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MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with President Carlos Salinas of Mexico and Prime Minister Brian Mulroney of Canada (C)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
President Salinas
Prime Minister Mulroney
Interpreter: None
Notetakers: Robert Morley/Roseanne Hill

DATE, TIME AND PLACE: December 17, 1992, 9:14 - 9:21 EST
The Oval Office

Prime Minister Mulroney: Hello, Carlos, how are you? This is Brian. (U)

President Salinas: I'm fine. (U)

Prime Minister Mulroney: Up here in Canada, we are doing a television series on Mexico. The series is very good. Everyone is learning a lot about your country. (U)

President Salinas: Really? I didn't know that. (U)

The President: (Coming on the line) Hello, Brian and Carlos, are you on there? How are you? And Merry Christmas to you both. This is just a hurray call. I'm very excited about what we have achieved together. I will be putting my signature on this document this afternoon, but wondered if you had any last minute thoughts? (U)

President Salinas: You are very kind. This is a very important time for us. I wanted to thank you for your courage and determination to finish this agreement. Without you, we would never have succeeded. (U)

The President: You both have been courageous as well. It rests with your diplomacy to see it gets through now. I know you have been in touch with Bill Clinton, Carlos, and I have too. I think he will want to move right along with this. I hope there won't be any new demands or sticking points with the new Congress. U.S.-Mexican relations are very good now, and I don't want anything to happen that would embarrass either of us. It is my fervent hope everything will go well. I think Clinton will look on the agreement positively, and support it. (C)

Prime Minister Mulroney: Well, George and Carlos, from everything we have heard, I think all the difficulties can be accommodated in the framework of the agreement and any problems can be worked out. We think this agreement will be viewed as a great benchmark of the decade. George, your stewardship and determination made it all possible. The NAFTA is the most significant trade agreement ever negotiated, and we owe it all to you. I also want to say, Carlos, that Canada is delighted that Mexico will be joining in the very special relationship that has always existed between Canada and the United States. I congratulate both of you. (Ø)

The President: Thank you. And how are things at your end, Carlos? Okay? (U)

President Salinas: Everything looks fine. The latest poll shows 65% of the Mexican population favor the agreement. The rest were not against it, but wanted more information about it. Our population knows it will be good for our children, for our future generations. (U)

The President: I think it's good. We are going to the OAS to sign the agreement. It will be a good setting to talk about the NAFTA and the importance we place on our relations south of the border. Sometimes we take it for granted. I will give a little talk about our relations and sign the agreement there. (Ø)

Prime Minister Mulroney: I'm going to the House of Commons at 11:00 today and signing there. We will bring in the leaders who have been involved in free trade since 1985. I'll make a statement and sign the agreement at 11:15 this morning. (Ø)

President Salinas: We will do it at 1:30. That is Mexico time, which is one hour earlier than Washington. So I will be signing the agreement at the same time that you do, George. I'm bringing in all the governors, members of congress, cabinet officials, and other dignitaries. It will be a very important event here shown live on national TV. (U)

The President: I understand I have a spy there, my son Jeb. His wife is here. Carlos, I don't know if you remember his wife is Mexican. She keeps up with her Mexican heritage for her children. It is a very personal thing for her. (Ø)

Prime Minister Mulroney: I'll do it before you because I am seeing John Major this afternoon. He is here on a visit. (U)

The President: That's right. If you know of any questions that he will want to raise with me, let me know. We'll be meeting tomorrow. (Ø)

Prime Minister Mulroney: I will call you for sure. Two things I'll always remember -- your statement on the NAFTA agreement and the 1992 World Series. (U)

The President: Oh yes, Carlos, he's talking about the Toronto Blue Jays winning the World Series and rubbing my nose in it. I guess we'll never stop getting flack about that. I'm so pleased to talk to you both again, especially at Christmas time. (U)

Prime Minister Mulroney: Thank you. All the best to you for the holidays. (U)

President Salinas: Thank you and my best to you and your family. In Mexico you will always be welcome. (U)

The President: I wish you the same. I will be talking to you both again, but for now, have a happy holiday season. (U)

Prime Minister Mulroney: Good by. (U)

President Salinas: Good by. (U)

-- End of Conversation --