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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting with Francois Mitterrand, President of France (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs (Notetaker)
Interpreter

Francois Mitterrand, President of France
Jacques Attali, Special Counselor to the
President (Notetaker)
Interpreter

DATE, TIME July 13, 1989, 4:00 pm - 4:35 pm
AND PLACE: Palais de L'Elysee, President Mitterrand's
Office

The President asked President Mitterrand whether they were meeting in his working office. (U)

President Mitterrand said no that it was his ceremonial office. (U)

The President congratulated President Mitterrand on eloquent and moving ceremony for the celebration of the 200th Anniversary of the Rights of Man and asked whether the performers were actors. (U)

President Mitterrand answered that they were. He went on to say that he holds feelings of respect and confidence for the President that he started to feel before his election. He referred to the warmth of feeling at Kennebunkport and said that he hoped the President would feel absolutely at home. There are always minor squabbles but friendship is secure. (Ø)

The President said that the old saying "there are no pancakes that don't have two sides" was appropriate in this circumstance. (Ø)

President Mitterrand remarked that they were lucky to have Attali and Scowcroft to settle all. (Ø)

The President then made a few remarks about Poland and Hungary saying that he feared that the two countries knew not to expect a blank check and understood that they must help themselves. He said

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that he had found the Hungarian leaders extremely impressive, warm and friendly. They are convinced that Gorbachev wants real change. He noted that he is more worried about Poland where labor demands will make it difficult to introduce reforms. The authority of the regime and the power of the population must find a way to coexist if reform is to succeed. He opined that a state crackdown would bring chaos which would lead to intervention. The Poles cannot move away from their alliances. The President remarked that Jaruzelski was probably the best candidate since he had lived through difficult times and was thus battered but experienced. Moreover, Jaruzelski and Walesa know each other. He then asked President Mitterrand to share his views of Gorbachev. (S)

President Mitterrand said that he thought Gorbachev more imperiled than ever before and may have to assert his authority. Mitterrand said that Gorbachev detested the Chinese course and feels threatened by it. Moreover, he never has time to sleep and is under constant pressure. He noted that Gorbachev had made a few critical remarks about the U.S. not being helpful in Afghanistan saying that the Soviet troop withdrawal had gone unanswered. President Mitterrand said that his suggestion that the Soviets withdraw aid to Najibullah went unanswered. Gorbachev also mentioned the President's remark about withdrawing Soviet troops saying that he would not last one week if he did such a thing. (S)

The President said that he could see Gorbachev's concern about his remark and said that perhaps he should talk with him. (S)

President Mitterrand observed that Gorbachev was not concerned about the President's diplomatic intervention in Eastern Europe. He suggested that the President should meet with Gorbachev. (S)

The President asked whether it would be valuable to do so even without an arms control agreement. (S)

President Mitterrand expressed the opinion that the important thing was that the superpowers talk and exchange views. (S)

The President said that the problem was that there might be nothing concrete to do. (S)

President Mitterrand answered that the two could simply meet as Presidents who had not yet met. (S)

The President asked Mitterrand whether Gorbachev was worried that the U.S. did not want perestroika to succeed. (S)

President Mitterrand said that he did not think so but if he did worry about that it would be a dangerous sign. (S)

The President noted that Gorbachev had said in New York that there was an element in the U.S. that wanted perestroika to fail and that it was a group that would never give up. (S)

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President Mitterrand suggested that much needs to be cleared up. Gorbachev established a personal relationship with Ronald Reagan and desired one with President Bush. (S)

Turning to the Middle East, the President asked for President Mitterrand's views on the position of the Arab League. (C)

President Mitterrand admitted that he was pessimistic and feared that there would soon be an offensive on East Beirut. He said that Israel had not been helpful but if the great powers keep stressing the importance of a unified Lebanon, Syria would not dare attack. The French are seeking to keep the Iraqis out of Lebanon. (C)

The President asked about politics in Israel. (C)

President Mitterrand replied that the situation was bad. (C)

The President agreed noting the pull from the right on Sharon. (C)

President Mitterrand then asked if the President was tired. (U)

The President responded that he was not because he was so exhilarated by what he had seen. (U)

President Mitterrand said that it was very important not to push the East European states to withdraw from the Warsaw Pact which might have to exist to the end of the century for stability. Western action, especially economic action, is fine but a break with security commitments had been the problem for Imre Nagy. When he declared Hungarian neutrality, Russian troops moved in. It is simply too soon to talk about dissolving the Warsaw Pact. (S)

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