

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telephone Conversation with President Turgut Ozal of Turkey

PARTICIPANTS: The President
President Turgut Ozal
Nicholas Burns, NSC Staff (notetaker)

DATE, TIME AND PLACE August 20, 1990, 9:02-9:16 a.m.
The Oval Office

The President: Hello, Mr. President. (U)

President Ozal: How are you? (U)

The President: I am all right and pleased and proud of Turkey's actions in this conflict. (U)

President Ozal: Our Foreign Minister was in Tehran last week with Rafsanjani and I have some information to relay to you. (S)

The President: Please go ahead. You said your Foreign Minister was in Tehran? (S)

President Ozal: Yes. Ali Bozer. The Iranians asked him to go to Tehran. The situation is as follows. The Iranians said they are firmly committed to sanctions. They see the Iraqi return of their land and the 1975 Algiers Treaty and the current crisis in the Gulf as completely separate. They are concerned that others may violate the sanctions. They said the Soviets had sought permission to evacuate 4,500 Soviets by air from Iran. They fear the Soviets may be planning to send spare parts or even troops to Iraq. (S)

The President: That would be a direct contravention of what the Soviets have told us. (S)

President Ozal: Yes. I think the likelihood of spare parts is greater than their sending troops. The Soviet request to evacuate their citizens involved bringing them to Iran from Iraq by bus for travel back to the Soviet Union by air. (S)

The Iranians said their public position on the crisis would be that they are opposed to any foreign presence in the region. But privately, they say they are not opposed to the U.S. presence until there is no longer a need for it. (S)

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The President: That is encouraging. (U)

President Ozal: The Iranians reminded us that Sadaam is an animal who will not be silenced until he is suffocated. The Iranians also said they will maintain their state of alert on the border with Iraq. They fully expect that Iraq will withdraw from their territory and repatriate their prisoners. The Turkish delegation found the Iranians to be relaxed about Iraq. (S)

The Iranians said they are not yet ready for a better relationship with the U.S. Our representatives offered to help in communication between Iran and the U.S. as a conduit. (S)

The President: That is reassuring. I have been concerned about a possible unholy alliance between Iran and Iraq. I am also increasingly concerned about the Iraqi ships in the Gulf. We cannot permit them to go forward. (S)

President Ozal: Yes. We have been following the situation. What is the situation with the U.S. and UK citizens in Kuwait and Iraq? (S)

The President: This is of grave concern to me. We have information the Iraqis are moving some of them to strategic locations. It is uncivilized and hardly believable. But we have information they are being moved to targets like gas manufacturing plants. I am increasingly concerned they are hostages. The Iraqis are making unacceptable diplomatic demands. We won't do what they want or give in. I have been told by my Ambassador to the UN that there is a possibility of UN action in just a few hours that has to help. But I am increasingly concerned. We can't be silent or inactive in the face of provocation and I hope you and others will understand. (S)

President Ozal: They are blackmailers. (S)

The President: Yes, it is blackmail. We can't pay off blackmailers. They have put U.S. lives at risk. I would welcome your judgment on this. We just cannot sit there forever, and I hope again that people would understand this. (S)

President Ozal: We could help to take your people out of Iraq, if they are let go. (S)

The President: Any verbal, public assistance would be very much appreciated. (U)

President Ozal: We'll do that. We can also help you if you have an operation. (S)

The President: That is a very helpful statement. Thank you. We don't doubt your friendship. (U)

President Ozal: How many U.S. citizens are in Kuwait and Iraq? (S)

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The President: Wait just a minute. Bob Gates is here, I'll check. We have 2500 people in Kuwait and 500 in Iraq. (S)

President Ozal: Have they not rounded up your people in Kuwait? (S)

The President: Not yet. But there is a report that they are going house to house searching for them. The world is outraged. (S)

President Ozal: The Iranians think that conflict is imminent. (S)

The President: I wonder if they think Sadaam wonders the same thing. (S)

President Ozal: I don't know. The Iranians said that seventy Iraqi planes are loaded with chemical weapons. (S)

The President: We know they have made preparations. We'll continue to check on them. We have got air power and interceptor power. The man is ruthless. Do you think there is a chance he will move against Saudi Arabia? (S)

President Ozal: I don't think so. (U)

The President: We don't believe so either. (U)

President Ozal: He'll wait and try to bargain. If he was interested in Saudi Arabia, he would have done so ten days ago. We will continue to talk to the Iranians. (S)

The President: It is important that you do so. (S)

President Ozal: We also met the Pakistanis in Tehran. We'll listen to your speech today. (U)

The President: There is nothing that is really new in it. Your favorite station and mine, CNN, is carrying it. Thanks very much for your call. (U)

President Ozal: Good-bye. (U)

The President: Good-bye. (U)

- End of Conversation -

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