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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with Bob Hawke, Prime Minister of Australia on August 9, 1990 (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Bob Hawke, Prime Minister of Australia
Notetaker: Douglas H. Paal, NSC

DATE, TIME August 9, 1990, 5:15 - 5:40pm EDT
AND PLACE: Oval Office

The President: Hello, Bob, how are you? (U)

PM Hawke: Hello, how're you holding out? (U)

The President: Hanging in, hanging in, I have been concentrating on this somewhat intense and frustrating situation in the Middle East. I assume that's what you are calling about. (Ø)

PM Hawke: Specifically, there have been some raisings by your people to join this naval multinational task force, because it has become current with the press here and caused one way or another national concern here and I thought it best if I spoke directly to you to see what you think is on your mind, if we can decide on how best to contribute, to join the multinational national defense force. I will be having a press conference today. (Ø)

The President: Bob, I think that's wonderful. I think there would be great interest in your participating. We are very much concerned with the multinational force. We are pleased to hear this -- we will get our people in touch right away. I am glad you are so open-minded. (Ø)

PM Hawke: We are more than open-minded. If the request comes, we are prepared to send three ships. If it is to be productive we need to qualify certain standards for the command and composition of the force. We think it may be under UN auspices right now. We want to look at the status, membership, command and purpose of the task force. By status, I mean whether under UN command or not, who will control communications and all of this, so that we can get the UN flag over all of this. (Ø)

The President: This might be difficult to get under UN auspices. My UN people advise it will be difficult. With this positive indication, let's get our people in touch. France, Britain,

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Germany, you, and others as well. I am skeptical we can get the UN flag over all of this. The Soviets, I am pleased to say, are interested. It is good not to have them working against us this time in this sort of crisis. But, Bob, I am advised it is very hard to get the UN flag over the interdiction effort. (S)

PM Hawke: What about Japan, George? (S)

The President: Japan has been very cooperative on the economic side with four prospective economic sanctions. I have not talked to Kaifu in the last few days. They can contribute in some way. (U)

PM Hawke: I think it would be useful. For reasons I think you would understand, George, we would like to have Canada and Japan join, too. A number of European countries are in place now. I think we would be particularly interested to see Canada as part of it. They are somewhat interested in it. I talked to Brian Mulroney yesterday, who indicated a supportive role in the same way that we did. If he were to get a request from you, to Canada and Australia, then we could simultaneously announce... (S)

The President: That is easily arranged. I was talking with Mulroney last weekend, when he came down here. We did not discuss Canada in a multinational force at that time. I certainly will make a simultaneous announcement. With this very positive phone call, I will get with the Secretary of Defense and the National Security Advisor. We will not discuss this outside and will arrange a simultaneous approach. You will see other participants on land and sea. There will be some Arab participation. Saddam will say this is a Western effort to beat down the Arabs. But it is not just Canada, Australia, Great Britain and France. There is much further participation here. (S)

PM Hawke: Good, George. Obviously, we would see the multinational force as primarily for blockade and sanctions. (S)

The President: Precisely, to enforce the blockade and protect the free flow from the oil producers. Can we go back to Japan? (S)

PM Hawke: We had the feeling that because of the importance to Japan of the Middle East it would be appropriate to have some important Japanese presence. You and I want to see that the Japanese have a role commensurate with their importance. To some extent, they have had an easy ride, an easy ride from you. I do not say this critically; this is as it has evolved in the post-war era. They are perceived not to have as large a role when it comes to defense, but to be big in the economic dimension. Their participation will have the benefit of... (S)

The President: If that's a possibility, they can pitch in one way or another. They may be limited in any defensive capability but they have a lot of money. Incidentally, the Turks have been stalwart in all of this. Jim Baker is over there. I have heard from him, talks with Ozal have been quite productive. The initial reports have been very positive. (Ø)

PM Hawke: I have met Ozal when I was over there. He is an impressive fellow. He runs the place when it comes to decisions; the others are just supernumeraries. As for the Japanese, they certainly have a lot of money. They also have a navy of quality. (Ø)

The President: On Japan, they do have some forces. I have no hesitancy to ask Japan for support. This is a timely and very important call. (Ø)

PM Hawke: Let me indicate what we would be able to provide: two FFGs and one supply ship, an oiler. (Ø)

The President: I repeat, that would be very helpful. Let me pass that along then. It is encouraging in terms of ships and people in that part of the world, positive response not just for the Saudis. It is positive for Oman. Oman is standing tall. You can tell your commanders they will have ports, and our forces will use their support for various vessels. (Ø)

PM Hawke: Which country would do much? (Ø)

The President: Oman. Positive support from the Emirates. We haven't had a chance to call them all. (Ø)

PM Hawke: At the press conference, I can say you will have your people talking with us on a more definite basis as, I understand, participation is concerned. For presentation, you called me, we had a yarn, we will be working our participation. We indicated our willingness to be a part of it. (Ø)

The President: Is it alright to say that now? (Ø)

PM Hawke: I think it will be within 7 hours from now. (Ø)

The President: I'll be glad to mention it earlier or wait until you make a statement. (Ø)

PM Hawke: I would like to make a statement, first, George. (Ø)

The President: We will say that I called you to request if Australians could participate. You were positive. Details will be worked out by others. We will, in seven hours, watch for the take, then we'll make a positive suggestion. We would try to organize a response, this is a positive development. (Ø)

PM Hawke: Excuse me just a minute, George. (Pauses to speak with aides.) George, I think given the circumstances we could arrange to make a statement earlier. Two and a half hours from now? Could you ring Brian Mulroney and ask him for support. If you can ring Brian now, then I'll call him and work out the details. (Ø)

The President: That is perfect. I will call him, sure. We will wait. I would like to say something after you do. (Ø)

PM Hawke: I am very grateful and want to say that we can call Canada and, if you would want, it would be a similar request, Canada has been invited, if that would be helpful. (Ø)

The President: We should get it out fairly soon, but I want to get it out the way you want it. Our evening news goes to bed here pretty quick. (Ø)

PM Hawke: Ring Brian Mulroney and get it going. If you could ring Brian Mulroney now and tell him of our conversation, I will have a conference with him. (Ø)

The President: I will call right now. Thank you, you are a good friend. (Ø)

PM Hawke: George, I want to say something, and it is not just gratuitous. Australians are enormously impressed by the way you have handled this, with maturity and intelligence. (Ø)

The President: Well thank you very much. I have good people doing most of the work. (Ø)

PM Hawke: Goodbye, George. (U)

The President: Bye, Bob. (U)

-- End of Conversation --