

Withdrawal/Redaction Sheet

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17. Telcon	Memorandum of telephone conversation between President George Bush and Prime Minister Gonzales of Spain [SENT FOR AGENCY REFERRAL] (4 pp.)	2/9/91	(b)(1)	S

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Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON



MEMORANDUM FOR TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telephone Call with Prime Minister Gonzalez
of Spain

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez
Adrian Basora, Notetaker, NSC Staff
Patricia Arizu, Interpreter

DATE, TIME February 9, 1991, 7:20 - 7:40 a.m.
AND PLACE: Camp David

The President: Hello, Felipe. (U)

Prime Minister Gonzalez: Good day, how are you? (U)

The President: I am sorry to interrupt your weekend, but I
wanted to give you an update on the Gulf war. (U)

Prime Minister Gonzalez: It's no problem at all. I am glad to
hear from you. (U)

The President: The one thing that concerns me somewhat is the
fact that Saddam Hussein has launched a propaganda campaign
alleging that we are targeting civilians. This is, of course,
false. It is obviously impossible to avoid some collateral
damage, but there has been very little. Saddam continues to
shift his military weapons into civilian areas. He has placed
anti-aircraft guns and airplanes in civilian neighborhoods. For
example, he has put an anti-aircraft battery in front of the
Hotel Rashid. We have spared this battery, even though it is a
threat to our aircraft. (S)

I have sent Cheney and Powell to the region to assess the
military situation. I will reserve my decision as to when to
launch a ground campaign, but I am in no hurry. We will set the
timing of the next phase, not Saddam. (S)

We are also starting to look beyond the war to see how the U.S.,
and other countries might cooperate on how to build peace and
stability in the area, and to catalyze the Palestinian issue. We
don't want an Iraq so weakened that it undermines regional
stability. Iran is playing a helpful role. I believe they will

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keep the Iraqi planes, but I don't understand why Rafsanjani says there are only 20 planes when we know there are 129. (S)

Prime Minister Gonzalez: I too, think Iran is playing a positive role. (S)

The President: I am very disappointed with King Hussein. He went very far to the left in his last speech. I know he has problems domestically, and I am trying to be understanding. (S)

Prime Minister Gonzalez: I think that is important. He has no margin for maneuver. He is very threatened inside of Jordan. (S)

The President: That's true, and I am trying to be understanding. But this time Hussein went so far that I had to lay down a marker. (S)

Prime Minister Gonzalez: Yes. (U)

The President: Over 1,000 Iraqi prisoners have come across the border. Based on their report, there seem to be serious morale problems. One last point, I continue to be outraged by the SCUD attacks, which are a form of terrorism, and by Saddam's brutal treatment of our POWs. That is an updated report on the situation. I would be interested in your views. (S)

Prime Minister Gonzalez: My views coincide with what you have said, and with your analysis. To save time, I will just make some complementary remarks. First, it is true that there is a contradiction between the political interest in moving militarily on the ground soon, and the military interest in waiting longer in order to minimize casualties. But I fully understand that you want to find the right time before taking actions on the ground. Nevertheless, it is important to keep in mind that the earliest moment is the best politically. (S)

When the ground war begins, and not before, Saddam Hussein is likely to make a peace offer. The response has to be prepared in advance, and you need to be very careful that the Security Council and the UN Secretary General continues to be fully behind your efforts. (S)

The President: I talked to Perez de Cuellar on that very point yesterday. I do worry about a UN call for a cease fire. That would give Saddam a victory. (S)

Prime Minister Gonzalez: Yes, but a closed-door UN meeting seems a certainty. (S)

The President: I don't know where that stands, but there may well be a meeting. (S)

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Prime Minister Gonzalez: One other point: [REDACTED] (b)(1)

[REDACTED] Karsanjani doesn't control all of the planes. Part of them may be controlled by the Revolutionary Guards. (S)

Another point is that you should try to control the flow of information, in the good sense, because the mass media are playing Saddam Hussein's game. (S)

The President: I know, we are failing on that score. Only one-sided coverage is coming out of Iraq, including destruction, and the media are picking it up. (S)

Prime Minister Gonzalez: Yes, so you have to make an effort to counteract this. You should emphasize the fact that the U.S. is trying not just to save American lives, but also Iraqi civilians, and the lives of its coalition partners. (S)

The President: I agree, and I will try to step up my own efforts in this regard. (S)

Prime Minister Gonzalez: I have a couple of other important points. It is important to calm down the Israelis, but we also need to talk to them on the Palestinian issue. They have to be willing to discuss the Palestinian issue after the war. One other element of concern is North Africa. (S)

The President: Exactly, what is your view on that? (U)

Prime Minister Gonzalez: We have them right here, 14 kilometers from our borders. The situation in Algeria is serious. I believe there are divisions in the government. Tunisia is complicated. In Morocco, for the first time, we are worried about their stability, even though the King is trying to maintain the balance. Our Foreign Minister will visit all of the countries of North Africa next week. We see these problems because of our proximity. These countries are under pressure for many reasons, but especially because of the frustration of the people. (S)

We too have had problems with public opinion. There is no problem in Parliament. All parties except the Communists support our role. But we do have problems with the press now that the story about the B-52s is being made into a public scandal. However, you'll have no problem with Spain. Our attitude will be one of 100 percent support. (S)

However, more attention must be paid to North Africa. We foresee more problems in the Maghreb. (S)

Regarding Iraq, after Iraq's decision to break relations Spain proposed that the EC make a statement of solidarity with the Gulf coalition partners, and on the issue of diplomatic relations. (S)

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The President: That's very good. (U)

Prime Minister Gonzalez: Finally, the terrorism threat cannot be neglected. We are making a big effort, but there are real possibilities of terrorist actions. We must remain alert. (S)

The President: Exactly. I think we are looking at the situation eye-to-eye. If you have additional ideas, please give me a call in the coming days, and I will do the same. (S)

Prime Minister Gonzalez: Fine. To sum up, we have to keep an eye on the UN Security Council and the mass media. (S)

The President: I think so too. I appreciated our talk and your suggestions. Have a good weekend. (C)

Prime Minister Gonzalez: Thanks, Mr. President. You too. (U)

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