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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

December 16, 1991

ACTION

MEMORANDUM FOR WILLIAM F. SITTMANN

FROM: EARL ANTHONY WAYNE *EA*

SUBJECT: Telcon with French President Francois Mitterrand

Attached at Tab A is a Memorandum of Telephone Conversation between the President and President Mitterrand on December 15, 1991.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the attached Memorandum of Conversation be filed for the record.

Approve 10 Disapprove _____

That you sign the memorandum to State at Tab I.

Attachments

Tab I Memorandum to State

Tab A Memorandum of Conversation

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Declassify on: OADR

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DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12958, SEC 3.5(B)
WHITE HOUSE GUIDELINES, AUGUST 28, 1997
BY: *ASZ* NARA, DATE 8/30/00

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with Francois Mitterrand, President of France

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Francois Mitterrand, President
Interpreter: Carol Wolter
Notetaker: Tony Wayne, NSC Staff

DATE, TIME: December 15, 1991, 12:01 - 12:22 p.m.
AND PLACE: Camp David

The President: Francois, how are you? (U)

President Mitterrand: It's a pleasure to talk with you. Where are you now George? (U)

The President: I'm up in Camp David, but in two hours I am going back to Washington. (U)

President Mitterrand: I hope you are resting. (U)

The President: Yes and you? (U)

President Mitterrand: I am in Paris now, but I spent 24 hours in the country. There are several reasons I want to talk to you. First, we have had no opportunity to talk since Maastricht summit. On the side of the 12 things are going as well as possible. Even though the UK could not associate itself with two of our decisions, its stayed to work with us and will continue to do so. Second, I am concerned about your initiative on Soviet assistance. Up until now, we have agreed to coordinate aid in the G-7, and we had asked Germany to organize or to take the leadership for assistance for the purpose of coordinating. So it seems that the initiative by your country is causing a bit of confusion. ~~(S)~~

I also wanted to raise two other issues. On Yugoslavia, we in the EC are going to recognize the two republics, but this will be based on a series of strict international conditions. On Libya, I think its time that we talk again in the coming days either by phone or by writing. Now on assistance to the Soviet Union, what are you going to do? ~~(S)~~

The President: Would you like me to speak now? (U)

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President Mitterrand: Yes. (U)

The President: We certainly don't have all of the answers on this. Our proposal is to call a group together to coordinate what already has been agreed. This is not a pledging session but would look at humanitarian and other assistance. Jim Baker is there now. He intends to talk about nuclear matters as well as get a sense of their military and economic planning. He will brief Roland and others this Thursday and Friday in Brussels. I know you were in touch with Gorbachev. I spoke to Yeltsin and Gorbachev at the end of the week. Yeltsin believes he has a commonwealth going. Gorbachev is resigned to the situation and depressed, but he wants to see if he can help assure a smooth transition. So we have Baker going to talk with a lot of them, and then he will brief Roland and the others and me. Then, we will try to see that we are all coordinating our aid well. We need to be sure there is a proportionate distribution of food and medicine among the republics. ~~(S)~~

President Mitterrand: Exactly, we need to see that it gets to those concerned. In Maastricht, we planned to organize an entire logistic train with experts. We need to make sure that the aid reaches the people who need it. It is getting to the cities but not necessarily to those in need. We need to follow the goods from their departure point to their arrival point. I will ask Dumas to discuss this with Baker and see if we can see have a common point of view. ~~(S)~~

The President: What is your view of Gorbachev's ability to survive at this point in history? ~~(S)~~

President Mitterrand: I don't think he will survive on the political level for long, but he will try, by conviction and self interest, to maintain a continuing unity among the republics with a federal or confederal authority over them. But it will be very difficult to succeed. All of the republics are nationalistic and living for their self existence. However, I think they will quickly come to see that they need to get together. They have three centuries of shared economic relations and government. I'm talking about since Peter the Great and Catherine the Second, not Stalin. So I think he will be seen on the one hand as the man who freed people from tyranny and on the other as the one who tried to form a confederal system. But I don't think he will have any true power for long. ~~(S)~~

The President: He kept saying to me that change must be constitutional and legal. And, he made disparaging remarks about who can be trusted among his colleagues. ~~(S)~~

President Mitterrand: Yes. I also continued to be interested in the nuclear issue. There are two aspects to this. First, on the civilian side, there are power plants which are very dangerous. They require international experts to help. Secondly, on the military side, the UK the former Soviet republics and we are agreed to have a meeting to discuss the specific nuclear issue. This will not be about disarmament. I know you have reservations

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about this. We don't want to eliminate the Germans, Italians or others. But its not our fault that they don't have nuclear weapons, and we can not let those nations which don't have nuclear weapons limit what we can say about them. I don't need an answer now. Please think about this. These are my thoughts, but right now this is not going anywhere. ~~(S)~~

On Yugoslavia, we are getting to the point of recognizing Croatia and Slovenia. It is true that the Germans are pushing hard for recognition. We have no reason to oppose this in principal, but recognition must be predicated on respect for international law, for the rights of minorities, etc. ~~(S)~~

The President: Do you think the Germans will go ahead and recognize in any case? ~~(S)~~

President Mitterrand: Yes. This is a very strong desire on their part. They accelerated the trend more than was needed. It bothers Perez de Cuellar, the EC negotiators, and Vance and Peter Carrington. But we are working for a common opinion in the EC with the Germans and others. As you may know, there is a meeting of the 12 foreign ministers tomorrow to talk about this. ~~(S)~~

The President: Our position is close to that of France on this. We support Perez de Cuellar, Carrington and Vance in their reservations. They all believe that recognition will kill the efforts for peacekeeping and peacemaking that are underway now. So we are close to you on this. ~~(S)~~

President Mitterrand: Yes. We will inform you after the meeting of the results. But we can't even fool ourselves for a minute. The Germans and then Italians and others have decided to go forward to recognize regardless. ~~(S)~~

On Libya, I think it would be good for our experts to talk soon. We are getting a better idea of how we should be acting. ~~(S)~~

The President: Good. I am troubled by Libya. It is a very clear case. The American people are troubled and want a response. I want to solve this as quickly as possible. ~~(S)~~

President Mitterrand: The main point for now is Yugoslavia and the conference which you called on Soviet assistance. It seems a bit useless as it adds on to procedures we already have in place. ~~(S)~~

The President: We feel we must to respond to the critical need for humanitarian and in other help in former Soviet Union. The conference is simply an effort to avoid duplication and lack of coordination. I understand we have been in touch with the Germans, and I believe they agreed this can complement the more operational role of the G-7 on this. We are not trying to usurp the role of others. So let us have Jim and Roland talk. ~~(S)~~

President Mitterrand: Yes, I want you to know that Europe is making a great effort in this field. Lets speak again, if

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needed. There is no rest for us given the international situation. ~~(S)~~

The President: I didn't mention at the start your role in Maastricht. I issued a strong statement of support. I know that your role was key in making it all possible. On Libya yes, I agree our experts should talk. On Yugoslavia, we remain worried that early recognition will cause problems. I also know we have differences on the Uruguay Round. We are working hard to work them out. ~~(S)~~

President Mitterrand: On Yugoslavia, we like you are very prudent and reserved, but I don't want the 12 to split. We are looking for a middle path. Well have a good Sunday and evening. ~~(S)~~

The President: The same to you. I hope to see you soon. Warmest regards. (U)

President Mitterrand: Thanks. I hope to see you soon too. Best wishes. (U)

-- End of Conversation --

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