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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telephone Conversation with Prime Minister John Major of the United Kingdom

PARTICIPANTS: The President
John Major, Prime Minister
Notetaker: David Gompert, NSC Staff

DATE, TIME August 19, 1991, 12:56 - 1:06 p.m.
AND PLACE: Air Force One

The President: Hello. We're going to D.C. I'll swear in Strauss. Then I go back to Maine. What is the latest? (S)

Prime Minister Major: Two things. One, Bielecki called me. All is calm, but he is worried. The Soviets have closed the borders. The Poles are very worried. They want the EC to conclude the association agreement as soon as possible. I promised I'd push this idea in the EC as a signal. He asked me to tell you this. (S)

Second is the prospect of Europeans having their own meeting. We need a NATO Ministerial. The sub-plot is for the EC to take the lead. (S)

The President: My only worry about NATO is not to elevate concern about military action. I don't want to look like we need to go to the barricades in NATO. I am worried about the Baltics. Let's be careful not to get drawn in by the Baltic hard-liners. Let me talk to Baker and Brent. (S)

Prime Minister Major: Stephen Wall will talk to Brent Scowcroft. (S)

There are calls in the UK for halting defense cuts. (S)

The President: Let's keep this on a diplomatic plane. We could back Yeltsin's call for constitutional rule. We don't want to look like we're anticipating any military action. Yeltsin wants to involve the UN. What do you think? (S)

Prime Minister Major: I can't see anything practical that the UN can do. It's not likely to be productive, at first blush. As Bob Gates told Stephen Wall, the Soviet people can't hear what we hear from Yeltsin. (S)

The President: It's confusing what Yanayev is saying about the possibility of Gorbachev coming back. (S)

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Prime Minister Major: It's totally disingenuous. (S)

The President: I am sorry about the problem with your Right over defense spending. (S)

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