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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

The Secretary's Meeting with Shevardnadze

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TIMBIE

C:CP E.O.
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TIME: 4:30 to 6:05 pm, Thursday, April 14, 1988
PLACE: Residence of the Soviet Minister to the UN,
Geneva, Switzerland

SUBJECTS: ABM Treaty, START, Bilateral Agreements,
Iran-Iraq, Middle East, President's Moscow
Schedule, Ethiopia, INF "Future Weapons"

PARTICIPANTS

U.S.

U.S.S.R.

THE SECRETARY

SHEVARDNADZE

Under Secretary Armacost
Assistant Sec. Ridgway
Amb. Matlock
Assistant Sec. Redman

Amb. Karpov
Amb. Obukhov
Mr. Alekseev
(Director, Middle East
Countries, MFA)
FonMin Aide Tarasenko
(Notetaker)
Mr. Palazhchenko
(Interpreter)

EUR/SOV Dir. Parris
(Notetaker)
Mr. Afanasenko
(Interpreter)

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During an extended photo op, SHEVARDNADZE welcomed the Secretary, noting that he had had dinner the evening before in Moscow with Commerce Secretary Verity and General Secretary Gorbachev. Verity's delegation had been large, and Shevardnadze had quipped that the Americans had "occupied Moscow."

Shevardnadze said that it was well that the two ministers had participated that morning in the signing of the accords on Afghanistan. It had been an indication of the level that the relationship had reached. For their present meeting, Shevardnadze noted, he was at something of an advantage, as the flight to Moscow lasted only three hours. When THE SECRETARY said that that meant Shevardnadze ought to make all the concessions, SHEVARDNADZE replied with a grin that this was no time to break previous patterns.

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In a more serious vein, Shevardnadze said he had met the previous day with Gorbachev, who had emphasized to the Foreign Minister the importance of identifying now the substance of the President's Moscow visit, of identifying now any agreements to be signed in Moscow. It might not be possible to do that in Geneva, but the two ministers could start the process, and have a more detailed discussion during the Secretary's own visit to Moscow April 21. That visit should produce clarity with respect to the objectives for the President's visit.

Shevardnadze said he had met the previous evening with the Soviet NST negotiators. He had the impression from that conversation that things were "more than difficult" in Geneva. Much would depend on the Secretary's visit. Some work, of course, was going on in Geneva. Certain language and drafting problems were being tackled. But there were no solutions on the big issues.

ABM Treaty

Shevardnadze said that the issue of how to handle the ABM Treaty had in fact become more complicated since his March visit to Washington. Ambassador Matlock the day before had conveyed U.S. views on the need to develop a joint draft agreement text. Moscow was not in principle against such an approach, as Shevardnadze had said in Washington. But this was essentially a technical issue; it did not get at the real problem.

Holding up a copy of the draft treaty text tabled by the U.S. Defense and Space delegation, Shevardnadze contrasted the relatively small amount of space occupied by the Washington Summit Statement's treatment of the ABM Treaty to the extensive "additions" -- highlighted in green -- of the U.S. January 22 proposal. Shevardnadze said that the result of such an approach was that "nothing remained" of the Washington Statement language. He did not want to get into a detailed discussion, he said, but it would be a good idea for the ministers to reaffirm clearly to their delegations that, as the Secretary had suggested in Moscow, they use the Washington Statement language as the basis for their work. Any other approach would not yield an agreement. What the U.S. delegation was proposing would destroy the ABM Treaty.

Shevardnadze suggested that, in view of the importance of the issue, the two ministers should devote an entire session the following week in Moscow -- or at least a full hour -- to its discussion. If there were no agreement on this, he reminded the Secretary, there could be no agreement on 50% reductions in strategic arms.

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THE SECRETARY asked to comment. He did not understand Shevardnadze's reluctance to use the joint draft text approach. The U.S. believed that the Washington Summit Statement language should be the heart of any new agreement. Its key provisions should be set out.

There were, however, some disagreements on certain issues. Some, such as Soviet reluctance to accept "supreme national interest" language which was a standard feature of our agreements, were hard to understand.

The most important disagreement, however, was the meaning of the Washington Summit Statement's reference to the need to observe the provisions of the ABM Treaty, "while conducting their research, development and testing as required, which are permitted by the ABM Treaty,..." There was agreement that we disagreed about the meaning of that language. During the ministers' February meeting, it had been agreed that the two sides would "build on" the language of the Washington Statement in developing a new agreement. The U.S. sought to build in a way which resolved our differences over the wording of the Washington Statement. Experience showed it was unwise to proceed on something important when we disagreed on the meaning of language.

The U.S. had ideas on how the problem could be addressed. We had broached some during the March ministerial. The Secretary would have more to say in Moscow the following week, e.g., with respect to sensors "running free." We hoped to be able to address other aspects of the problem as well, and had been stimulated by Soviet confidence building proposals in the context of a possible verification package.

SHEVARDNADZE said he did not want to dwell on the subject, as time was limited. But the joint draft text approach was not, in and of itself, a way out.

In response to THE SECRETARY's comment that it nonetheless helped, SHEVARDNADZE concurred, but noted that it did not resolve the substantive disagreements. The Soviet side proposed simply incorporating the text of the Washington Statement, changing nothing, and using that as the basis for a new agreement. Verification and predictability questions could be dealt with in a legally binding protocol.

THE SECRETARY said he thought that might be a good idea. SHEVARDNADZE said that in that case the two delegations should be instructed to work on that basis. The Washington Summit Statement language should not be touched. It should be treated

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like the "Bible." Other aspects -- verification and predictability arrangements -- could be handled in protocols.

THE SECRETARY said "We can try." SHEVARDNADZE asked if the Soviet side could then consider that the U.S. did not oppose in principle the approach he had outlined.

THE SECRETARY said that it was "OK by us." The negotiators should do what they could do to develop a joint draft text. This would force people to put their differences down on paper. But there was one area where we knew there would be no agreement. There was no point in playing with words until the substance of that problem had been dealt with. Words could then be found.

SHEVARDNADZE summarized the Soviet proposal: to leave the Washington Summit Statement language the way it was -- not to touch it; and to work on a joint protocol.

THE SECRETARY said that there had to be some agreement on the meaning of the language. The Soviet side, for example, had resisted incorporation of standard "supreme national interest" language. Cloudiness had arisen with respect to what happened at the conclusion of the non-withdrawal agreement. Working on the text of an agreement, as well as a protocol covering confidence building measures was an acceptable way to proceed. The U.S. basically liked the Washington Summit Statement; a way could be found to incorporate it. But the Statement did not deal with all the issues.

SHEVARDNADZE said that all unresolved issues could be handled in the protocol. THE SECRETARY said we would see how to do it. It was important to agree on meaning, or there would be problems. SHEVARDNADZE said that the U.S. had not appeared to believe that the Statement's language would be a problem when it was agreed to in Washington.

START

Shevardnadze said that there were, however, problems in other areas. There would have to be a thorough discussion during the Secretary's visit of SLCM's. Clarity on this question was essential. There should also be a discussion of counting rules and ranges for ALCM's. Mobile ICBM's would also have to be discussed, as would the general problem of verification. Many of the proposals the Soviet side had made in previous ministerials remained unanswered. Shevardnadze hoped that the Secretary would have something concrete to say in Moscow.

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THE SECRETARY said Shevardnadze had named the key areas. For its part, the U.S. had made a proposal for counting ALCM's, and had even modified it to take Soviet concerns into account. We awaited an answer from Moscow to our latest ideas. As for verification, the Secretary's sense was that some progress had been made as a result of his and Shevardnadze's February instructions to their delegations to concentrate in this area.

With respect to SLCM's, the U.S. Navy was fully engaged with the problem. Some progress had been made. But the Secretary had to say on a personal basis that he did not think a complete SLCM verification regime could be worked out by the time of the summit. The Secretary could tell Shevardnadze from personally riding herd on the problem that we were working hard at it. Some ways to approach the problem had been identified -- e.g., declarations with some elements of verification and agreement to continue efforts to solve the problem more definitively. But people needed time to settle into these kinds of issues.

SHEVARDNADZE said he understood that there were differences on both sides, but in his discussions the day before with Soviet negotiators he had felt there was not enough movement in Geneva. ON SLCM's, no progress could be recorded. The Soviet side had given the U.S. a specific numerical limit; it had proposed a comprehensive verification system. It had also shared ideas on how to count ALCM's and mobile missiles, and had provided a proposal for numerical limits on mobiles. Moscow did not expect Soviet proposals to be the last word on the subject; they did believe they provided the basis for serious discussion. These were tough issues. That was why the General Secretary felt it important during the ministers' meeting to define as clearly as possible those which could be resolved by the time of the summit and those which could not.

THE SECRETARY said it was his sense that, with effort and good spirit, real progress was possible on mobile ICBM's verification and on an overall verification regime. This was the result of the effort the ministers had set in motion in February. On mobile numbers, the U.S. was still waiting to hear Soviet views on warheads; the launcher numbers which had been given could cover from 800 warheads to the total Soviet warhead ceiling.

SHEVARDNADZE said that the Soviet side would provide warhead numbers in Moscow the following week.

THE SECRETARY said he thought ALCM's were also do-able. Both sides understood the subject and had ideas on how to deal with it.

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The same could not be said for SLCM's. Some important things might still be said, but the Secretary doubted it would be possible to come to closure. Intensive work on the subject was underway in Washington. Until it had reached some conclusions, delegations in Geneva could not resolve the problem.

SHEVARDNADZE said that resolution of the SLCM problem depended entirely on the U.S. Ceiling numbers might be debated further, but Shevardnadze had already outlined to the Secretary the fundamental Soviet approach. There was no fallback. Moscow knew the problem was a difficult one for the U.S., but, if a Treaty were to be concluded, a solution on SLCM's was necessary.

As for ALCM's, what was important was the method of counting them. Even before a START agreement were signed, the Soviet side would be prepared to allow the U.S. to inspect Soviet bombers to determine their capabilities. Shevardnadze had made a real effort to understand what fault the U.S. could find in the Soviet approach to the problem. His negotiators had convinced him that the ball really was in the U.S. court. Again, Shevardnadze concluded, an effort should be made to clarify the problem when the Secretary came to Moscow.

THE SECRETARY said he would have his usual suspects with him, all ready to work.

SHEVARDNADZE, picking up on the Secretary's reference to SLCM's having to be worked in Washington, said with a straight face that he welcomed the Secretary's acknowledgment that "everything" now depended on Washington, not Moscow. The Soviets were not, he added, trying to avoid anything.

Nuclear Testing/Chemical Weapons

Switching to the subject of nuclear testing, Shevardnadze said things seemed to be moving. He indicated delegations should complete by the ministers meeting a detailed plan for the Joint Verification Experiment (JVE). Otherwise there would be no document to sign at the summit on this issue, despite both sides' earlier hopes.

On chemical weapons, Shevardnadze reminded the Secretary that the U.S. owed an answer on the Soviet proposal for a joint summit statement. This was another question which should be clarified when the Secretary was in Moscow.

Bilateral Issues

Shevardnadze said the ministers should also review what bilateral agreements might be signed at the summit. What had been prepared to date was not as impressive as it might be. There had been some progress with respect to maritime search and rescue cooperation and transportation. It would also be well to reach agreement on a new program of cooperation in the cultural sphere. Conclusion of an agreement on scientific and technical cooperation would be an important achievement.

THE SECRETARY said there was also the question of establishing cultural centers in both capitals. He agreed that there was the makings of a good bilateral list. The ministers should seek to make it impressive.

The Secretary acknowledged that there had been some progress on chemical weapons and nuclear testing since their last meeting. It would be good to make a start at the CW verification experiment the Soviet side had proposed. We would be ready to talk seriously in Moscow.

On a more general plane, the Secretary said he perceived that Shevardnadze felt the two ministers should use their next meeting to decide how the substance of the President's visit should be organized, and what the content should be. The Secretary agreed. Some important things had to be prepared.

Regional Issues

The Secretary noted that one important preparation for the summit had taken place earlier in the afternoon, when the Geneva accords on Afghanistan had been signed. This showed it was possible for the two sides to do something constructive on regional issues. There should be further discussion of regional issues in the weeks ahead. When the ministers met, they might address the Iran-Iraq war, the Middle East, Southern Africa, Cambodia. The Secretary understood that ARA Assistant Secretary Abrams was meeting even as they spoke with Abrams' counterpart.

The Secretary observed that a lot of work had also been done on human rights and humanitarian questions. The Secretary in Moscow would want to focus on a number of issues: the seventeen names he and the President had raised in recent meetings; emigration, where the numbers were up somewhat, which we welcomed; and the Vienna CSCE Follow-up meeting. The Vienna meeting seemed to be hung up for some reason. The Secretary suggested the two sides try to straighten it out so things there could fall into place.

SHEVARDNADZE said the Soviet Union agreed and was doing its part.

On regional questions, Shevardnadze thought the most acute in the wake of the Afghanistan settlement was the Iran-Iraq war. The conclusion of the Geneva accords had provided some important experience in dealing with such problems. The signature that afternoon had given new impetus to the search for solutions to other regional problems.

Shevardnadze said he had asked Perez de Cuellar during their bilateral for a read-out on his recent consultations with the Iraqi and Iranian foreign ministers. Shevardnadze's impression was that the exercise had produced no results. Perez had said he would be making a formal report to the Security Council. Then "we'll have to continue work within the framework of the understandings we've reached with you."

Shevardnadze also thought there were possibilities for working together in the Middle East. Moscow was aware of the Secretary's extended travels in the region, and had itself been in "constant" contact with Arab leaders, including Arafat.

THE SECRETARY said he had seen Gorbachev's statement on PLO recognition of Israel's right to exist. It had been an important statement.

SHEVARDNADZE said that Moscow, for its part, saw some reasonable elements in the U.S. approach. The current Soviet approach should likewise contain elements acceptable to Washington. So a stage had been reached in which the two sides could more actively work on the problems of the region.

THE SECRETARY said that General Secretary Gorbachev would see that the Secretary had taken some of the ideas the General Secretary had given him in February into account before locking in our approach. The Secretary would be bringing Assistant Secretary Murphy with him to Moscow, and was prepared to make him available for discussions with Soviet specialists. The two ministers should also discuss the Middle East, however.

SHEVARDNADZE suggested that the Middle East be considered a priority area for their discussion -- and also a promising one. THE SECRETARY said dealing with the Middle East was tough work. He knew from experience. SHEVARDNADZE agreed, pointing out that Arafat was no worse nor better than the Israelis. The discussion of Middle East issues should continue, it should be more substantive. The Soviet side was prepared to meet and talk at all levels.

President's Summit Schedule

Turning to the upcoming summit meeting, Shevardnadze quickly ran down the proposed schedule at Tab, noting that it reflected considerations raised by the U.S. advance team in discussions to date.

After reading the schedule, Shevardnadze said that the General Secretary would welcome reactions from the U.S. side. There was plenty of time to take further U.S. views into account. The General Secretary had emphasized that he wanted to do this as fully as possible.

THE SECRETARY said he appreciated the suggestions which Shevardnadze had conveyed, which appeared to be constructive and positive. He would report to the President the next day, and expected that there would be some reaction at that time. There were really two schedules involved, one for the President, the other for the First Lady. It was helpful to have the General Secretary's views, and the Secretary would be prepared to revisit the matter more authoritatively when he was in Moscow.

Ethiopia

The Secretary asked to say a few words about Ethiopia. There was a tragedy in the making there. The food aid that the Soviet Union and other countries were providing was not being delivered. The Ethiopian government was behaving badly. Millions of lives were at stake. The Secretary knew that Moscow was aware of the situation, and hoped it would use its influence in Ethiopia to help deal with it.

SHEVARDNADZE said that the situation in Ethiopia was not easy. It had recently become more complicated as a result of separatist activities. The government had taken steps to restore order. It was also working hard to improve relations with its neighbors. As for drought-related problems, Shevardnadze hoped that, in addition to taking steps to restore order, the government would take steps to ensure that people received aid.

THE SECRETARY said that the two sides seemed to see the problem in the same light. He suggested they both work on it.

INF Future Weapons

The Secretary said he had a final point to raise on INF. As Shevardnadze was aware, the ratification process was going well. All three Senate committees which had examined the

Treaty had voted in favor of ratification. It would move to the floor that day.

The Secretary was sure Shevardnadze was aware of certain questions which had arisen, especially with respect to the possibility that ground launched missiles of INF range could be used with future weapons technologies. The U.S. had called the Senate's attention to Ambassador Obukhov's statement in the August 25, 1987 plenary meeting, in which he addressed the question of new types of missiles, stating that the ban applies to all types of ground-launched and cruise missiles "regardless of how they are armed."

The U.S. had thus taken the position with the Senate, the Secretary explained, that, in negotiating the INF Treaty, the parties understood the term "weapon delivery vehicle" to mean any INF missile system in which the missiles carries a weapon, that is, any mechanism or device which, when directed against a target, is designed to damage or destroy it. This meant that INF ballistic missiles using new weapons technologies to damage or destroy targets would also be banned. The Secretary reminded Shevardnadze that INF had been solved by adopting a double global zero approach. This applied to future as well as present ground-launched missiles of INF range. The Treaty and the negotiating record showed a common view on this question. The Secretary said he hoped to be able to tell the Senate that he and Shevardnadze had discussed this and had a common view.

SHEVARDNADZE asked Obukhov to comment. Obukhov said he would have to look at the question in more detail to understand what had been described. He needed to understand more precisely the issue the Secretary had raised. It seemed to him that the ban on new types was clear. He did not see what the question was.

THE SECRETARY said that the U.S. agreed that the Treaty and the negotiating record were sufficiently clear. He was simply putting himself in a position in which he could say, "We agree." He took Obukhov's comment as along those lines.

SHEVARDNADZE said that this was good. It seemed to him that up to this point there had been full mutual understanding on this point. Why had the question now arisen? He would like to know more about the issue.

THE SECRETARY explained that, in the INF negotiations, agreement had been reached to include conventional as well as nuclear-armed missiles in the ban. The issue had not been easy for the U.S., but the President had made a decision, and the concept had been incorporated into the Treaty.

During the ratification process, someone had expressed concern that, while the meaning of "nuclear" and "conventional" was clear enough, at some point in the future another type of weapon could be put on missiles of INF range. Then what? The U.S. had taken the position that they would be banned, and both Obukhov's words in the negotiating record and common sense supported that view. Some Senators had asked if the Soviet side saw the problem the same way. The Secretary had said he would ask to be sure.

SHEVARDNADZE repeated that up to that point there had been no disagreement over this. The question was completely new.

THE SECRETARY confirmed that there was no disagreement. He only wanted to be able to report authoritatively to the Senate.

SHEVARDNADZE said he would look into the matter, perhaps the next day. But the Soviet side had not felt there were any differences, and there should be none.

THE SECRETARY said that was his view as well. He did not want to exaggerate the importance of the issue. But he needed to be in a position to say that Shevardnadze also did not believe there was a problem.

The meeting ended without further substantive discussion.