

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting with Patrick Manning, Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President  
The Vice President  
James A. Baker III, Secretary of State  
Samuel Skinner, Chief of Staff  
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs  
Sally Cowal, U.S. Ambassador to Trinidad and Tobago  
Bernard Aronson, Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs  
William T. Pryce, Senior Director, Latin American Affairs, NSC (Notetaker)

Patrick Manning, Prime Minister  
Ralph Maraj, Minister of External Affairs  
Wendell Mottley, Minister of Finance  
Shastri Ali, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of Trinidad and Tobago

DECLASSIFIED  
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SCS 3/1/11

DATE, TIME AND PLACE: May 12, 1992, 5:00 - 5:25pm DST  
Oval Office

The President: How are you? It's been a long time since I've been to Trinidad and Tobago, but I remember the country very fondly. I did some drilling for an oil company in the mid-60s with Zapata Petroleum. We did some exploration drilling and then we drilled for a Venezuelan consortium. (ϕ)

I hope you feel relations are good between the United States and Trinidad and Tobago. We feel that way. I want to know if there are any problems. Anything you think that we should discuss, I would be very glad to do so. (ϕ)

Prime Minister Manning: Trinidad and Tobago is the jewel of the Caribbean. Economically it has done very well. The real problem is that of social and economic adjustment. This can come through a number of things. Our party was in opposition for five years. We had time to think, and we have come up with policies while we were in opposition, which we are now trying to implement. When we take over with our new economic policies, we are in harmony with that of the International Banks. We want to liberalize our economy and we want to encourage privatization. (ϕ)

The President: Did you take your case to the people? (ϕ)

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Prime Minister Manning: Yes. But we were not as explicit as we needed to be. (Ø)

The President: Are both parties in the same area, economically? (Ø)

Prime Minister Manning: Yes. You have two references. One problem is the need for stability. We are looking for a partner. I wanted to ask you about a partner. (Ø)

The President: I'm not really an expert. You don't have enough production to utilize refineries to the full, and you want to bring in production. I don't know enough about it, but we should be able to find someone who would know. Is there a lot of oil available? Is production declining? (Ø)

Prime Minister Manning: Yes. AMOCO is drilling a well which will go down about 25,000 feet. The AMOCO production is all exported. (Ø)

Secretary Baker: What kind of an arrangement does the government have? (U)

Prime Minister Manning: It's a tax regime. (Ø)

The President: What sort of a percentage do you get? Do you get sort of a share? (Ø)

Prime Minister Manning: Well, it's like a tax. It sort of works out to 12 and 1/2 percent royalty. (Ø)

The President: How are other things going? You mentioned the World Bank. (U)

Prime Minister Manning: Well, we can always do better. We are going to have to liberalize our foreign exchange regime by the end of June. To do that, we have learned from other countries, not excluding Jamaica. We need a cushion. In larger terms, we need to manage the money we get from the Inter-American Development Bank, not because of impositions but we want to manage our change. They told us to talk with the International Monetary Fund. We hope to see flexibility there. We have managed the economy so that we don't need a standby. (Ø)

The President: I have a personal question. Are you an economist? You certainly sound as though you have a complete mastery of the financial situation. It sounds like you have a solid economic background, that is so important. We hear about the need for solid economic programs from the international financial institutions. We normally back their efforts. (Ø)

Prime Minister Manning: In a small country like Trinidad and Tobago, there are special problems. (Ø)

The President: How are you doing in the neighborhood? I understand you are taking over the Presidency of CARICOM. (Ø)

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Prime Minister Manning: In July, we assume the Chairmanship.  
(U)

The President: Who is it now? (U)

Ambassador Cowal: Saint Kitts. It's interesting because the Commission will submit a report which will have revealing implications for CARICOM. (Ø)

The President: How many countries are in CARICOM? (U)

Ambassador Cowal: Thirteen. (U)

The President: How is Manley's successor doing in Jamaica? We had a very nice supper with him just before he left office, but I haven't seen much of what is going on in Jamaica since then. (Ø)

Prime Minister Manning: I haven't been too much involved in that. Their economic situation is a little different. I did live there for three years. (Ø)

Secretary Baker: What will happen with the Jamaat al Muslimeen?  
(Ø)

Prime Minister Manning: It looks as though they will be set free. (Ø)

The President: What would be the consequences of that? (Ø)

Prime Minister Manning: It would seem a little surprising. (Ø)

Secretary Baker: There was an amnesty granted. The question is whether to honor it? (Ø)

Foreign Minister Maraj: The question will go the Privy Council. We will have a judgment in the middle of the month. (Ø)

The President: How many people are in jail? (Ø)

Secretary Baker: One hundred fourteen. How much proof do you have of Libyan involvement? (Ø)

Prime Minister Manning: We aren't sure. We don't have facts on financial involvement. There has been training by the Libyans and there was talk of financing. (Ø)

One other subject I wanted to mention is drugs. I'm sure you are aware that our interdiction efforts have been successful. We are funding a program jointly. (Ø)

The President: Do you have a user problem, or is it just one of transport? We are still trying hard to improve our situation to reduce demand. We know that many people say that we are the problem, but we are trying very hard. We have good news to talk about on the young people, but bad news on the older people who

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are addicted. There is great difficulty there in the addicted people from 30-35 years old. We just got a report saying that we are going the wrong way. (Ø)

Prime Minister Manning: We are proceeding on criminal investigations of this whole problem. We have a problem of the management in the security forces. We are seeking to remove all of the top management. They are not all at fault but we don't know who are and who aren't. (Ø)

The President: Well, if they are involved. (U)

Prime Minister Manning: Well, we don't know, but management is involved so we have to move. (Ø)

The President: That is tough, but positive action helps with Congressional support. I want you to know that we want to assist you in this situation. (Ø)

The conversation broke up at this point with an exchange of amenities. The President and the Finance Minister, who is a former olympic champion exchanged pleasantries about the track coach at Yale. The conversation ended on a very positive note.

-- End of Conversation --