

THE WHITE HOUSE
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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting with Prime Minister Constantine Mitsotakis of Greece

PARTICIPANTS: The President
James A. Baker III, Secretary of State
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
David C. Gompert, Senior Director for European and Eurasian Affairs, NSC, Notetaker

Constantine Mitsotakis, Prime Minister of Greece
Lucas Tsilas, Diplomatic Advisor to the Prime Minister
Virginia Tsouderou, Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs

DATE, TIME July 9, 1992, 7:30 a.m. - 8:00 a.m.
AND PLACE: Guest House, Helsinki, Finland

The President: I want to hear from you especially on Cyprus and Macedonia. (Ø)

Prime Minister Mitsotakis: Thank you for receiving me. I have the same two topics to discuss with you. On Macedonia, I believe we are close to a resolution. The EC decision facilitates a solution but Gligorov has yet to accept this decision. I think Gligorov's domestic decision is strong. He can implement this if he wants to. I think he wanted the government to fall. It should not be an insurmountable problem for him to accept the EC decision. The U.S. position will be decisive with him. This is how I feel. I think the U.S. should adopt a clear stand. (Ø)

The President: We have tried to hold back on recognition. Your proposal seems okay with us. What makes you think Gligorov is prepared to accept it? (Ø)

Prime Minister Mitsotakis: If Gligorov is convinced that there is no alternative, he will go along. This is a terrible problem for him domestically. But if it is not solved, it will continue to be a crisis. All Greeks oppose any other solutions. If Greeks are hostile to Macedonia, there cannot be co-existence.

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But we are ready to recognize them if they accept our proposal on the name. There is no hostility toward them. (ϕ)

The President: Is there some way you can reach out directly to Gligorov? Do you believe he knows your heart beat on this? (ϕ)

Prime Minister Mitsotakis: I have used public statements and private contacts to connect with him. (ϕ)

The President: Reach out if you can. (ϕ)

Prime Minister Mitsotakis: I will make a speech and reach out in that way. Also we are prepared to provide aid. (ϕ)

The President: Does Gligorov really understand your sincerity on this? (ϕ)

Prime Minister Mitsotakis: What I can't do is meet with him. We have used intermediaries. I'll do what I can to convince him that we want his country to exist. It is in our interest. (ϕ)

The President: We think the Macedonians have done a good job on how they have gone about trying to achieve their international status. Why is it that you can't meet with him? (ϕ)

Prime Minister Mitsotakis: As soon as he accepts a name that does not include "Macedonia" I will be ready to meet with him. In the meantime, Douglas Hurd will go to Skopje on July 18. (ϕ)

Secretary Baker: We have sent the message to Gligorov saying that we would support your proposal. We have made it clear to them that this is the EC decision and we support it. (ϕ)

Prime Minister Mitsotakis: We have to try harder to convince Gligorov. (ϕ)

Secretary Baker: But he came to see us and we told him the facts. (ϕ)

Prime Minister Mitsotakis: We have to insist. (ϕ)

Secretary Baker: We are worried about the situation in Macedonia. (ϕ)

Prime Minister Mitsotakis: I told the Europeans that they have to choose and then persuade Gligorov. We want stability in the south of what once used to be Yugoslavia. This could be our first success from this crisis. But the U.S. must insist. He will be prepared to decide this. He has people who want to settle it. Such a solution will also increase the U.S. prestige in Greece and in Europe. (ϕ)

Secretary Baker: Even if Gligorov agrees, will this political situation permit him to survive? (ϕ)

Prime Minister Mitsotakis: Gligorov has control. He can accept this. But it is hard for him to shift especially from the hard core people who surround him. (Ø)

The President: Maybe we can escalate our presentation to Gligorov. I understand what you want. Maybe we could do something in connection with Hurd's visit. I still wonder if Gligorov can survive. But I can see what I can do. (Ø)

Prime Minister Mitsotakis: The dual name compromise eliminates no one. It is a fair compromise. (Ø)

Secretary Baker: Have you suggested what the formal name would be? (Ø)

Prime Minister Mitsotakis: It can be anything they want as long as doesn't include "Macedonia." (Ø)

The President: We will see what can be done. We are terribly worried about instability in this region. (Ø)

Prime Minister Mitsotakis: If we solve the Skopje problem and are careful about the Kosovo, perhaps we can keep the war out of the South. (Ø)

The President: We were impressed with the new Albanian President. Berisha is a good man. (Ø)

Prime Minister Mitsotakis: I agree. (U)

On Cyprus I know about the efforts you are making. We have a great opportunity right now. I went to Istanbul twice. (Ø)

The President: I know that Demirel likes you. (U)

Prime Minister Mitsotakis: I have met with Ozal, Inonu, Demirel, and Cetin. Cetin in particular is a great man. I try to create a good atmosphere with Turkish public opinion during my visits but I will be frank. I am still not sure that the Turks want a settlement of the Cyprus problem. Demirel, Cetin, and Yilmaz all said that they are ready but I am not sure that they have reached a final decision. We may be in the last days, please keep up the pressure on them. I've tried to be helpful. (Ø)

The President: Don't you need to lean on our friend Vassiliou? If there is a problem on either side, we will weigh in. I know the territories and refugees are key for you. The Secretary General's proposal seems reasonable, that is his so-call "set of ideas." (Ø)

Prime Minister Mitsotakis: Territory is key. (Ø)

The President: You are asking us to keep after Ankara. (Ø)

Prime Minister Mitsotakis: Yes, in order to keep the pressure on Denktash. (Ø)

The President: We have little influence on Denktash. (Ø)

Prime Minister Mitsotakis: Denktash doesn't really exist. I will be seeing Demirel while I am here. (Ø)

The President: So will I. Let's see what we can all do to bring this to a conclusion. (Ø)

-- End of Conversation --