

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: The President's Telephone Conversation with Prime Minister Mulroney of Canada

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Prime Minister Mulroney
Notetaker: Beth Sanner, NSC Staff

DATE, TIME August 21, 1991, 2:17 p.m. - 2:22 p.m.
AND PLACE: Kennebunkport, Maine

The President: Brian? Pretty nice developments. (U)

Prime Minister Mulroney: Well congratulations to you on quarterbacking quite a thing. (U)

The President: I don't know about quarterbacking, but the results are very encouraging. (U)

Prime Minister Mulroney: I can tell you my Mother turned 79 today. She saw you on TV outside the house. She told me she saw President Bush say he talked to President Gorbachev. She said she couldn't have had a nicer birthday present. (U)

The President: Isn't that sweet? It was a very emotional call. Gorbachev was very upbeat, grateful, and friendly on the line. Same 'ole Gorby. Problems still exist, for sure. There are rumors all over the place. We don't really know how many of the rumors are true. (U)

Prime Minister Mulroney: What did he have to say to you George? (U)

The President: He's in control, and has placed Moiseyev in control of the military. Yazov is doing what Gorbachev wants, pulling forces back from Moscow. You know, Yakovlev called Baker in Brussels to say that Yazov had committed suicide, but Gorbachev didn't seem to know anything about that. He said that he understood that five of the coup plotters were coming to see him, and I don't know if they made it. Gorbachev's guards remained loyal to him throughout this episode. He felt that it was over, and that he had to go back to Moscow and take care of things. He said it was a victory for democracy and reform. If his caution was caused by balancing on a tightrope then he will not have to worry about the rightwing hardliners for now. (U)

Prime Minister Mulroney: Yeltsin played a fantastic role. (U)

The President: Yes, he did. Gorbachev was very grateful for the statements from the West. I didn't know if he had been held incommunicado, or if he had gotten any news. He was a confident and ebullient person ... I played it a little short outside. They asked me "are you declaring the coup over?" I said I'm not declaring anything. We've had people here, I haven't even seen the TV. (ϕ)

Prime Minister Mulroney: Can we safely release this to the media without it bouncing back on us? (ϕ)

The President: I just said that this is what I was told by Gorbachev. (ϕ)

Prime Minister Mulroney: Did he say when he was going back to Moscow, George? (ϕ)

The President: Tonight or tomorrow morning. I think tomorrow morning. After I had the press conference I took the gang out for a stormy boat ride. When we returned, I stepped on to the pier, and they told me "a head of state is on the line," and I asked which head-of-state, and they said that they couldn't tell us on this phone. Later, they told me it was Gorbachev. (ϕ)

Prime Minister Mulroney: I don't want to needlessly intrude, but how did you put your call through to Gorbachev? (ϕ)

The President: I don't know. We placed this call this morning, and then they told us that they had put it through. Scowcroft told the operator to put it through to us. (ϕ)

Prime Minister Mulroney: I'll give it a shot. May I go through your switchboard if we can't get through? We'll try to get some good words through. (ϕ)

The President: Go ahead and try. The more contacts he has with the West, the better. (ϕ)

Prime Minister Mulroney: Again, I thought you quarterbacked it skillfully. Best to your family. (U)

The President: Bye.

-- End of Conversation --