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MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with Prime Minister Jean-Luc Dehaene of Belgium

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Prime Minister Jean-Luc Dehaene
Interpreter: None
Notetaker: Tony Wayne

DATE, TIME: December 3, 1992, 8:38-8:45 a.m.
AND PLACE: The Oval Office

The President: Mr. Prime Minister? (U)

Prime Minister Dehaene: Yes, Mr. President. (U)

The President: I was calling to discuss Somalia with you and to ask for your support in helping us overcome the tragedy there. Belgium has played a critical role in every crisis we have faced during your tenure on the Security Council and has made invaluable contributions to peacekeeping in Africa. So we start with a salute to Belgium. Do you need a translator? Am I speaking too fast? (U)

Prime Minister Dehaene: No problem. (U)

The President: In our view, the situation in Somalia has reached a crisis point. You and we know the horrible suffering. We all see it nightly on TV. Thousands of Somalis are dying every day, but international relief agencies are unable to provide the food the people so desperately need. The core issue is security, as the Secretary General pointed out in his report to the Security Council. Despite the UN's best efforts they have been unable to win local permission to deploy enough troops to do the job. As I am sure you are aware, the United States is proposing to form an international coalition under UN auspices to establish a peacemaking force. These peacemaking forces would get the relief operation off the ground and running the way it should. Then in a short period of time, they would then turn over the task of maintaining this newly established secure environment to a regular UN peacekeeping force. We are planning to make a major contribution. We are having a meeting this afternoon to receive the recommendations of our generals and the Secretary of Defense. But it will be a significant contribution. I hope Belgium will join us to support this plan in the Security Council and in moving boldly to enact it. I hope you will agree to assign the

troops which you had already committed to Somalia to serve in the peacemaking force and then to stay on in the peacekeeping force.

(Ø)

Prime Minister Dehaene: I share your concerns. As you know, we had already agreed to send a force to serve with the UN in Somalia, but until now, it could not go because the UN was unable to reach agreement with the forces on the ground. So on the one hand, we will certainly support you at the UN. We need to bring order there and address the hunger. On the other hand, since we have already agreed to send a force as part of the UN effort, it will be important that the UN framework be clear. We will certainly be part of the UN peacekeeping. But I have to go back to my Council of Ministers to get approval for participation in the peacemaking effort. I will recommend that we participate in both forces. One point that I need to address is to assure that the EC will finance this. My first contacts suggest that this will be possible. So while I must confirm this, it looks like we will support you on the resolution and that our forces will participate. (Ø)

The President: I certainly understand your need to have the Council of Ministers approve your participation. Our Ambassador will be available at anytime for questions. And anytime you need to talk to me, I'm available -- this is our top priority right now. Our top defense people will also be available, if you have any questions. Again, I salute you. Belgium has been out front on this. (Ø)

Prime Minister Dehaene: I'll talk to the Council tomorrow, and then we can clarify our role and go forward with the details. (Ø)

The President: Very good. Many thanks, sir. Good bye for now.
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