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DEPUTY COMMITTEE (SVTS) MEETING

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 28, 1990

9:30AM - 10:30AM

WHITE HOUSE

~~Andy Card (Invited)~~  
Robert Gates

OFFICE OF THE VP

Carnes Lord

NSC

Robert Blackwill  
Condi Rice  
Stew Denton (Chobotnik)

STATE *Curly Kamman*

~~Alejandro Wolff~~ (Kimmitt is on the Hill)  
James Dobbins

DOD

Paul Wolfowitz  
Lewis Libby

JCS

Howard Graves  
David Meade

CIA

Richard Kerr  
Robert Blackwell



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Gates Dick, could you give us the latest intel update.

Kerr Varennikov left the BMD on the 27th; he's to return on the 29th. His deputy is in charge till his return. We have some reports of activity to move some forces around. Elements of an airborne division are to move from Kaunas to Vilnius -- not sure exactly what or why. Also another MVD ops group is changing sites. Hard to know what this activity means.

The deserters are going to be moved to other places in the Soviet Union. [redacted] garden spots like Mary and Anadeer (?). Could interpret this as a form of punishment -- they're a long way from Lithuania.

The Soviet ops group is getting ready for the conscription callup on April 1. About 8-9000 Lithuanians are eligible to be called up. The Soviets have units there to enforce the callup if necessary.

[redacted] more vehicles are out of their sheds, but Vilnius is quiet. Over all, though, no indications of major Soviet military activity.

[redacted] indicates that Soviet officials in the Baltic area see Landsbergis as the problem -- they think he's too stubborn and nationalistic; they think they'd be better off with former Lithuanian Party chief Brazauskas. One [redacted] refers to the possibility of an "angel coming to give Landsbergis a heart attack." Probably just chatter in the background, but can't totally discount it.

We passed out yesterday our first cut at our look at possible economic leverage Moscow has on Lithuania. Bottom line is that the Soviets have a lot of economic leverage.

Finally, we know that Lithuanian militia loyal to Vilnius is guarding the radio station and the parliament.

Gates Jim, anything on the diplomatic front?

Dobbins Not much. Still no response to the Baker message to Shevardnadze. We've gotten a partial readout from the Kennedy meeting with Gorbachev. Gorbachev spoke at length, and renewed cautiously his pledge not to use force. He emphasized a political solution to the problem, not through negotiations though, but through a constitutional path Lithuania could follow. There was no indication of a massive, military crackdown, but still nothing about negotiations.

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Gates What happened to Taft at the NATO meeting?

Dobbins There was a NATO meeting, but it generated a reluctance to say anything. Last night we sent instructions to Will to keep it on the agenda and to push for some action, perhaps a statement by Woerner. It may be that the Europeans think that the EC statement was enough.

Gates We spoke here about pushing NATO for a statement, but think that it could be counterproductive for the allies to be making a stand on this issue.

Dobbins A NATO statement could be harmless as long as it didn't stick out.

Blackwill The French have been saying that Lithuania is an important topic but not for NATO. The problem of exciting the issue of NATO and Lithuania is that we've been saying that NATO should be more active, but in this case there are security issues to consider.

Dobbins Yes, CFE and other negotiations could be affected. NATO should weigh in but only as a part of a broader chorus of statements.

Wolfowitz There hasn't been a NATO statement so far?

Gates Right.

Wolfowitz That doesn't seem like a desirable situation.

Dobbins NATO meets less frequently than other groups; I don't think we should push it.

Wolfowitz Is there any way to push the issue in CSCE? We keep talking about it as an increasingly important venue for these issues, and could it be useful now.

Dobbins There are three ways to push it in CSCE. 1) We could raise at the CSCE Bonn conference on economics; 2) raise it at the Vienna CSBMs talks -- neither of those two is related, but we accolade introduce it anyway -- and 3) we could ask for an inspection under the Stockholm agreement. All of these would mean confronting the Soviets at some point.

Gates There would be some value in the PCC fleshing those ideas out for us to discuss.

Wolfowitz What about generating a common NATO position to take to CSCE?

Dobbins If we decide to go ahead with a NATO statement, we

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would certainly want to coordinate it as much as possible. Clearing it at one of the NATO caucuses might be the best way.

Gates We need to think carefully about posturing NATO on an issue of such importance to the Soviet Union. We've been pushing the Soviets to accept a unified Germany in a NATO context, and we don't want to upset that track.

Dobbins The Germans themselves are worried about East-West relations on a variety of fronts, including arms control, and they see the maintenance of good relations all around as essential to their achieving unification.

Gates At the breakfast meeting this morning, Baker, Cheney and Brent agreed that general Vuono should not go on his trip. The Soviets will get the message, and we'd prefer to do it in a low key manner. There will be no announcement here, we won't play it up here at all. We'll see how things go in between now and Saturday. It'd be just as well if the Soviets announced it.

Graves What is the timing and venue for passing the message?

Gates I don't know if Dick was going to call Carl himself or what.

Dobbins My understanding was that State would cable the Embassy authorizing them cancel or postpone indefinitely on Friday -- we'll take no action until then.

Gates Paul, talk to Dick about it.

Dobbins I'll research what's the best way to pass the message with the Embassy.

Gates Stay in touch with Howard and Paul, but let us know how and when you plan to do it. It's in the overall interests of everyone to keep it quiet.

Wolfowitz We'll need contingency press guidance if the press does get wind of it. We probably will want to answer questions in the most anodyne way possible.

Gates You all put guidance together. State and the White House will defer to DoD -- say something about deferring it on technical grounds maybe.

Dobbins We'll do a cable to the embassy later with the request to defer the trip and with contingency guidance. The other breakfast item from today was for all of us to try to stick to a consistent line, let the press detect what they think are subtle shifts.

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Gates

I think we can agree on that. Marlin is drafting something for us to look at today which should reflect the core of what we've been saying. After Brent looks at it, we'll send it over to Margaret. It'll reflect part of the six point that came over yesterday.

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