

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: The President's Meeting with Secretary General of NATO Manfred Woerner

PARTICIPANTS: The President
James A. Baker, III, Secretary of State
John Sununu, Chief of Staff
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Robert Gates, Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
William H. Taft, IV, Ambassador to NATO
Robert Zoellick, Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs and Counselor to the Department
Barry F. Lowenkron, Director for European Security Affairs, NSC (notetaker)

Manfred Woerner, Secretary General
John Kriendler, Deputy Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs
Roland Wegener, Head of Private Office
Christine Shelly, Deputy Head of Private Office

DATE, TIME October 11, 1991, 11:30 -12:00.
AND PLACE: The Oval Office

The President: Welcome my friend. I am glad that we could have this meeting, and I look to your advice and counsel on what we should do for the summit. I understand we have some problems with some of our European allies. You know our views. We have been consistent all along on the importance of NATO and NATO's role in the great changes underway. (C)

Secretary General Woerner: Let me begin by putting the Rome Summit in a historic context. We face a decisive moment in European history in which the shape of a Euro-atlantic or a Pan-European security structure can take form. The United States is in a position to lead in this endeavor. No other nation in history has found itself in such a powerful position as the U.S. is today. (C)

This summit can achieve the following. It can describe NATO's role within the context of the Euro-Atlantic framework and the transatlantic axis which is fundamental both to European order and to the new world order. We need a new picture of NATO, not as a military alliance confronting the Soviet Union, but as a

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military alliance confronting instability and uncertainty, and as a political alliance gaining in importance for establishing and carrying out this new European and world order. (S)

Regarding Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, their leaders are anxious to see me. Yeltsin wants to see me. The Russians are sorting out their thinking about NATO. Havel, Walesa and the Czech, Polish and Hungarian foreign ministers have all turned to NATO and they expect answers from us. (S)

I need two things from you. I need American input on the summit declaration, and I need your leadership in getting Alliance agreement to upgrade NATO's relations with the nations of Central and Eastern Europe along the lines of the Baker-Genscher initiative. (S)

The President: Do you include the Baltics in these liaison programs? (S)

Secretary General Woerner: Yes, if the Baltics apply they should be welcomed. Landsbergis wanted to come see me at NATO, but because I am here today the Vice President of Lithuania went instead. The French however resist expanding our liaison program. They are isolated. Every other nation wants to formalize, institutionalize and deepen the liaison program with the East as the next step. You are the only one that can help bring the French along. (S)

The President: What do the French really want? I feel comfortable with what Mitterrand is saying, but then we hear divergent French positions. We hear the French questioning whether we are willing to stay the course in Europe. What are your views? (C)

Secretary General Woerner: The French have lost their basic purpose and orientation. They have two old fears. They fear an America that is too strongly involved in Europe or they fear an America that will leave Europe. They were quite comfortable with Yalta. With Europe and Germany divided France could be in a leadership role vis-a-vis Germany. That is all gone now. Moreover, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe are looking to Germany not France. The French are looking for a new role. Mitterrand says one thing, Joxe says something else and Dumas and his bureaucracy are the worst, clinging to their classic Gaullist position. The only way to achieve any results is to deal with Mitterrand. I spoke to Kohl and to Mulroney and I will speak to Andreotti. Kohl and Mulroney said they would try to help with Mitterrand. I do not believe we can change Mitterrand's profound attitude, but I think we can get agreement on upgrading or establishing a new quality of relations between the Alliance and the East. Perhaps you can do it along with Kohl. (S)

There is another goal I want to mention, but one which I am less optimistic in achieving. As you know the French have for the first time participated in drafting the new strategy for the Alliance. I would like to see them join the military committee

and the DPC on the Spanish model. I have not been pushing for reintegration of French forces. They will not do that, and we should not even ask. But they could borrow from the Spanish model. (C)

The President: Is the difference between the Spanish and French model the commitment to forces to NATO? (C)

Secretary General Woerner: The Spaniards do not assign their forces to a combined NATO command. The time is not right to push the French to change this policy. If we try we will fail. Kohl promised that he would try with Mitterrand to get France closer militarily to the Alliance. If we do not succeed in this, it is not as important as getting the Summit to endorse qualitatively new relations with the East. If we fail on the military side with the French we should leave the door open and let them know they are welcome. (S)

I see the following coming out of the Summit. First, I see a political declaration which outlines the new security architecture: NATO, the European community the CSCE, and our relations with the East. I want to see NATO give CSCE a new push. Second, I want to see the new strategy which focuses on crisis management and on NATO's ability to deal with instability and risk. Third, I want to see NATO make a statement on the future on arms control that includes a call for ratification of CFE, progress -- if possible -- on CFE 1a, and alliance principles on the future of arms control talks. We should reconfirm NATO's central role in all of these areas. (S)

Secretary Baker: Is it your understanding that the Europeans will work out their security arrangements between now and the two summits? (C)

Secretary General Woerner: No. I think the Europeans are in a big mess. (C)

Secretary Baker: Then there is not much for us to say about it in Rome. (C)

Secretary General Woerner: We can just reconfirm the Copenhagen principles. (C)

Secretary Baker: I think the French will take exception to that. (C)

Secretary General Woerner: The Europeans are trying. You have an Anglo-Italian proposal. Genscher is meeting with Dumas. The Dutch draft has failed. It is a mess. (C)

The President: (to Secretary Baker) Do you have any preliminary consultations set up with your counterparts before the summit? (C)

Secretary Baker: I have nothing in particular scheduled. (U)

Secretary General Woerner: If I could make one more point. We in the west have been spending billions of dollars and DMs to try to help the Soviet Union and the countries in the East. And yet I do not have the one or two or three hundred thousand dollars needed to do what these countries want me to do. There is a tremendous amount of interest in Russia and in Eastern Europe on what NATO is doing. Zagladin said that Russia would like NATO to set up an information agency in Moscow. It has to be possible to get two to three million dollars out of 16 wealthy nations. We need a special fund for these programs. (S)

The President: Have we had any trouble with our contributions? (S)

Ambassador Taft: We have been good, but there is an over-all ceiling within the alliance. (S)

Secretary Baker: I imagine the French don't want to raise it. (S)

Ambassador Taft: Not just the French, the British too. (S)

Secretary General Woerner: I am not asking for an increase in the NATO budget. I know I won't get that. But what I would like is a special fund for Eastern liaison purposes: technical assistance, advisors, seminars, exchanges. (S)

The President: We will see what we can do. (S)

Secretary General Woerner: One last point. Zagladin and others have been sounding out our people in NATO on the possibility of Gorbachev coming to Rome. These have not been official requests. But we were told that Gorbachev himself had authorized the question to be asked. My associates have tried to discourage a formal request by saying that Gorbachev could engage the alliance better if he came to Brussels. But I am interested in your reaction. The last time I was here you were negative on the idea. Is your view still the same? (S)

The President: My view is caution. One question is how do you treat Yeltsin? We don't know how everything will end up in the Soviet Union. Will there be a center, will there be independence or will there be a loose union? In this day and age I don't believe you can have Gorbachev and not Yeltsin. Every time I talk to one of them they say that they have been talking to each other. They need each other, although I think Gorbachev needs Yeltsin more. We will see what happens on the 15th with the economic treaty, but Yeltsin is insistent that he be treated equally on military and political matters. (S)

Secretary Baker: I totally agree. We cannot invite Gorbachev without inviting Yeltsin. Since Gorbachev has a longstanding invitation to go to Brussels we can take care of the problem that way. (S) S

The President: London was awkward. Also, I understand the Italians would have a problem with Gorbachev attending. ~~(S)~~

Secretary General Woerner: Yes. ~~(C)~~

The President: The Italians would feel that Gorbachev's presence would detract from the NATO summit. Gorbachev and Yeltsin are now a team. They remind me of the old Mitterrand/Chirac relationship where one could not go without the other. ~~(S)~~

Secretary Baker: Manfred, do you detect any difference of opinion on this issue with Chancellor Kohl? ~~(C)~~

Secretary General Woerner: I don't think there is a difference. I did not have a chance to discuss it with Kohl because the Soviet requests came after I had seen him. ~~(C)~~

The President: We will try to make a good presentation at the summit. We will try to manage the French. We have a problem on GATT. We have very big difficulties on GATT. I don't want to blame it all on the French, but it is a big problem. We will work the NATO issues and try to smooth out the problems and make sure everything works out right. ~~(C)~~

Secretary General Woerner: Only you can do it. ~~(C)~~

The President: We will try our best. Thank you for your leadership. ~~(C)~~

-- End of Conversation --