

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telephone Conversation with King Fahd of Saudi Arabia

PARTICIPANTS: The President
King Fahd
Notetaker: Sandra Charles

DATE, TIME, AND PLACE: August 2, 1989, 10:33 a.m. 10:43 a.m.
The Oval Office

The President began by saying he wanted to call to discuss the situation in Lebanon with the hostages and more generally as well. (U)

The President said that the world was up in arms about LTC Higgins. We assumed he was dead and didn't know for sure, and didn't know when he died. He knew the King didn't have any influence over the radicals, but wanted to make the same appeal he had made to the Holy Father, the British Prime Minister and head of the United Nations. The President suggested that anything the King could do to influence the return of the body of LTC Higgins would be greatly appreciated. He continued that it was brutal to keep the body there when the man's family was suffering. He told the King we had made a strong appeal to Iran through the Swiss, but we were not very hopeful there. We were asking anyone with any influence with Iran to see what they could do. We had condemned all hostage-taking and called for the immediate release of all hostages. Lastly, he mentioned the larger hostage situation. The Secretary General had dispatched a top aide to the area to help with the return of the body, to encourage both that they take no more hostages and that there be no more deaths. (P)

The President then turned to the broader question about Lebanon itself. He commended the King on his and Prince Saud's efforts with the tripartite initiative saying he felt it offered the best hope. Despite these efforts, it appeared the Foreign Ministers had come to a halt. The President said he didn't know if we could be helpful in resurrecting the initiative and offered to call King Hussein and Chadli Bendjedid if the King thought it would be helpful. He welcomed suggestions from His Majesty on what the U.S. might do, if anything. While he didn't know whether the United Nations Security Council could help, he mentioned that he and Pope John Paul had discussed it the previous day. He then asked if the King had any strong feelings

on the UN, saying sometimes a UN meeting can be helpful and sometimes not so. (Ø)

King Fahd commented on the murder of LTC Higgins, saying it had hurt them very much in Saudi Arabia and their reaction was very bad. In Saudi Arabia it was considered to be a barbaric act. The King said he would make an effort with all parties with which he believed he had influence. First, he said he would have the body of LTC Higgins returned. Second, he would try to make an effort to have all hostages freed and returned, making that effort with all parties with which he had any influence. (Ø)

The President thanked him. (U)

King Fahd said he would mediate in these and all other matters that are abhorrent to the Saudis and other people. (Ø)

Turning to Lebanon, King Fahd encouraged the President to contact King Hassan and President Bendjedid to encourage them to make another effort on the initiative to arrange a ceasefire, remove the siege, and resolve the other problems in Lebanon. (Ø)

The President agreed to do so. (U)

The President then mentioned Prince Salman's visit, saying he had been honored to receive him. The Vice President had told him how fantastic the exhibit was. He told the King it had received wide acclaim, and he personally wanted to see it. (U)

King Fahd was pleased, saying the success of the exhibit was due to the strenuous, vigorous efforts of United States officials who promoted it. He thanked the President and the people of the United States on behalf of the Government of Saudi Arabia and his people. (U)

The President then said he wanted to raise one other subject. He said he had received a call from King Hussein and that he was very much concerned about his depressed economy. The President said he would be sending the King a letter asking for addition support, if possible. He said he would do this through normal diplomatic channels in a letter if that was ok with the King. (Ø)

King Fahd responded that he would be pleased to receive any letter from the President. He said King Hussein was a friend and anything he and other friendly countries could do to help they would. (Ø)

The President thanked him and said he looked forward to the King's visit. The arrangements were all set and they would have plenty of private time to discuss all these issues. (U)

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King Fahd said he was looking forward to the visit, and to meeting with the President. He was certain there would be some time to talk about all the important Middle East issues and issues from around the world. (U)

The President thanked the King. (U)

In concluding, King Fahd said he hoped and expected by the time of his visit, we would have accomplished some meaningful things in the Middle East. (U)

The President hoped so too. (U)

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