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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

PRESIDENTIAL CALL TO ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER SHAMIR
23 January 1991
0005-0010 EST

Pres Bush Hello Mr. Prime Minister.

PM Shamir Yes, good morning.

Pres Bush Once again I call in an hour of distress. I am sorry about the backdrop of tragedy. I hope you have read the letter I sent to you with Larry Eagleburger.

PM Shamir No, in a few minutes I will meet with him.

Pres Bush Oh, then I won't go into all the arguments. We are asking you not to respond to the Iraqi attack. There are no benefits in you having to respond to the Iraqi attack which shocked the world. Your involvement would only hand over victory which has alluded him. My appeal to the Cabinet is not to give him the victory he wants. My understanding is the (Patriot) battery had technical problems. Our sortie rate is one Israel cannot match. No matter what the provocation, it would be seen as invading an Arab country. I know I am asking you something history will judge as the most difficult thing a President could ask an Israel Prime Minister. The Israeli people have supported your restraint. Please ask for restraint; the world will applaud. I believe history and our close relationship justify my request. I appreciate you seeing Larry Eagleburger.

PM Shamir Thank you. I am sure we will have contact during the day.

Pres Bush Sorry about calling so early, but I know you have to head off. Thank you for receiving Larry Eagleburger.

PM Shamir Thank you. Good bye.

Pres Bush Good bye.

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98-0099-F/3
12 04 04 LT

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Originally Processed With FOIA(s):
1998-0099-F

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Record Group/Collection:	George H.W. Bush Presidential Records
Collection/Office of Origin:	National Security Council
Series:	Haass, Richard N., Files
Subseries:	Working Files

OA/ID Number:	CF01584
Folder ID Number:	CF01584-011

Folder Title:
Iraq - January 1991 [2]
