

ConfidentialNotes of Ambassador Brunner's meeting with the Minister for  
Foreign Affairs of Spain

Held in the Senate, Madrid  
on 29 October 1991 at 4:30 p.m.

Present:

Ambassador Brunner	H.E. Mr. Fransisco Fernández-Ordoñez,
Ms. Bутtenheim	Minister for Foreign Affairs of
Mr. Brandt	Spain
Mr. Briscoe	H.E. Mr. Emilio Artacho

Ambassador Brunner thanked the Minister for receiving him and congratulated him on Spain's perfect organization for the impending peace conference on the Middle East, which he hoped would bring success. It would be important that no party departed the conference prematurely. Mr. Fernández-Ordoñez agreed that the ensuing bilateral negotiations should begin promptly. It was important to raise the issue of Israeli settlements in the occupied territories. The Minister had told Mr. Shamir that what was needed from Israel was a "gesture" of good will. The United States held the same attitude and was also seeking an Israeli gesture. He doubted, however, that the subject would be broached by Presidents Bush and Gorbachev in their speeches.

It was regrettable that the conference would come to an end that Friday morning, after only three days, when Mr. Shamir would return to Israel in time for the Sabbath. It would not be possible to discuss all the issues in that brief time and the parties should stay for a couple of weeks. Agreement to hold the meeting in Europe represented a compromise by Israel, but at the conference table it would be isolated. It therefore wished to end the opening session as soon as possible and move to the bilateral negotiations.

Ambassador Brunner felt that progress in the bilateral talks would depend on a "sage-femme" or an honest broker. The only precedent for a successful peace process in this region had been the Camp David process, where the United States had been engaged at the level of the President himself. The Ambassador was sceptical of success without the full involvement of the United States. Mr. Fernández-Ordoñez replied that the United States had so far done the most it could. While Mr. Shamir would be leaving that Friday, Secretary Baker was said to be prepared to remain in Madrid until 7 November. Convincing Mr. Shamir that Israel



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should attend the conference had meant almost physically lifting him into his seat at the table.

Observing that the Soviet Union had played only a minor role in convening the conference, Ambassador Brunner commented that the two parties which could bring the most pressure to bear were the United States and the European Community. Mr. Fernández-Ordoñez described two different points of view prevailing within the EC. The first, which he described as the "classical line", included France and Spain (although not Italy), which were prepared to apply pressure on Israel. The second included Belgium, Holland and Denmark, which were opposed to introducing any measures.

Turning to the situation in Yugoslavia, the Foreign Minister reported that the EC President was making every effort to resolve the crisis. Mr. Fernández-Ordoñez had recently travelled with the EC troika to the region, as well as to France and Greece. Now it appeared that the United States was more resolved than the European Community about ending the conflict. The crisis was a "big thing" for Europe.

Reverting to the subject of the peace conference, the Foreign Minister observed that the only country able to help influence Israel was the United States which should work to resolve problems regarding the bilateral discussions. Ambassador Brunner said that one would have to wait to see how the multilateral negotiations developed. He hoped that this phase would be successful, although the expression "those parties who wish to attend" was causing some confusion. The European Community, declared Mr. Fernández-Ordoñez, would have a lot to do in the multilateral stage. He agreed that that particular phrase was inspiring "beaucoup de volontarisme".

Ambassador Brunner predicted that the Syrians would take a hard line. Behind Syria was Iran, which opposed the talks altogether. Mr. Fernández-Ordoñez added that the Palestinians would also adopt a hard line, but that they were in a weak position. He noted that all parties would have to cooperate in order to benefit from the peace process. There could be no "free lunch". In Ambassador Brunner's opinion, the Israelis had not got the restricted participation which they had wanted at the conference. On the other hand, rejoined Mr. Fernández-Ordoñez, they had managed to prevent active participation by the United Nations and the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Ambassador Brunner felt that President Bush and Secretary Baker had worked hard to convene the conference. President Bush could win reelection even if he were firm with Israel. The Foreign Minister concurred: the position of the United States had definitely changed and the international community was now bringing pressure to bear on the parties. Yet, continued



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Ambassador Brunner, despite this combination, "Mr. Shamir is a hard nut to crack".

At this point the Foreign Minister took his leave in order to accompany Prime Minister Gonzalez to a meeting with the United States delegation.

Neil Briscoe

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2 November 1991