

THE WHITE HOUSE

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#0017

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telephone Conversation with King Fahd of Saudi Arabia (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
King Fahd
Interpreter Mrs. Shukran
Notetaker: Richard Haass

DATE, TIME December 31, 1990, 1:58 - 2:22 p.m.
AND PLACE: Camp David

The President initiated the call. (U)

President Bush: Hello Your Majesty, this is George Bush. (U)

King Fahd: Welcome Mr. President. I wish to congratulate you and offer great success in the new year. (U)

President: That's why I'm calling you. I hope to work with you in a most cooperative way. At year's end, we count our blessings and I'm grateful for the wonderful cooperation we've had and for our friendship. (U)

The other point I'd like to make to you is that my view remains exactly the same as when we talked in Saudi Arabia. I don't think Saddam Hussein will compromise and if there is no total withdrawal very soon, we will have to do what we will have to do. (U)

We will just keep staying on course. This will be a very interesting two week period. What is your feeling on the subject? (U)

King Fahd: First of all, I'd like to confirm to you Mr. President, that we continue to have the same united point of view and we will continue to be united until the very end. (U)

Second, Saddam Hussein was given a chance and no one can say he was not adequately given a chance to comply. (U)

Third, as far as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is concerned, we all agree with the U.S. as what needs to be done. No one can influence us. What you think and perceive is exactly what I think and perceive. Mr. President, you are fully authorized to

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do what you think will achieve the objectives of truth and justice. This is my opinion and the opinion of all the people and government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. (Ø)

President: That's very good. There is some talk that the EC will be sending someone to see Aziz and this is ok with me, but I don't think he can make compromises. I don't believe Aziz has the power to make a decision to withdraw. (Ø)

King Fahd: This is true, Mr. President, we are not bothered at all by the Europeans going to meet with Tariq Aziz. Let's see if they can get him to budge, get him to move. It is your opinion, mine and Saudi Arabia's that Saddam must withdraw completely and unconditionally. But let them go and talk. (Ø)

President: I agree with that; the only thing that I'm worried about is that at the last minute he'll make a statement to partly withdraw. That will not be sufficient for the U.S. (Ø)

Fahd: This is true, Mr. President. This is not acceptable to Saudi Arabia or any other country in the world that believes in truth and justice. (Ø)

President: That's true. We will stay firm on that point. Over the next two weeks, you will be reading a lot of controversy in the U.S. because the Congress is coming into session in two days. But do not let this discourage you. Congress is covering its own tracks. They do not want to take action and do not have the power or right to tie the hands of the President. (Ø)

Fahd: I am certain of what you are saying. I agree with you. Like you, I expect this controversy to take place and people to say to wait and give sanctions time to work. But why did Saddam Hussein give Iran everything it wanted after 8 years of fighting? If he wants to do the right thing, he can withdraw from Kuwait totally and unconditionally. Anyone who argues to wait is talking for the purpose of discussion only. I believe the Congress and the people will be on your side and back you up completely because you believe in truth and justice. (Ø)

President: I noticed Khomeini attacked us today about our wanting to leave troops in the area. But I don't understand why he chose today. (Ø)

Fahd: I hope Mr. President you won't pay attention to what Khomeini has said and his attack. We've known him for 10 years; he was addressing his own people. This is only for local consumption. He will not get involved in the Gulf crisis. (Ø)

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President: That's good because basically I believe Iran has been pretty good during the crisis. (C)

King Fahd: Yes, Mr. President. If you permit me Mr. President, I would like to express this idea. If any member of Congress believes Saddam will leave Kuwait after a year, let them go to Iraq and speak to Saddam. If there is some way he can be persuaded to withdraw without conditions, let them go and try to talk with him. We know that he will not accept any discussion on this subject. (C)

President: I agree. There is no flexibility about this at all. Every time they insist they will not withdraw from Kuwait. We have very little to talk about. (C)

King Fahd: This is true, Mr. President. Saddam Hussein has been given a chance and an opportunity. We both have made statements that he must withdraw from Kuwait. If he wants to follow the logical course, this is what he must do. As far as we're concerned, we agree with what you have said. (C)

President: Do you think he'll try to make a last minute compromise offer before January 15 like a partial withdrawal? (C)

King Fahd: I believe the possibility for that is about ten percent and believe he does not know he does not know and I also believe he does not know that he is about to self-destruct.

President: I agree that he does not know. We will remain resolute. I really called to wish you a happy new year. (C)

King Fahd: I thank you, Mr. President, and I'd like to wish all of us victory in all areas and success in all our endeavors, God willing. (U)

President: Thank you. I agree. (U)

King Fahd: Thank you, Mr. President. (U)

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