THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with Secretary General of NATO,
                     Manfred Woerner

PARTICIPANTS: Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President
                       for National Security Affairs
                     Notetaker: Barry Lowenkron

DATE, TIME   September 27, 1991, 11:25-11:37 am EDT
AND PLACE: Situation Room

Secretary General Woerner: I got the President's letter and I like every part of it. I do have some questions. (S)

General Scowcroft: I'm sure you do. (S)

Secretary General Woerner: The first question has to do with SNF. Is the President proposing negotiations, or some kind of commitment by the Soviets to do the same in parallel? You know my views. I do not generally favor negotiations but I have to know your intentions, particularly for tomorrow's Council meeting. (S)

General Scowcroft: No, we are not planning negotiations. This is a unilateral move. Of course, if the Soviets reject our proposals, we may have to reconsider. We did get preliminary support from Gorbachev on the President's proposals. He was very, very pleased with the whole thing and told the President that, while the President could say that the Soviets were still studying the ideas, their initial reaction was to support them. (S)

Secretary General Woerner: I expected nothing less. (S)

General Scowcroft: There will of course be consultations with the Soviets. One of the things that troubles us is the security of nuclear weapons in the Soviet Union. (S)

Secretary General Woerner: We had a small consultation in the NAC to discuss the French initiative. (S)

General Scowcroft: Our move is somewhat broader than the French idea. The Soviets don't know how to destroy these weapons, or at least we think they don't know, and we have to engage them as discipline continues to erode in the Soviet armed forces. (S)

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Secretary General Woerner: The Soviet nuclear control is a concern not just to NATO nuclear members but to all members of the Alliance. We will use the NATO liaison to convey these concerns. (S)

General Scowcroft: As the President has said, we will sit down with the Soviets. Gorbachev wants this. We will not simply do a blind or unilateral pullback, and we will keep our allies informed. (S)

Secretary General Woerner: My second question is whether TASM is cancelled and if so, does the option remain to develop another system? (S)

General Scowcroft: We are dropping TASM. It is a terrible program. (S)

Secretary General Woerner: That does not change anything, since TASM was not scheduled to be ready until 1997. To me dropping TASM now is a good idea. I can stop discussions on it in NATO. There are two things that I believe are essential. First, we need to keep air-based nuclear systems in Europe. (S)

General Scowcroft: Absolutely. You have been very helpful in this regard. (S)

Secretary General Woerner: I have made public statements on this need and we will have a good statement coming out of the NPG. The second thing that is essential is that we keep open the option to develop a similar system. (S)

General Scowcroft: That is precisely what we have in mind. (S)

Secretary General Woerner: I have one favor to ask you, if you can convince the President to include in his speech a reference to the NATO Summit. We have to keep NATO wholly involved. We have to demonstrate that NATO is consulting, and that the NATO Summit will deal with these matters. Please consider this. It will be helpful. Everyone is looking to the summit, and we must do something. (S)

General Scowcroft: We can work that in. (S)

Secretary General Woerner: Congratulations again. These proposals will be tremendously helpful. I told Jim Baker and Will Taft that we have to keep the initiative in the nuclear field and you have done so with this proposal. (S)

General Scowcroft: Thank you, you've handled this magnificent. (S)

Secretary General Woerner: Please convey to the President my congratulations and my support. (S)

-- End of Conversation --