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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting with President Ozal of Turkey (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President  
James A. Baker, Secretary of State  
Nicholas Brady, Secretary of Treasury  
Richard Cheney, Secretary of Defense  
  
Turgut Ozal, President of Turkey  
Nuzhet Kandemir, Ambassador

DATE, TIME September 25, 1990, 11:30am - 1:30pm  
AND PLACE: Family Dining Room

President Bush: Tell me about Tariq Aziz (S)

Ambassador Kandemir: He is close to Saddam Hussein. (S)

President Bush: Would he tell Saddam bad news. Some say no one will tell him bad news. (S)

Ambassador Kandemir: It is difficult but Aziz would be the right man. (S)

President Bush: I'm interested in the comments you make of the Iraqi military. We're trying to assess it - have to look at the worst case. I'm interested in what you think. They have never fought with long supply lines or against air superiority. (S)

Ambassador Kandemir: They are very tough - they would inflict heavy casualties on the other side. One must be very careful. (S)

President Bush: That's discouraging. (S)

President Ozal: I don't think they are so strong. They have lost a lot of equipment. I was there during Iran-Iraq war - they didn't really win very much. They couldn't even stop oil shipments. Kuwait was taken by a special guard. (S)

Ambassador Kandemir: I was Ambassador to Kuwait. There were many Iraqi deserters during the Iranian war. They don't have water, blankets. (S)

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President Bush: Do you think they are undisciplined? (S)

President Ozal: Yes, except the guards. (S)

Ambassador Kandemir: They are in general very disciplined. (S)

President Ozal: The number of prisoners of war in Iran are much greater than in Iraq. (S)

Ambassador Kandemir: That's because the Iraqi's killed them. (S)

President Bush: We are worried about the dismantling of Kuwait. Can it bounce back? (S)

President Ozal: The Kuwaitis will know who is a Kuwaiti. (S)

The Kuwaitis are keeping records - though it is difficult to prove legally. Kuwait has 10-15 key families - many failed. Very delicate - this is why Saddam will prepare referendum. (S)

President Bush: You hear more and more talk - people are looking for a short answer. (S)

President Ozal: I told Mitterrand there can be no negotiation until they withdraw completely. (S)

President Bush: As time goes on you may hear more of this - we want to see more Syrians and Egyptians on the ground so it doesn't look like the US, UK, France against the Arabs. We are pleased the Egyptians and Syrians are moving. (S)

Secretary Baker: Both Egypt and Syria would be willing to send more forces - that's my impression. One Egyptian division is enroute - central Syrian deployment. (S)

Secretary Cheney: The logistical chain is important. The Syrians have quality forces but when you move them they don't have basic supplies. (S)

Secretary Baker: Equipment support from Germany may be taken from East Bloc forces - it may go to the Syrians. (S)

President Ozal: You shouldn't worry whether your force is small or large. They will make a lot of it - but this propaganda is not effective. (S)

President Bush: How about in Jordan? (S)

President Ozal: There the problem is the Palestinians. I don't think in most places Saudi Arabia, the Gulf - (S)

President Bush: How about along the Nagreb? Tunisia has been disappointing. Maybe because of the Palestinians. One other area we're concerned about is the financial. Secretary Brady has

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worked with the banks to cut down on illegal transfers especially the Bank of Jordan. Nick, is it better? (S)

Secretary Brady: Yes, much better. (U)

President Ozal: I mentioned to Secretary Brady - the debt we are paying. Everyone talks about the Frontline States. The banks started to pull out. We are not in a situation like Jordan or Egypt. I hope these missions that Brady and Baker worked out will help Turkey. Do we have a mechanism? (S)

Secretary Brady: There is a mechanism. It will meet tomorrow to get donors together. (S)

Secretary Baker: It is advisory. Countries want to do this bilaterally. Having solicited contributions we just want to work toward equitable distribution. Germany will do some things directly. We are pleased the Soviets have behaved as they have - what to you think? (S)

President Ozal: What they have done is reasonable. We can't ask more. (S)

Secretary Baker: We're adopting a tough resolution at the UN today - an air blockade and willingness to adopt other measures down the line. (S)

President Bush: What does it say? (U)

Secretary Baker: Full compliance with respect to air; countries are asked not to grant overflight if they suspect diversion to Iraq. (S)

President Bush: Who are the culprits? (S)

Secretary Baker: Libya. (S)

President Ozal: We need to look at sanctions for countries violating these sanctions. (S)

President Bush: We're not going that far this afternoon. We are talking about possibly doing that. (S)

President Ozal: Some Gulf states are talking about oil on credit. I talked to Brady - we must do something about the price of oil. We have increased gasoline prices by 65%. Maybe we can take action - announce the Saudis will increase production or ready to use reserves. (S)

Secretary Baker: Supplies will be drawn down in the third quarter. Japan, Germany, and the US would all have to do something. Even so, price is not being set by supply and demand but by speculation. (S)

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President Ozal: The Japanese are ready to do something. (S)

The French say they are looking for joint effort in purchasing oil. (S)

Secretary Brady: Speculation is in paper barrels of oil. (S)

President Bush: A strong statement that speculators will be hurt may help. We need to make a soothing statement. (S)

Secretary Brady: I think we can do something to knock the price down. (S)

President Bush: Dick, did you talk to the President about the situation on the ground? (S)

Secretary Cheney: We estimate now - 430,000 ground troops, 9 out of 12 are armored mechanized divisions - 1/2 in Kuwait; 1/2 just outside. (S)

President Bush: How many are reserves? (S)

President Ozal: Many must be very young because 48 percent are under 14. The total population is 18M. They must be almost down to the bare bones. (S)

Secretary Cheney: The size of military/proportion to population - they have larger percent in military than North Korea. (S)

Ambassador Kandemir: They call it the Popular Army - they are under command of the number 3 man. (S)

President Bush: What happens if Saddam drops dead? Who would take over? (S)

President Ozal: There would be dissent - there is no number two. (S)

Ambassador Kandemir: He controls the Ba'th party, the Army. (S)

President Bush: Maybe it's too optimistic to expect a more reasonable regime. (S)

President Ozal: After Saddam there may be a better situation. (S)

Ambassador Kandemir: But after a period of uncertainty. (S)

President Ozal: There was a good analysis in the Wall Street Journal. (U)

President Baker: How is your health? (U)

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President Ozal: Very good. (U)

President Bush: If you learn anything at the UN - I want to hear from you. (U)

President Ozal: There is too much exaggeration. Iraq is a third world country. The media exaggerates. (S)

Secretary Baker: Good news isn't news. (U)

Secretary Baker: If Iraq is a third world power - Does Saddam understand that? Will he act accordingly? If I knew this - I would be cautious in face of the alliance he faces. (S)

President Ozal: He thinks he won't have to. Do you see he is attacking you, Thatcher, Mubarak - but not Turkey, Syria - there is rationality there - as time goes on - he may start to try to bargain. (S)

President Bush: What worries me - we've come together on the same terms - get out of Kuwait - status quo ante - what if he said OK - Our people would say great - but in that part of the world people would worry. (S)

President Ozal: You should ask for reparations. (S)

President Bush: Many are saying already our terms are too tough. My point is that we cannot commit a war of aggression - but if he accepts terms - then what do we do? People would worry in the region. Something else needs to be on the table. (S)

Ambassador Kandemir: He is not going to withdraw. When he does something - he doesn't retreat. (S)

Suppose he takes the long view - he can use his power over time - he is saying let us share - have versus have not. (S)

President Ozal: If he pulls out - he cannot make this agreement. (S)

President Bush: He's sitting there with chemicals, biological weapons - a nuclear plant. He's reckless - unless a peacekeeping force comes along there may be disquiet - it may not be enough that we're asking. What is your view on timing of sanctions? (S)

President Ozal: Three-four months time - then there will be a pinch. (S)

President Bush: Is there any way that pressure could cause him to change his behavior - cause him to be kicked out? (S)

President Ozal: It is not tested? But if people become hungry - unrest could follow. Mr. President, you should come to Turkey. (S)

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President Bush: I accept - before you change your mind - I will be in Turkey before the end of 1991 - that's a commitment. Given the steadfastness of Turkey - my respect for you - I want to do it when it's beneficial to you. (C)

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