. And the U.S. has a leading role on this. (Ø)

Our Muslim population was sympathetic to Saddam Hussein. And he did succeed in shifting the responsibility to the Palestinian issue. (Ø)

The Palestinian issue must be solved. And the U.S. has the possibility of solving it. The image of a double standard is being dissolved now. (Ø)

The President: Is there still a feeling that we don't give a damn about the Palestinian people? (Ø)

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Secretary Bacha: That is changing. People see that the U.S. is putting its foot down. (Ø)

The President: Good. We are the first Administration since Eisenhower to stand up against the Israeli blank check in this town. (Ø)

If it doesn't work, we will be right back in the arms race in the Middle East. we don't want to appear to be insensitive on this issue. (Ø)

And you can get into trouble if you aren't willing to negotiate. Look at my friend Chadli Bengidid in Algeria. (Ø)

Why when Jim Baker was in Geneva to see Tariq Aziz, the Iraqi wouldn't even mention the word Kuwait. He only wanted to talk about Palestine. We said it was about the Iraqi invasion of a Muslim country. They butchered Kuwait. (Ø)

General Scowcroft: I want to raise Diego Garcia. On the night of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, we were looking at what we could do and we moved forces to Diego Garcia to demonstrate our concern.

When we had used up all of the airfield space in the region, we moved aircraft to Diego Garcia. Diego Garcia was a key base for our bombers from day one. (Ø)

Prime Minister Jugnauth: Yes, I understand. But as I said in my statement on this subject on television, we didn't surrender sovereignty. But I also said it is not a contentious issue so far as we are concerned. (Ø)

The President: Going back to the Middle East, don't the Muslim people in your country see the PLO as missing the boat on the Gulf? (Ø)

Secretary Bacha: It's not really rational. But the feeling is that the PLO must be part of the process. (Ø)

Prime Minister Jugnauth: On Saddam, he was wrong if he thought he could fight and win. (Ø)

But the PLO should have known better and persuaded him not to do it. And they have kept neutral. (Ø)

The President: I think Saddam Hussein never thought we would do it. He never thought we would fight. He saw Vietnam and maybe Lebanon. In spite of that, we moved. Then he thought he could bog us down in the desert. And then he could say he stood up to us. He miscalculated. (Ø)

Saddam may have respected our air force. But he never thought we would do it on the ground. He was silly telling the President of the United States what he could or couldn't do. (Ø)

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Militarily, when the ground war began, he could have stopped after a day. We were afraid he might do that. I didn't want that. (C)

General Scowcroft: We have the impression that people around Saddam are scared to death of him. (C)

The President: We have reports that he won't let soldiers come into Baghdad because they will say what happened in the war. (C)

And he is diverting relief food, flour, to Tikret, his home town. (U)

Mr. Gates: I have a question about India. Can it hold together? What about the future and growing tensions with Pakistan? (C)

Prime Minister Jugnauth: It could be very bad. Unemployment is a growing problem. They are having to use the army to maintain order. The feeling at the funeral was that Congress was likely to get a big sympathy vote. But that will go down as more time passes. (C)

I think the Hindu fundamentalist party is likely to get more seats than Congress. (C)

The President: With whom would they form a government? (U)

Acting Secretary of State Eagleburger: You don't think the sympathy vote will help Congress enough? (U)

Prime Minister Jugnauth: No. India is in for trouble for a long time. The secession pressures will build and weaken the country. I don't know what Pakistan will do. But that could be a problem too. (C)

The President: Rajiv was a good man. Did they ever pin down the killer? (U)

Mr. Gates: The police may have bungled the investigation. (U)

The President: I called his widow. She was very distraught. It was a political ploy trying to make her the leader of Congress. It's so sad. I remember when I first met Rajiv. It was clear he was not interested in politics. But he did a good job. (C)

Is there anything else? (U)

Ambassador Korth: Mr. President, I want to thank the government of Mauritius for the good security they provided us with during the war. (U)

The President: Yes. We do appreciate that very much.

-- End of Conversation--

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