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Add-on

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting with Prime Minister Tofilau Eti Alesana of Western Samoa (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Robert M. Gates, Assistant to the President and Deputy for National Security Affairs
Arnold L. Kanter, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs
John Becker, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and Pacific Affairs, Acting
Timothy M. Carney, Director of Asian Affairs, NSC, Notetaker

Tofilau Eti Alesana, Prime Minister of Western Samoa
Tuaopepe F. Wendt, Ambassador of Western Samoa
Mose Pouvi Sua, Secretary of Foreign Affairs
Terry Toomata, First Secretary of Embassy

DATE, TIME AND PLACE: October 8, 1991 1:45 - 2:15 pm
Oval Office

The President met with the Prime Minister in the Oval Office. Photographers and a writing pool entered as the President and the Prime Minister were seated.

The President: When did you arrive? (U)

Prime Minister Tofilau: Last evening at about six. (U)

The President: Did you stop on the way? (U)

Prime Minister Tofilau: In Los Angeles. (U)

Question from the Press: ...credit crunch. It had no specifics in it. (U)

The President: The reference is to steps in terms of regulations. We are trying to do everything the Administration can to get the economy going better. (U)

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The Press Departed.

The President: Regarding the question of Johnston Island: I want to be sure Johnston Island is going to the satisfaction of the countries concerned? I have been told that the first phase was safely done. Hopefully that will calm down the concerns so eloquently expressed when we met in Honolulu last year. What are your views? (c)

Prime Minister Tofilau: The question was again raised, touched on at the last (South Pacific) Forum meeting in Pohnpei. There were no more harsh views about the non-acceptableness of the destruction of weapons there. But, we were concerned that after the destruction of weapons, the U.S. should look into closing and not continuing with destruction of that kind of weapon there. (c)

In general it is not an issue that countries of the South Pacific are so concerned about as before. (c)

The President: I am hoping that the first safe shipment and dismantling would allay the concerns which I clearly felt. (c)

Prime Minister Tofilau: First of all, I offer my thanks, sincerely and very profoundly, for the opportunity afforded me to pay this courtesy call at the White House. It has been a long-standing desire, as leader of my country, that I have a visit to the White House. Today is the culminating point. It is an honor for myself, and country to visit, meet, greet you in the White House. (c)

Everything back home is working out. The results of the last election, the first one under a system of universal suffrage, were according to my expectations and those of the country. In the future I will guide myself to the totality of universal suffrage for Western Samoa. (c)

I did not visit with a large amount of subjects to trouble you with, but there are issues of extraordinary importance. I would like to raise some issues. I would like to thank the U.S. for trying to settle what took place in the Gulf War and Middle East. Western Samoa supported, stood behind you in every way required as is known to you. By the same token, what the U.S. had in mind, sending troops to the Middle East is a sign to us, a burden of the world, that what happened in the Gulf could happen in the South Pacific. The reason is because I feel that if we don't seriously work together, the economic system in the region is something that has to be nursed properly in accordance with the need. What people fervently require for the future is security of political aspirations. Most parts of the world are not settling as they should be. The main root of most of the world's problems is economic instability. (c)

Western Samoa worries that, with the emerging of newly independent nations in Asia (sic), formerly communist states, there will be much effect on the policy of the U.S. Government. One demonstrated fact is that with the involvement of the U.S. in peacekeeping of the world, economics, military and other spheres, the world will remain stable. The U.S. will assist in keeping of the peace and harmony in the world. A world remaining at peace is what we dream of. (C)

With other leaders of the South Pacific in the South Pacific Forum, particularly Australia and New Zealand, I discussed this. Our main goal is economic security. I believe this worthwhile for you to take up again with other South Pacific leaders. (C)

The economic question you raised in the Hawaii meeting is still something we are looking at. Maybe it would answer what I have just voiced. (C)

I believe you are fully aware of the fact that the world, and particularly the free world, looks to the U.S. to keep peace and harmony. (C)

Regarding issues strictly related to Western Samoa: upgrading your Embassy in Apia which since 1988 still has a Charge d'Affaires. The involvement of the U.S. with the issues I just posed would be greatly enhanced if an Ambassador was designated to head your Embassy in Western Samoa. (C)

I would like to reiterate my question of the availability of scholarships in U.S. university institutions. The reason is a decent one: mainly on the fact that who knows in the future about the selection of leaders. Education overseas may involve some education in the USA. I am always regarded as pro-U.S. (C)

The President: We here, too, are very happy at that. (C)

Prime Minister Tofilau: My elementary education was in American Samoa and I was the first grantee of a U.S. foreign leadership grant in 1962. The time spent here was worthwhile. U.S. escorts took me around the U.S. and to Puerto Rico to observe politics and how the government of the USA runs. That is why I request some form of scholarship assistance for Western Samoa. The request does not reflect on the Peace Corps Volunteers in Western Samoa. (C)

The President: That is different... (C)

Prime Minister Tofilau: Yes, it is different. The other issue is the question of...no, that is about all. (C)

The President: On the Embassy: the problem is not of wanting to do it as it is a problem of Congressional views. Of equal importance is just plain budget on which we are fighting constantly. Isn't that right, Arnie? (C)

Mr. Kanter: Yes, Mr. President. (U)

The President: If I see an opening You are simply caught up in one of our problems here. The budget agreement last fall is very constraining. It caps every account. If you add spending, you must take from another account. It sounds like an excuse, but that is just the way it is. It is not a putting down of your country. If there is a change, maybe we can accommodate that. (C)

Prime Minister Tofilau: The information from your Embassy and visiting envoy is plentiful. Still I feel the impact of a full-fledged Ambassador would be good. (C)

The President: Does our Ambassador get there from Wellington? (U)

Prime Minister Tofilau: Yes, she was there with Neil Smith. I think it was last month. (U)

The President: My sister was there in 1989. I am not saying she was an Ambassador. I will not even say it can never happen, but I can't say yes at the moment, but given my personal interest... (C)

Are there specifics on scholarships? (U)

Prime Minister Tofilau: Just in general. Your Ambassador has been informed. I have put it in a letter for you. (U)

The President: Are you going to the UN? (U)

Prime Minister Tofilau: I will address the UN on Thursday. (U)

After crossing the Atlantic to London, I will go to Wales for the football test match of Western Samoa against Australia. (U)

The President: Size matters. Do you have some big guys? (U)

Prime Minister Tofilau: We could be No. 1 if they put me into it. (U)

The President: We have our own peculiar brand. TV will show people slamming into people. (C)

You mentioned Desert Storm. We are very grateful for your solidarity on that. I feel good about the UN Resolution to end

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5

the aggression, but compliance with the rest of the UN Resolutions is a problem. He (Saddam Hussein) backed down from defying the UN and is permitting inspections. There is some evidence he is still hiding information. (C)

The UN has definite conclusions on whether he is continuing after the war the ambitious program of before the war to seek weapons. The jury is out on whether he will succeed or not. We are determined, and will keep on driving to get what he's hiding. I say we, but it is mainly being done by the UN. I hope you will tell the UN Secretary General about your support for fulfilling the UN Resolutions. (C)

Regarding the Pacific, what we are doing with the Soviet Union is in the big picture. We hope for peace in the Pacific. The nuclear arms proposals will have some effect. If none are on ships, 'tho your country has accepted (the earlier U.S. policy). We appreciate you receiving our ship visits. (C)

Prime Minister Tofilau: The announcement of a decrease in ICBMs was well received by the world. (U)

The President: Then President Gorbachev on Sunday responded well. (C)

In the USSR they have such big problems. (C)

Prime Minister Tofilau: I am given to understand that you might go to the South Pacific, to Australia. (U)

The President: I am not sure that we have locked the dates in. (U)

Prime Minister Tofilau: Please stop in Western Samoa. (U)

The President: Have you ever seen the size of my squad? (U)

Prime Minister Tofilau: We had a Shultz visit. (U)

The President: It is four to ten times that size. Thank you for the invitation. I do want to participate in another Pacific Forum (sic), but next year is an election year. They tell me I travel too much. I learn a lot from that. It was a good discussion, a good climate. (U)

Prime Minister Tofilau: The motivation for it was good, it was very informative. (U)

The President: I came back here to explain to the bureaucracy that if the ocean level rises, some islands will be under water. (C)

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6

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The President and Prime Minister moved to examine the carved wooden bowl which the Prime Minister gave the President

Prime Minister Tofilau: "Talofa" means hello. The bowl is for a ceremony in which kava is drunk as a prayer before a meeting.
(U)

The President: It is very handsome and will have a special place. Every President has a library and I will put it there when I get one. Before then, Barbara might put it where we live here.

The Prime Minister expressed thanks and he and his party departed.

-- End of Conversation --

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