

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

## MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with Francois Mitterrand, President of France

PARTICIPANTS: The President  
Notetaker: Barry Lowenkron

DATE, TIME: September 27, 1991, 7:13-7:20am EDT  
AND PLACE: Situation Room

President Mitterrand: I've just seen your Ambassador. (S)

The President: That's why I'm calling, to discuss the steps we're proposing, and to ask you if they cause you any problems. I think they'll be well received. My first point, though, is we don't want to cause any problem for French nuclear forces French forces, and their modernization, are separate from what we're proposing. (S)

President Mitterrand: I understand fully. The Ambassador explained the four points you'll be making today. (S)

The President: We respect the independence of French forces. A second point, I'll be referring to the possibility of a dialogue with the Soviets on nuclear weapons. Following up on your proposal, I wanted you to know that we'll mention you and your idea in the speech. The third point is that we'll keep a U.S. air-based nuclear capability in Europe, which I know you support. I believe the Germans will support this too, but we may need your help on that. (S)

President Mitterrand: On your four points, I told Ambassador Curley that they are fine. Eliminating SNF artillery is good, as is reducing strategic missiles. These are good projects. As for the usefulness of the meeting I proposed, I'd like to know when you think it will be possible to hold such a meeting. I'm not worried about the independence of French nuclear forces -- they're not involved here, and I note that, over the last few years, you and I have developed an atmosphere of mutual trust in this field. (S)

The President: On your idea, I think it is important that we consult among ourselves before we sit down with the Soviets. (S)

President Mitterrand: Yes, of course. (S)

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The President: We'll move with our proposals now, but there is no timetable set for a meeting on your proposal. We will be guided by your thinking on that. (S)

President Mitterrand: Fine, we will move quickly on this. (S)

The President: On Iraq, I see some progress, but this does not lessen my concern that we will have to take some action if we don't get Iraq to agree to the letter of the law. But, the missile batteries are getting into place, and we'll be ready to go. (S)

President Mitterrand: You don't think that the Iraqis have made sufficient gestures? (S)

The President: I just heard what Mr. Key has said, that there is a problem with food and with getting the documents out, so it is still a little cloudy, and there is a new letter from Iraq -- which France as Security Council President will see -- which contains ambiguous language, and so the jury is still out. (S)

President Mitterrand: Well, fine. We spoke about this the other day. It is not a question of giving into provocation by Saddam, but he has to do what we want. (S)

The President: Nice talking to you. I appreciate your support. I think it will be well received in Europe, around the world, and in the U.S. as a sign that we are moving to a less threatening world.

President Mitterrand: We are in agreement, and we will see how to implement all of this. (S)

-- End of Conversation --