

THE WHITE HOUSE

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WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Minutes of Meeting with Egyptian Deputy Prime Minister
Boutros Ghali (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs
Richard N. Haass, Special Assistant to the
President and Senior Director for Near East
and South Asian Affairs
Boutros Ghali, Deputy Prime Minister of Egypt

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PER E.O. 12958,
AS AMENDED

2000-0429-F
8/21/09 RW

The meeting began in General Scowcroft's office at 11:35 a.m.

Opening pleasantries.

Deputy Prime Minister Ghali: I want to give you some background on myself, my health, my role in the Mandela release, and on the fund I have set up for Africa. We managed to lend \$10 million a year with a very small overhead, something that is not easy given Egypt's bureaucracy. (U)

General Scowcroft: Nothing is easy in the Egyptian bureaucracy. (U)

Deputy Prime Minister Ghali: I also have a letter for the President from President Mubarak. (U)

(At this point the President enters the room - 11:40 a.m.)

Deputy Prime Minister Ghali: I saw Shamir in Paris. Shamir wants to see Mubarak. I explained to him he needs to show something before such a meeting, given Egypt's role in the Arab world. Shamir objected. I told him progress in the peace process would allow normalization and such a meeting. Getting to the peace conference is key. (e)

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The President: His response? (U)

Deputy Prime Minister Ghali: Shamir said that he agrees it is important to have a conference. He said I could convey this to Mubarak. All of this happened before your statement on loans. There is good chemistry between us. I think he was frustrated by the comparison with Begin. I reminded Shamir that there was progress in our bilateral relationship at the time we used to meet often. I told him that Egypt wants to help, that we have no personal ambition now, and that we can work the Palestinian problem. (C)

The President: What is Mubarak thinking on the Middle East? Is he discouraged? (C)

Deputy Prime Minister Ghali: No. We will be able to start. The momentum will allow us to continue the dialogue. It is important to recall that the autonomy talks took two years, yet it was still a mistake to have broken them off. I told Shamir that, and he agreed, saying he's prepared to take the risk of the conference. (C)

General Scowcroft: Shamir really wants to meet with Mubarak. (C)

Deputy Prime Minister Ghali: Yes. He is humiliated by our press attacks, by the comparison with Begin, by the fact that Shimon Peres has met with Mubarak but he has not. Having the conference will facilitate such meetings. (C)

The President: My relationship with Mubarak is "A-1". But why this difference about Libya? What am I missing here? Why does Hosni keep arguing he can bring him along? (C)

Deputy Prime Minister Ghali: We're trying to neutralize him for our bilateral purposes. We have our border and tourism to think about. Lots of Libyans come to drink beer in Egypt. The problem is that he is helping the fundamentalists in Sudan, in Egypt and in Tunisia. We're trying to get him to stop. (C)

The President: We'll try to keep an open mind, but his support for the Soviet coup makes it impossible. Please tell Mubarak that. Just look who else supported the coup. This is a tough group. (C)

Deputy Prime Minister Ghali: There are two schools of thought, and the other is that we're wasting time with him. (C)

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The President: We've got great confidence and respect for Mubarak. It is one of the relationships I enjoy most. But in our view the down side with Qaddafi dominate -- terrorism, chemicals, etc. (C)

Deputy Prime Minister Ghali: We understand. His efforts to help fundamentalists pose a real danger to Egypt. (C)

The President: Well, we are here to talk if you need to or want to. On another subject, I hope our coalition partners stay tough towards Saddam. This is in Egypt's interest too. I know you do not want a new war, but Saddam cannot brutalize the Kurds or deny helicopter flights -- and we can't think that by easing sanctions it will help. The guy shows no signs of having learned anything. It is important for Mubarak to stay with us on this. (C)

Deputy Prime Minister Ghali: Public opinion in Egypt is increasingly anti-Saddam and it would be difficult for us to change. Some two million Egyptians lost jobs and money. (C)

The President: I understand that you oppose any new use of force. (C)

Deputy Prime Minister Ghali: Not so much. We would have to explain it to public opinion. The only question for many Egyptians is why we didn't finish him off. (C)

The President: That is a good question. We need to answer it. On the UN, we've got great respect for you. We are flexible at this juncture. We're just beginning to take a look at the question of the next Secretary General. I don't know where we will come out. (The President then read the letter from Mubarak). I am glad to have this. You've got your President strongly committed to you and this President has noted that. We could not dictate to the UN even if we wanted to, and if we push too hard, China or France could resist. But we will give it serious thought. (C)

(The President departed the meeting at 12:00)

Deputy Prime Minister Ghali: I have the support of France and China. (C)

General Scowcroft: That's interesting. China is worried about the U.S. throwing its weight around. (C)

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Deputy Prime Minister Ghali: China is not yet ready to declare its position publicly. The Soviets too are supportive, in part because I helped bring about Egyptian-Soviet rapprochement. Primakov reiterated this to me after the coup. He said the key would be US support. I met with [UK Foreign Secretary] Hurd. He asked me about democracy in Africa and whether the UN should intervene. I told him I thought that this was a problem best handled by NGO's, by education and communication, and that I favored an indirect approach not involving governments. If governments get involved, there is the risk that the result would be artificial multi-party systems. They need more education first. Hurd told me the UK is not ready to take a stance on the Secretary General matter. The non-permanent members of the Security Council are in favor. This includes India, even though it is not yet ready to go public. The Latin Americans would support me if deCuellar does not present himself. I've avoided getting Arab League support so as not to provoke Israel. I am representing myself as the candidate of Africa, not the Arabs. I reminded the Israelis that I was the only minister to accompany Sadat to Jerusalem. I am told by my Israeli friends that they will not oppose me. The Europeans also favor me. (C)

General Scowcroft: Is there any chance the Africans will come together behind one candidate? (C)

Deputy Prime Minister Ghali: No. They have a short list of six candidates and only ask that one of the six be chosen. (C)

General Scowcroft: We are trying to act quietly. It would be dangerous for us to assume a high profile. Obviously, we are very sympathetic but we will have to see. (C)

Deputy Prime Minister Ghali: It is important to have a Third World candidate. Many in the Third World fear that East-West reconciliation will come at the expense of the North-South dialogue and marginalize the third world. This would help. (C)

General Scowcroft: I hope you know the esteem in which we hold you and your boss. We will take this seriously. (C)

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