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THE WHITE HOUSE
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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telephone Call to Prime Minister Mulroney of Canada (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Brian Mulroney, Prime Minister
Robert Hutchings, NSC Staff (Notetaker)

DATE, TIME August 9, 1990, 5:40 - 5:52 p.m.
AND PLACE: The Oval Office (U)

The President: Brian, I just got through talking with Bob Hawke, who asked me to call you to discuss a naval presence in the multilateral force. He said he could provide two frigates and a supply vessel and indicated you had talked and that there would probably be Canadian involvement. He wants to go forward. We will sort out the command and control mechanisms. He also asked about the force being under a UN flag. I talked to Brent about UN flagging, and we think that it is not very hopeful. Hawke would like to do this with Canadian participation and asked me to call you now, prior to his press conference in several hours. It would be wonderful to have some vessels from Canada involved, and I was enthusiastic when I heard Australia wants to participate. He said he will also call you on this. (Ø)

Prime Minister Mulroney: George, he called me last night. He thought it would be multinational, under UN auspices. He wanted to know, if he were invited by the Saudis or the UN, what our reaction would be. I said, Bob, we are by no means a superpower, but I could understand the benefit to the President of the United States. I said we will join in and support the effort. I told him that whatever his decision, we would support it. Let me tell you, George, what we're looking at, but don't hold me to it. (Ø)

The President: No, no. (U)

Prime Minister Mulroney: We're looking at a squadron of 12 CF-18s with about 200 service personnel, two destroyers, helicopters, and a major naval supply ship with another 800 Canadian sailors. We could make this force available in short order. (Ø)

The President: It would be a very significant force. You referred to an invitation by the Saudis or the UN. Clearly, an invitation could come from the Saudis. They are looking for help. I didn't touch on that with Bob. (Ø)

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Another encouraging thing: Oman and the UAE have been very forthcoming regarding porting and supply vessels at their ports. They are the only two I have talked to -- the Sultan of Oman and the Sheik -- but they are very supportive. It is encouraging -- not surprising, but encouraging. (✓)

Prime Minister Mulroney: I felt, George, that as the coordinator of the multinational force you would be happy if the Canadians and Australians joined. (✓)

The President: I would be more than happy; I would be delighted. It would strengthen the multilateral aspect. We are taking some shots here, though they don't worry me. Brent was asked some questions like, where is this multinational force? There will be others. Confidentially, the Moroccans will be joining. But it would be a very, very good signal if you and Australia joined. So color me enthusiastic, and grateful as well. Brian, do you want to coordinate with Hawke? More important than my hogging all the credit, you should announce this any way you want. He said he would announce in two hours. I said that was fine and that we would just say that we welcomed the announcement. (✓)

Prime Minister Mulroney: The first thing after our meeting the other night, I got together with our people to go over what we could do if asked. I readily understand the merits of a multinational force. I will coordinate with Hawke and then later with you. (✓)

The President: Okay. I may be out, but Brent will be here. Barb and I are going out for Mexican food with some of the grandkids, but I can come back. (✓)

Prime Minister Mulroney: Not at all. I will be happy to talk to Brent. (U)

The President: I can be reached within three minutes, anyway. I am very, very pleased. (U)

Prime Minister Mulroney: How are things going generally? (U)

The President: Very, very well, although there are uncertainties, of course. We have heard terrible stories of brutality in Kuwait, from one of the Sheiks and also from Thatcher, who said that a British stewardess had been raped. I think we will have more reports of this kind. The Arab Summit is interesting, but I have no knowledge of what will happen. King Hussein might go along. He has pulled back from his isolated and rather pathetic position. Turkey is standing tall. The military side went smoothly. We have no information of forward movement by the Iraqis, but they are digging in. So that's where we are. Saddam Hussein is trying to portray this as the Arabs against the rest of the world, and Dan Rather had a silly report about the haves versus the have nots. But generally speaking I think there will be a strong condemnation from the Arab League. There ought to be. (✓)

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Prime Minister Mulroney: I am pleased. We will do what we can.
(U)

The President: It is very helpful. Your visit here was very important. It emphasized the multinational aspect. This sends a good signal, that it is not just the U.S. taking some kind of vengeance against Iraq. (Ø)

Prime Minister Mulroney: I'll be back as soon as I can. (U)

-- End of Conversation --

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