

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting with Carlos Salinas de Gortari,
President of United Mexican States (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Lawrence Eagleburger, Acting Secretary of State
James A. Baker III, Chief of Staff
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
John Negroponte, U.S. Ambassador to Mexico
Bernard Aronson, Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs
Charles A. Gillespie, Jr., Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs

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Carlos Salinas de Gortari, President of United Mexican States
Fernando Solana Morales, Secretary of Foreign Relations
Jaime Jose Serra Puche, Secretary of Commerce & Industrial Development
Arsenio Farell Cubillas, Secretary of Labor & Social Welfare
Luis Donald Colosio Murrieta, Secretary of Social Development
Jose Cordoba Montoyo, Chief of Staff to President Salinas
Gustavo Petricioli, Mexican Ambassador to the United States
Andres Rozental, Under Secretary of Foreign Relations

DATE, TIME AND PLACE: October 7, 1992, 4:25 - 4:40pm CDT
Plaza San Antonio Hotel, Victoria House, San Antonio, Texas

The President: Well, we can get started. First let me just mention NAFTA again, and then I'd like to hear your ideas. (U)

Well, today's events really say it all. I repeat what I said in our larger meeting: I am going to push hard to put NAFTA into effect. I can't touch it until December 17, but then I will promptly sign it. I'm confident we'll win and I believe NAFTA has enough steam behind it to make it happen. The environmental provisions are in good shape and we can handle any criticism

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there. I see no downside where GATT is concerned. The NAFTA is in good shape and I'm optimistic. (Ø)

I would like to hear your assessment of the bilateral situation and the floor is yours. (U)

President Salinas: Mr. President, I want to thank you again for your determination and political will. Now, about signing the Agreement. Your date is December 17. We will be ready. I understand you need implementing legislation and there will be ninety days after you sign the agreement to enact it. We must also go through a legislative process. (Ø)

The President: Do you have any constraints? (Ø)

President Salinas: Not political constraints, but there are other important factors. I believe it would be very good for us to sign the Agreement in December. December 17 is a Thursday. (Ø)

The President: Are you thinking of a joint signing? Brent (Scowcroft), what do you think? (U)

General Scowcroft: Well, we haven't really addressed that. (U)

President Salinas: Yes, we are thinking of a joint signing. It would be dynamic. I will need it with the business community and other interested groups. (Ø)

The President: Would the Canadians be there? (U)

Secretary Serra: We have discussed it with them and, yes, they would like to do it. (Ø)

The President: We want to sign it as soon as we can. (Ø)

President Salinas: Good. The rest of our bilateral relations are all right, except for the case of Dr. Alvarez Machain. That is something that deeply affects Mexican public opinion. (Ø)

The President: Do you mean that case is still having an effect? (Ø)

President Salinas: Yes, it is. We know, for example, that your Federal prosecutors are assembling lists of Mexican witnesses, Mexican government people, also including candidates for office. That can hurt the relationship. I want to say that the return of Alvarez Machain to Mexico is very important. Let me leave with you an aide memoire on this and maybe we can talk again in December about his return. (Ø)

The President: All right. Meantime there will be a trial and that will raise the matter again. I had hoped that my letter to you would serve to put this to rest. (Ø)

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President Salinas: Yes, it was helpful, but there is still a serious problem. (Ø)

The President: My hands are tied under our law as to what I can do right now. (Ø)

Secretary Eagleburger: At New York I told Foreign Secretary Solana that we could start talking in December. (Ø)

The President: The situation in El Salvador is on our minds. I know you've been working on that. (Ø)

Secretary Solana: Yes, we are working. Things are going well. We are working on it, we will be there. We will continue working together as part of the "Four Friends" (of the UN Secretary General) and with the United States. Your efforts have been especially useful. (Ø)

Secretary Eagleburger: Mr. President, I know you're going to see the Secretary General tomorrow. It will be helpful if you tell Boutros Ghali that we are all working on the problem and that the United Nations should continue to press the FMLN and support President Cristiani. (Ø)

President Salinas: We will. (U)

The President: Do you have any new thoughts on Fidel Castro? Is there any word on the Russian brigade? (Ø)

Secretary Eagleburger: The brigade is not out, but it's on the way out. (Ø)

Assistant Secretary Aronson: It may be out in about six months. (Ø)

Secretary Eagleburger: The Russians just told the Cubans they were going and that was that. (Ø)

President Salinas: We have not really heard very much. (Ø)

The President: I don't know if Castro can survive the worldwide trend. There may be strife when change comes, but Cuba has the capacity for rapid adjustment. It's really a rich country, with strong people. (Ø)

President Salinas: You're right. And Mexican businessmen are very interested in Cuba. (Ø)

The President: I guess Aldana, a high ranking official, was trying to ease things -- said "let's lighten up" and now he's out. We are worried about (Nicaraguan President) Violeta (Barrios de Chamorro). She has serious economic problems and she's being whipsawed between Cesar (National Assembly) and the Sandinistas. I don't feel comfortable about that situation. (Ø)

Assistant Secretary Aronson: She risks being isolated, and the situation is polarized. (Ø)

The President: She has a lot of confidence in Antonio Lacayo. (Ø)

Assistant Secretary Aronson: He's her son-in-law. (U)

President Salinas: We still find her committed to democracy, freedom and human rights. The irony would be that if friends don't help she could become desperate and lean to the wrong side: to the Sandinistas. Or she might just quit. (Ø)

The President: Our position is to get funds released so that she can meet her obligations. The situation worries me. I don't want to see her weakened. (Ø)

President Salinas: I hope you can give her support. We will help, too. (Ø)

Secretary Serra: I would like to raise the tuna issue we've been talking about for some time. The bill that your House sent to the Senate contains broad embargo language that would affect shrimp and other species. That's a problem, because we've been working toward an agreement. The House bill went beyond our exchange of letters. (Ø)

Chief of Staff Baker: Well, if the legislation is in the Senate it may never pass. (Ø)

Secretary Serra: We would like to make sure the substance is right. We'll send you a letter. (Ø)

Secretary Eagleburger: Yes, do. I'll look at it immediately. (U)

Ambassador Negroponte: The point is that the Mexican government has gone the extra mile. To broaden the sanctions now, to move from tuna to shrimp and other species, is the real problem. (Ø)

Chief of Staff Baker: Well, the Senate is only considering three items and this is not one of them. (Ø)

President Salinas: This is a complicated new world that we live in. (U)

The President: It certainly is, but we are doing all right. This has been a good meeting and a pleasure. Thank you. (U)

-- End of Conversation --