

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telephone Conversation with Sultan Qaboos bin Said of Oman (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Sultan Qaboos bin Said of Oman
Interpreter: Shukran Kamal
Notetaker: C. David Welch

DATE, TIME August 8, 1990, 2:55 - 3:32 p.m. EST
AND PLACE: The Oval Office

The President initiated the call. (U)

The President: Hello, how are you? I would like to pay my respects, and to share views on the recent events in the Gulf. (U)

Sultan Qaboos: Thank you. (U)

The President: I tell you, I still remember, as does Barbara, with great fondness our visit to Oman. I will never forget your hospitality. (U)

Sultan Qaboos: We also do not forget your presence among us, and we cherish those memories. There are very good feelings in Oman about the visit. (U)

The President: I hope to see you another time soon. I have a handful of points I would like to make to you, and then I would appreciate your advice on this situation. I'm sure that you know by now, we have agreed to King Fahd's request that U.S. forces deploy to Saudi Arabia to help in the defense of the Kingdom in the event of Iraqi aggression. In my speech to the American people this morning, I said that our troops would be ready to defend themselves, Saudi Arabia, and our other friends in the Gulf that might need support. Oman has long been a friend of the United States. I want you to know that when I made that statement, I had Oman in mind. We will stand by our friends. Our mission -- not just military, but UN sanctions also -- must be successful, or Iraq will not be deterred or removed from Kuwait. I would like to encourage your political endorsement of Saudi Arabia's decision and our deployment. More than anything else, this would send the right political signal of our firm solidarity. That signal would go out to the other Arabs and

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especially to Iraq. Our forces will also be needing considerable host nation support, perhaps access to facilities in Oman. We've had such good cooperation from you, I hope that I can count on you to instruct your people to give us this cooperation. Over the past few days, you may have been concerned about the resolve of the United States or our willingness in the face of Saddam's brutal aggression to do anything. I hope our actions make it unmistakably clear by now that we intend to stand by our friends. Iraq will not win this confrontation. I welcome your comments and your assessment of the situation right now. (Ø)

Sultan Qaboos: Thank you for the call and for your explanation of the situation. Second, we are pleased with the firm stance the United States has taken alongside Saudi Arabia, which is what we expected. We support and strongly endorse this stand. Third, I talked to our Foreign Minister and told him to clarify Oman's position in support of U.S. policy and Saudi Arabia's request to the United States to help it defend itself. Our friends will not stand with their hands tied behind their backs. (Ø)

The President: Well, that is a very direct and very strong statement of support. Thank you very much. I would like your advice on the issue; you are closer to it. How do you see Iran's stance? What's its position now? (Ø)

Sultan Qaboos: Before that, with regard to the request to facilitate and support the troops, there are agreements between us. Whether to do with the agreements or not, everything needed to support Saudi Arabia and U.S. troops to defend Saudi Arabia, there should be no doubt that we are willing to do everything. (Ø)

The President: Thanks, that is very forthcoming. (Ø)

Sultan Qaboos: Regarding Iran, our information is that they did not issue a public statement of support to indicate their feelings. But our understanding is that they aren't unhappy with what is happening as long as Western ships do not go over into Persian waters. They informed us that they will stand alongside the Gulf countries and will do anything asked if there is a need for it. But in order to do that they need parts and equipment they do not have. If they get this in adequate amounts, then they're in a better position to do what is asked of them. We have also learned that Iraq has talked to Iran and is now ready to solve their problems -- they want to neutralize Iran in this matter. I would like to assure you that they are doing this so that if they have an agreement with Iran, and Iran is weak, then they can use the troops on that border elsewhere. It is important for you to know this. (Ø)

The President: I agree 100 per cent. Your analysis is correct. (Ø)

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Sultan Qaboos: If I may advise you, the United States and the West should take advantage of developing an understanding with Iran so that the balance in the area is not lost. (Ø)

The President: I agree with your thinking. There have been great differences between us and Iran, but I am interested in what you have said. If you have any specifics on this, call me or have your able Foreign Minister be in touch. Two points: first, we want Iran to keep the pressure on; and second, in the long run, we want better relations with Iran. (Ø)

Sultan Qaboos: I understand the obstacles to bettering relations; those are understood. I also understand Iran must do something in order to improve relations -- it must turn a new leaf. We are doing our best to help. I have heard that Iranians are saying "do not beat a dead horse." (Ø)

The President: We would welcome that, but I'm not quite sure how to get there. Rafsanjani seems to be reasonable; on the extreme, there are others. It seems any move that Rafsanjani makes, the Minister of Interior shoots down. But that is long-range. I welcome your further advice anytime, not only on the Gulf but also on wider issues, especially relations with Iran. (Ø)

Sultan Qaboos: We will collect our information and our thoughts, push the matter of improved relations, and relay them to you, also on relations with Iran and between Iran and other Western countries. We will call you or go through the Foreign Minister. Before concluding, I understand time is involved but don't lose the opportunity we have now, so that Iran does not fear its talks with Iraq. (Ø)

The President: I welcome any details. I would not like them to make an un-called for deal with Iraq because of their concerns about us. We might provide certain assurances perhaps through you, regarding relations with Iran. Tell them that you talked to me and that we want to assure Iran. Thank you for your observations. (Ø)

Sultan Qaboos: I would like to thank you. I will let you know that when we have information, we will inform you. I will talk to Iran, say you're an open-minded and willing to consider new ideas regarding relations. (Ø)

The President: Thank you for your support. I send you my best personal regards. (Ø)

-- End of Conversation --