

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting with Ambassador Saud Nasir Al-Sabah
of Kuwait (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President
Richard Haass, Special Assistant to the
President and Senior Director, Near East
and South Asian Affairs, Notetaker

Saud Nasir Al-Sabah, Kuwaiti Ambassador to
the United States

DATE, TIME December 17, 1992; 9:30 - 9:45 a.m.
AND PLACE: The Oval Office

The President: We wish you well. I am hopeful the new Administration will have the same conviction we have had to stand firm versus Saddam Hussein. We don't trust him. I haven't changed my view at all. It will be important for your Government to establish contact with the new Administration. I can't see anything that suggests they will shift U.S. policy. I can't conceive they will make up with Saddam so long as he violates UN resolutions. It would be criminal to shift and I see no evidence they will but it will be critical for you to work closely with them. Brent, Have you seen any indication of a change? (Ø)

General Scowcroft: No, but we have had no real indication of their thinking. (U)

Ambassador Al-Sabah: It is a source of concern with us. We can see the Iraqis courting the new Administration. There was Tariq Aziz's meeting with the Security Council. This is all a major concern to us in the region. We are trying to understand the direction of the new Administration. (Ø)

The President: I don't think they are far along in their thinking. (Ø)

James Baker: It would be a real surprise if they changed policy. (Ø)

Ambassador Al-Sabah: We are concerned about not simply Saddam but with the alarming escalation of the Iranian threat. (Ø)

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The President: As you know we tried to bring Saddam along in order to contain Iran. What do you see happening between Iran and Iraq? (Ø)

Ambassador Al-Sabah: I don't see any closeness yet but the future is unclear. (Ø)

The President: Is Saddam saying publicly that the Iraqi-Kuwait border deal is a non-starter? (Ø)

Ambassador Al-Sabah: He says the border that has been drawn up reflects the desires of the U.S. and "colonial" powers. He refuses to accept the findings of the Border Commission. He has refused to cooperate with it all along. The problem, though, is not so much the borders but their intentions, which remain bad. Even if they recognize the border today tomorrow they could tear up any pact. We have been trying to work with the opposition but none seems viable. (Ø)

The President: They are scattered around. (Ø)

Ambassador: They refused to take a stance on the border question. (Ø)

The President: We wish you well. You have been a wonderful Ambassador and you have made a lot of friends. (U)

-- End of Conversation --

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