

THE WHITE HOUSE
CORRESPONDENCE TRACKING WORKSHEET

INCOMING

CO 074

DATE RECEIVED: JANUARY 07, 1991

NAME OF CORRESPONDENT: REVEREND RAYMOND G. HELMICK S.J.

SUBJECT: ENCLOSURES A COPY OF HIS DRAFT LETTER WHICH HE
PLANS TO DELIVER TO PRIME MINISTER SHAMIR

ROUTE TO:		ACTION		DISPOSITION	
OFFICE/AGENCY	(STAFF NAME)	ACT CODE	DATE YY/MM/DD	TYPE RESP	C COMPLETED D YY/MM/DD
JOHN SUNUNU		ORG	91/01/07	JS	A 91/01/09
NS Bill Sittmann	REFERRAL NOTE:	R	91/01/14	W	C 91/02/15
	REFERRAL NOTE:	R	91/02/15	NAW	C 91/02/21
	REFERRAL NOTE:		1/1		1/1
	REFERRAL NOTE:		1/1		1/1
	REFERRAL NOTE:		1/1		1/1

COMMENTS:

see #201888

ADDITIONAL CORRESPONDENTS: MEDIA:L INDIVIDUAL CODES: _____

CS MAIL USER CODES: (A) _____ (B) _____ (C) _____

*ACTION CODES:	*DISPOSITION	*OUTGOING	*
*	*	*CORRESPONDENCE:	*
*A-APPROPRIATE ACTION	*A-ANSWERED	*TYPE RESP=INITIALS	*
*C-COMMENT/RECOM	*B-NON-SPEC-REFERRAL	* OF SIGNER	*
*D-DRAFT RESPONSE	*C-COMPLETED	* CODE = A	*
*F-FURNISH FACT SHEET	*S-SUSPENDED	*COMPLETED = DATE OF	*
I-INFO COPY/NO ACT NEC		* OUTGOING	*
*R-DIRECT REPLY W/COPY *			*
*S-FOR-SIGNATURE			*
*X-INTERIM REPLY			*

REFER QUESTIONS AND ROUTING UPDATES TO CENTRAL REFERENCE
(ROOM 75, OEOB) EXT-2590
KEEP THIS WORKSHEET ATTACHED TO THE ORIGINAL INCOMING
LETTER AT ALL TIMES AND SEND COMPLETED RECORD TO RECORDS
MANAGEMENT.

RECEIVED

UNCLASSIFIED

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

TRANSMITTAL FORM

S/S 9102786

Date February 21, 1991

FOR: Mr. William F. Sittmann
Executive Secretary
National Security Council Staff
The White House

REFERENCE:

To: To John Sununu

From: Rev. Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

Date: February 20, 1991

Subject: Encloses a copy of his draft letter which he plans
to deliver to Prime Minister Shamir

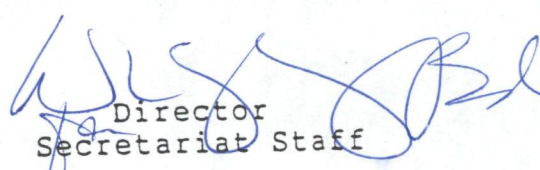
WH Referral Dated: December 31, 1990
NSCS ID# (if any): 202556

 The attached item was sent directly to the
Department of State.

ACTION TAKEN:

- A draft reply is attached.
- A draft reply will be forwarded.
- A translation is attached.
- An information copy of a direct reply is attached.
- X We believe no response is necessary for the reason
cited below.
- The Department of State has no objection to the
proposed travel.
- Other (see remarks).

REMARKS: No action is required. The letter dated 12/31/90
contains long arguments in favor of relying on sanctions
and against war. Completely OBE'd when received for
action here on 02/19/91.


Director
Secretariat Staff

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911 FEB 21 11 41: 266

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THE WHITE HOUSE OFFICE

REFERRAL

9102786

'91 FEB-15 11:36 AM

FEBRUARY 15, 1991

TO: DEPARTMENT OF STATE

ACTION REQUESTED:

DIRECT REPLY, FURNISH INFO COPY

DESCRIPTION OF INCOMING:

ID: 202556

MEDIA: LETTER, DATED DECEMBER 31, 1990

TO: JOHN SUNUNU

FROM: REVEREND RAYMOND G. HELMICK S.J.
JESUIT COMMUNITY
BOSTON COLLEGE

CHESTNUT HILL MA 02167

SUBJECT: ENCLOSURES A COPY OF HIS DRAFT LETTER WHICH HE
PLANS TO DELIVER TO PRIME MINISTER SHAMIR

PROMPT ACTION IS ESSENTIAL -- IF REQUIRED ACTION HAS NOT BEEN
TAKEN WITHIN 9 WORKING DAYS OF RECEIPT, PLEASE TELEPHONE THE
UNDERSIGNED AT 456-7486.

RETURN CORRESPONDENCE, WORKSHEET AND COPY OF RESPONSE
(OR DRAFT) TO:

AGENCY LIAISON, ROOM 91, THE WHITE HOUSE, 20500

SALLY KELLEY
DIRECTOR OF AGENCY LIAISON
PRESIDENTIAL CORRESPONDENCE

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

January 9, 1991

Dear Father Helmick,

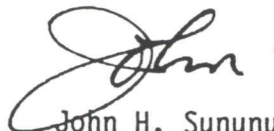
Thank you for your letters. I have asked our folks in NSC for the best way to handle your request for a meeting and briefing prior to your March trip.

I'll try to get back to you in relatively short order.

I hope you had a wonderful Christmas and I hope 1991 is a better year for all of us.

Thank you again for taking the time to correspond on these critical issues.

Sincerely,



John H. Sununu
Chief of Staff

Father Raymond G. Helmick
Jesuit Community College
Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts 02167



JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167

December 31, 1990

Governor John Sununu,
The White House
Washington, D.C.

Dear Governor Sununu,

Christ's Peace!

My thanks for your kind letter of December 4th. I was very glad to know that the matters I had written of earlier had been heard. I feel a bit presumptuous, now, to offer my thoughts on the Gulf crisis, but the matter is so serious that I truly feel responsible to say what I think. In writing to you yesterday to ask your help with my March visit to Israel I said I would be sending you the two letters in one day, but when I read over what I then wrote on the Gulf I decided to use it as a draft only.

I take it for granted that, in all his actions in this matter, the President is doing his best to prevent a war, and that that objective has an importance for him comparable to his quite proper determination to see justice done by the full withdrawal of Iraq from its invasion of Kuwait. The means he is using are less intelligible to me than they are to you of the inner circle. I had more confidence in the pre-November strategy, that combined defense against further aggression with sanctions to bring about compliance with the resolutions of the Security Council, than I do with a strategy of offensive threats and a deadline, but my uneasiness is about means rather than about objective. I'll put in a few headings here to make it easier to pick out points in this letter.

WHAT SADDAM HUSSEIN WILL SEE AS HIS FUTURE.

The President has taken his stance on a very convincing moral principle, that there must be no reward for aggression, and I fully respect that. It is the very definition of the Just Cause criterion for a just war, in the classical theory, by which defense against aggression, and in fact only that, can be the just cause for war. It remains true, though, that everything that was a matter of legitimate dispute, requiring negotiation or adjudication, before the Iraqi invasion still remains in need of negotiation or adjudication after a withdrawal. They are not forfeit for Iraq's bad behavior. I am glad to see that President Bush has said this explicitly, but I don't see that this message has gotten through to Saddam Hussein with clarity, largely because we have so many people saying that we must somehow "take out," or get rid of Saddam Hussein, that we must destroy Iraq's or his power to do anything in the future, that we must remove Iraq as a serious factor in the Middle Eastern balance, or other such threatening propositions, and these must sound as loud to Saddam Hussein as the President's recognition that what needed to be negotiated or adjudicated before still needs that afterwards.

This is important, because it should not be made to appear to Saddam Hussein that he would be in a worse situation if he complied with the withdrawal demand than if he did not; that if he did withdraw he would still face invasion of Iraq and destruction of its assets, war crimes trials and reparation demands, and the ignoring of all the matters that he believed were legitimate disputes before he invaded. If that were so, two things would follow: 1) that it would be better for him to await our attack in Kuwait, where he is dug in and has a buffer territory before we get to him in Iraq; and 2) that we ourselves would be following a policy that cannot be legitimized by the just-cause criterion, and had no legitimacy as a cause of war. Assassination doesn't meet the cut.

If we are to expect him to withdraw, and that we will not have to have war, then he must understand that it is better for him to comply than not to comply. A lot of our people seem to have inhibitions about saying anything other than "Grovel!" to Saddam Hussein on the basis that anything other than total humiliation for him is the famous "reward for aggression." It is not, and if we indulge ourselves in that kind of nonsense we make ourselves the cause of the war. This is not reward; it is the assurance of a just settlement by objective criteria.

ALTERNATIVES TO WAR.

All that is to speak as if an agreed settlement may be reached. That seems to me only remotely likely in the short term left by our January 15th deadline, or even some mid- or late-February deadline when our generals will all agree that our military forces are ready. Hence it is important to me to see that there are two alternatives to war: 1) the agreed settlement; or 2) continued embargo.

The latter, continuing the sanctions, has become a matter not merely of dispute among us Americans but a kind of touchstone of opposing policies. It should not be allowed to be that, as such a sham political battle makes it hard if not impossible to look at the real options and could trap us into a war that is unnecessary. Necessity is another of the essential criteria of a just war, and as all of you in the inner circle must be acutely aware, an unnecessary war is simply unforgiveable, especially in our contemporary circumstances, in which the horrors of a war and its effects on us and others are so monstrous.

From the beginning I have been convinced that the sanctions policy was in fact an effective one, and as I hear Administration spokespersons now repeat after one another that the sanctions are inadequate, it rings false to me, and I look for the reason for those statements in some doubt about the length of our American resolve to maintain the sanctions, or that of our allies, Arab and other, to stay the course with us. I'll take those up as separate sub-headings.

A. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SANCTIONS.

The sanctions in fact deprive Saddam Hussein of all the things for which he invaded Kuwait. That they have not yet brought him to abandon his invasion already is of far less importance than this. At somewhat longer term

their effectiveness is a certainty much greater than we could have by an attack. (I'll take up the uncertainties of military action a bit later.) To catalogue some of the more obvious items in their effectiveness:

i) Saddam Hussein has no income. He cannot sell his own oil, or what he has stolen from Kuwait.

ii) He cannot import necessities for his military machine. That means that all the high-tech items he relies upon, and has relied upon without difficulty of supply all through his war with Iran, are unavailable to him; that his military system is undergoing rot, on an exponential scale, so that the longer he has to wait the less prepared he will be militarily, and the morale of his forces has to decline as constantly.

iii) He has serious food shortages, and some real major suffering in the country for lack of specific necessities, especially of milk and medicines. I would take note of the particular provision in the Security Council resolution that these civilian necessities should not be kept from Iraq. Many advocates of a sanctions policy worry that any exception of these items would have the effect of weakening the sanctions and making them less persuasive to Saddam Hussein. I'm of an opposite opinion, namely that we could afford to sharpen the focus of the sanctions, putting the emphasis very specifically on the two main features: no oil out, no military or strategic supplies in, and that this would actually make the long-term resolve of our alliance to enforce the sanctions more convincing rather than less. I'm sure we should also be taking care to alleviate the effect of these sanctions on Jordan, which should not be subjected to them, but I will take that up separately below. But it does not appear to me that there is any sign of real famine or starvation in Iraq, nor that agriculture is a particular difficulty for the Iraqis. The picture is one of major inconvenience and disruption rather than of hunger, and that is all to the good.

iv) Saddam Hussein becomes a problem for his own people rather than the hero who successfully defies us and "the West." Over these first months of the crisis he has enjoyed hero status with the Arab masses for those readily understandable reasons, so much so that the alliance of Arab regimes with us has had to be seen always as a shaky one that threatens the standing of those regimes with their own people. As time goes on and the sanctions hold, without (as I shall explain) major drawbacks for other countries than Iraq, Saddam will increasingly be denied this hero status for his own people and army and for the other Arab peoples. The only thing that could then restore it to him would be that we should have the bad judgment to make him a holy martyr, and we should be able to manage the good sense and restraint not to do that.

v) If the sanctions policy were known to be the intention of our alliance, rather than plans of an offensive to drive Hussein more precipitously from his conquests, we would be able to draw down the numbers of our forces in the desert, replacing parts of our American complement with Arab forces, while still leaving Iraq on notice of the impracticality of any further aggression. This would make the long-term exercise of this policy far more acceptable both to our American public and to our allies.

vi) A long-term policy of sanctions would produce, in fact would be the very definition of, stability. This would deprive Saddam Hussein of his ace in the hole, which is his ability to hold the industrialised countries to ransom by disrupting oil prices. We've all learned by now that there is no real problem with oil supply over any time-scale affected by these sanctions, since the other Gulf countries have been able readily to make up for what we are not getting from Iraq and Kuwait. If the continuance of sanctions for the foreseeable future is the known policy of our alliance, the most conspicuous effect will be that stability is restored, and that sanctions are its form. That will mean that oil prices come right down to where they were.

B. ABILITY TO SUSTAIN THE SANCTIONS POLICY AT LONG TERM: U.S. AND EUROPE.

We and our European allies have shown our capacity for long-term commitment by the way we maintained the Cold War stance against the Soviet bloc for the length of 44 years. We sustained the blockade of South Africa, too, for a convincingly long time. That was a far less successful blockade than this present one, because there was so much economic reason for countries and companies to break those sanctions. In the present case, it is good economic sense for all these countries and companies to stay with the sanctions, especially for that goal of stability. We hear a lot of complaints about holes in the sanctions, though exclusively from those who have some political/ideological reason to want an attack on Iraq, a war. But in fact only a trickle, of no real economic or strategic importance, either of imports or exports has gotten in or out of Iraq, and it can remain so for the indefinite future, until Saddam Hussein becomes too great a burden for his own people to bear.

In that connection, we hear of much worry about the future military strength of Iraq, of its potential to develop, in a year, or in five or ten years, nuclear weapons with which it would be more of a threat. This is the most popular form in which it is said that we must "go in and take him out," or similar formulas that actually mean a war of aggression on our part (in theory, the pre-emptive war, which just-war theory will really not permit). I truly regard this as a fictitious fear. The military strength of Iraq, altogether an anomaly according to the country's resources or state of development, has been possible only because of the arms-sale policy of our own country, the Soviet Union and the Europeans, especially Germany and France. There is no way that is going to continue, whatever the outcome, peaceful or otherwise, of this present crisis. We have it perfectly within our power, in the kind of collaboration with our allies that is now, with the end of the Cold War, entirely available to us, to prevent any further development of weapons of mass destruction by Iraq, or even the maintenance of anything like its present conventional military strength. That aspect of our sanctions policy goes on in any conceivable responsible future, with the result that the military threat of Iraq is a passing and rapidly evanescent quantity.

All this convinces me that the sanctions policy, if maintained at long term, is indeed adequate, and hence that war is unnecessary. As I laid down above as basic supposition, I accept that it has to be the President's policy to prevent this developing into a war. But this option of continued sanctions as a means to prevent it is so clear that it can't be acceptable to slide into a war over any miscalculation on this point. That there is impatience is evident, as it is also

evident that there are many people who want a war and use impatience with the sanctions as an excuse for it. The sanctions have not caused Saddam Hussein to withdraw yet. But all the things that have made the continuance of the crisis unacceptable to us rise instead from the large scale of the military forces we have deployed in the area to provide an offensive capability, or from the uncertainty and air of crisis that destabilises our own and the world's economy.

Could we now afford to announce a change of course, away from offensive intentions and toward buckling down for a long future of sanctions, without looking weak? I see no reason why that can't be done. It can be presented as a consensus with our allies that the sanctions are indeed effective as a long-term instrument of policy and easily within our power to maintain. That will have more convincing terrors for Saddam Hussein than anything else we could tell him, as it would mean that he loses all the props for his own hold on Iraq other than the sheer terror that keeps people from overthrowing him. If in fact he is to go, it cannot legitimately be done by our decision, but only by the decision of Iraqis. And if he were overthrown or assassinated by ourselves or on our instigation, it would have the effect of making him a martyr, making all his baleful thinking about ourselves popular among the Arabs in a way that would be more dangerous to us than he is himself. But if the Iraqis themselves eventually get rid of him, the decision is theirs and legitimate. If, by simple terror, he manages to hold on for an exaggerated length of time, his whole regime and its military will be losing in strength and relevance all the time, provided that the sanctions are kept in place.

C. ARAB STEADFASTNESS IN THE SANCTIONS AND LINKAGE PROBLEMS.

The real worry that I see in the Administration is not about the effectiveness of the sanctions, nor about our own and our European allies' ability to sustain them, but about the Arab part of this alliance that the President has so brilliantly brought together. This worry is about linkage to the question of Israel and the Palestinian problem.

We are under growing pressure to raise that question again, pressure even from our European allies but much stronger from the Arabs, and this becomes a question of the stability of the alliance itself each time another Security Council resolution about Israel and the Palestinians comes up and we teeter on the edge of vetoing it. Of course we are adamantly against linkage, which we rightly recognise as a con-trick on the part of Saddam Hussein, who uses the suffering of Palestinians as rationalisation for the suffering he imposes on the Kuwaitis, his own people and many others. At a strange level we actually are being sucked into direct linkage ourselves, inasmuch as we are now saying that as long as Saddam Hussein keeps talking about the Palestinians we will have nothing to do with them, and that of course is linkage, and gives him the advantage of being able to accuse us of bad faith, a thing the Europeans too are inclined to believe on this issue. Just this last Saturday, the 29thth, we have this new, terrible outbreak of violence against Palestinians in the occupied territories, starting with the shooting to death of youngsters for writing graffiti, and escalating after that through a day of riots. The whole issue will surely come

right back to the Security Council again, this time with a stronger demand for international protection for the civilian population of Palestinians under occupation. There will be more embarrassment for the United States and more danger to our alliance with Arab countries.

When I heard General Powell and Secretary Cheney testifying before the Senate committees, they seemed more anxious to talk about the dangers of five or ten years from now, when Saddam Hussein would be stronger and perhaps a nuclear power -- and as you see, I don't believe that is true. The real worry these two witnesses seemed to represent in the Administration was about this next year, and what would happen to our Arab alliance over that time. Their preference for talking about a fictional hypothesis of five or ten years from now was that this danger to the Arab alliance is too delicate to talk about.

There is a solution to this problem, I believe, and it is in two steps: first isolating Saddam Hussein through the sanctions policy, thus producing the stability in which he could stew and the rest of the world relax; and then seriously addressing the Israel/Palestinian problem while Saddam Hussein was thus left irrelevant.

This is really why I wrote the letter to Prime Minister Shamir that you saw two months ago, arguing in it that Israel will inevitably be brought face to face with this problem again, by ourselves among others, and that Israel's best chance now is to take the initiative in the matter before it is forced upon it. I think it must be obvious to you that I do not propose that we act unfairly to Israel, undercut Israel's safety or rights, or do anything to the prejudice of our Israeli ally. As I argued in my letter to Shamir, Israel will not in fact ever be safe without coming to real terms with the Palestinians, and can come to peace with the rest of the Arabs through no other means than that the Palestinians are satisfied and commend them to the other Arabs. Our taking the initiative in this matter, not linking it to our Iraqi problem but treating it as requiring our serious attention in its own right, and in a way that simply pulls the rug out from under the pretensions of Saddam Hussein, will guarantee that the process will be one that safeguards the real rights and interests of Israel.

THE ALTERNATIVE OF WAR.

If we do come to war, we will to my mind have satisfied the Just Cause criterion for a just war; will have fallen foul of the Necessity criterion, as I believe we have no need to go to war; will perhaps have failed of the Right Intention criterion, if we are invading Iraq not for the justifiable reason of repelling aggression but for the ulterior motive of "taking out" Saddam Hussein. But our main problem then will be with Proportionality in this war.

This can be put in starkly moral terms. Our military have a horror of repeating the Vietnam experience of restraint in war, what they call "fighting with one arm tied behind their back." President Bush and all his spokesmen speak of a swift, violent blow that is meant to determine the outcome all at once. There are tactical problems on whether that is feasible, but at the

moral level the problem with it is that this describes, most probably, an attack on civilians. An army, thoroughly dug in as the Iraqis are, is not vulnerable enough to such an attack to be decisively knocked out, and I see no way this attack is going to have the sort of effect forecast if it is not against civilian cities. It is apparent enough that this is not currently worrying our American public in anything like the way the prospect of American deaths does, but that is an unfortunate bit of moral unperceptiveness on our part. The question doesn't have to be put in such abstractly moral terms as I have put it. The proportionality criterion is expressed by Clausewitz in terms of costs: if the costs of war are greater than the war's objectives, then the war must stop right there. The costs involved in this enormous carnage of Iraqis are an odium of Americans that will cling to us like the odium that attached to Germans after the Second World War. It is something that will stay, particularly, with Arabs for at least our own lifetime, perhaps much longer, and will result in Americans having no safety from terrorist attacks, at home or especially abroad, anywhere in the world for decades to come. Only through hypocrisy could we then always conclude that it was our attackers' fault and we should, self-defeatingly, dedicate ourselves to punishing them. Even apart from the great probability that the attack we have been describing would be against civilians, the strategy is basically to kill so many of them that we don't get enough of us killed to get everyone worried. That already incurs that odium, and not only in the eyes of Arabs. It will not be forgiven even by our European allies, and will be a lasting shame for ourselves.

I won't try to enumerate the other costs of such a war, as I'm sure you get plenty of such estimates. I'm glad to see that General Powell and the other responsible military men don't pretend this can all be done by air power, but understand that a ground offensive will be an essential part, and that it will involve American casualties on a scale that our own people are unlikely to accept as proportional to any objective they can endorse.

But I don't think I need to argue this case to any of you. I'm sure the President and all of you who assist him are as anxious as any of us to prevent its coming to this war, and that the question is the one I have already been addressing: how to avoid it, where are the alternatives, the better options.

One prospect I can't omit, though, is the involvement of Israel in such a war, through an attack by Iraq, through an Iraqi seizure of Jordan or however. That has, from the start, been Saddam Hussein's best option to turn the whole Arab parade around against us. I hear, occasionally, claims by or for the Administration that the Arab alliance would hold fast even in that situation. I don't believe that for a moment, and am sure that anyone who is telling you that is bluffing. Once Israel and the issues that cluster about it are brought into the war, as they surely would be as soon as it got under way and despite all the careful and responsible Israeli avoidance of provocation so far, we could be sure that our half-million Americans out in the sand-box would be right in the middle of enemy territory, on their own, with no access to harbors or airports or communication that they could not hold by force, and with consequent long-term wreckage of our relation with all the Arab states. For Israel itself, too, it would be not only the immediate, awful damage of war,

Governor John Sununu, December 31, '90 -- 8

it would be the final determinor of a situation in which Israel would always have to live in the midst of enemy states, an armed camp, drawn in on itself to the destruction of its civic life, which ultimately would fail in its confrontation with hostile Arab neighbors who might have been friends. For the Palestinians, also, it would be all tragedy, their forcible ousting, in genocidal circumstances, from their West Bank and Gaza territories, and the creation of a desperate Palestinian remnant that would have no aim in life but to wreak vengeance on their enemies.

All of this really means that war is a non-option. To come to it would already be failure: failure for the United States in its first great crisis after the termination of the Cold War; failure for the vaunted new international order, which could only dissolve into chaos; failure for the United Nations, able to act with unity now for the first time in its history, but bringing, with all its means for peace, nothing but bloodshed, which would irreparably discredit it, especially since we would all judge afterward that it had been unnecessary.

I write you perhaps a discouraging message, if you read it in terms of its negatives about the policy that appears to be heading into war. Actually, though, on the supposition I start with, that the President is working not to have the war, I would hope this letter may be read as positive, in terms of its two main conclusions: that a policy of continued sanctions will mean the genuine overcoming of the whole threat posed by Saddam Hussein's aggression, and that the problems of our alliance with the Arabs can be overcome by taking up the other main regional problem, that of Israel and the Palestinians, not by linkage, but in a way that leaves Saddam Hussein irrelevant on the sidelines.

My best wishes, and as you will understand, my prayers are with the President and all of you who assist him, that you may all have wisdom and calm through this time of momentous decisions.

In Christ,


Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.