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MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telecon with President Francois Mitterrand
of France on December 3, 1992

PARTICIPANTS: The President
President Francois Mitterrand
Interpreter: None
Notetaker: Tony Wayne

DATE, TIME December 3, 1992, 8:14-8:23 a.m.
AND PLACE: The Oval Office

The President: Francois, Comment allez-vous? (U)

President Mitterrand: Fine, George. I'm happy to hear your voice. I am hoping that we will be able to talk often in the future. (U)

The President: Yes, but you know I will only be employed for another forty-six days. (U)

President Mitterrand: We'll, it is not only work that will bring us together. (U)

The President: You're right. I might even make a little suggestion in that regard. I'd like to have you come to Camp David, perhaps for a week-end in early January. We could have a relaxing talk. (Ø)

President Mitterrand: Yes, let's talk about that, let's look at the possibilities. (Ø)

The President: Good, I'll ask General Scowcroft to follow-up with your people on the possibility and the details. It will be very nice if it works out. We could spend some time talking informally as friends. Now, may I take a moment to talk about Somalia? (Ø)

President Mitterrand: Yes, by all means. That is the subject of the day. (U)

The President: Now that Boutros Ghali has provided his views to the Security Council, it is time to act. As I said in my November 28 message, the situation in Somalia has reached a crisis point. 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 secure local permission to deploy enough troops to do the job.

The United States is proposing to form an international coalition under UN auspices to establish a peacemaking force. This would be a peacemaking force, not a peacekeeping force. It is needed to bring the warlords under control -- we don't expect that to be hard -- and to get the relief operation off the ground and running the way it should. They would then turn over the task of maintaining this newly established secure environment to a regular UN peacekeeping force. We are willing to make a major contribution to this effort. I can't say how much that will be yet. We are having a big meeting today with Secretary Cheney, Colin Powell and others to decide that. I want to underline here, Francois, that we are very conscious of the contribution which France is currently making to UN peacekeeping around the world. But I hope that you will actively support this concept and work with us to make it a reality. As always, France's leadership will be vital. We can leave this for you to think about, or I'd be happy to hear your immediate reaction. (Ø)

President Mitterrand: I can answer you right away. Certainly there are some inconvenient points to this, but there are also duties. We are ready to send an expeditionary corps together with the American troops. (Ø)

The President: That is great. That is as clear and good an answer as I could have expected. (Ø)

President Mitterrand: I am not sure of the numbers or of how we would work this out, but I am thinking of perhaps 2000 troops. Of course, we haven't reviewed this in detail. (Ø)

The President: That would be a significant and wonderful contribution. It doesn't surprise me, but it pleases me very much. (Ø)

President Mitterrand: Now you have our answer. Our assistants and aides must now work out the details. They are not all easy to solve. (Ø)

The President: Yes, they should be in touch. We must also make our decision today on the size of our contribution, and we will be in contact. (Ø)

President Mitterrand: We must also decide on a timetable and avoid becoming bogged down. (Ø)

The President: I agree fully. We want the peacemaking forces out fast. I do not want to bog our new president down with a military force in place. We think this can happen quickly. (Ø)

President Mitterrand: Yes, I have the same reaction as you. The U.S. effort is important, and we are happy to join this effort. (Ø)

The President: We will be in touch on this and on the possible visit. I hope it works out. (Ø)

President Mitterrand: Please give my best to Barbara. I look forward to seeing you both. I have the highest regard for you. From time-to-time we saw things differently, but I always thought that your decisions were done perfectly. (U)

The President: Thank you. You're a joy to work with. (U)

President Mitterrand: See you soon. (U)

The President: Good bye, my friend. (U)