

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMCON

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: President's Telephone Call from the President of Yemen (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
President Saleh
Interpreter: Shukran Kamal
Notetaker: Sandra Charles

DATE, TIME September 1, 1990; 8:40 - 9:00 a.m. EDT
AND PLACE: Kennebunkport

The President: Hello, President Saleh. How are you? (U)

President Saleh: How are you, Mr. President? (U)

The President: We're all very busy. I'm interested in why you're calling me and pleased you called. (U)

President Saleh: Thank you. I hope you and Mrs. Bush and your children and grandchildren are all well. (U)

The President: They're all fine. What do you want to talk about my friend? (U)

President Saleh: First Mr. President, I wanted to ask about your health. Then I wanted to discuss very important matters with you. I hope if you think that it is suitable you would approve to send someone from your Administration to talk with us about security and peace, and for preserving the interests of everyone concerned and U.S. interests in the larger interest of peace and stability. I believe there is still time to do that, Mr. President. (U)

The President: I would be pleased to have someone there. But I must tell you I have been concerned about the demonstrations there. I understand that you can't control them. But we are bound in solidarity with the other Arabs and the world on the UN resolutions. We see no compromise on those. (U)

President Saleh: You know well, Mr. President, that democracies -- and being the strong advocate of democracy you are -- there is very little we can do, but we are trying to stop them. We are making an effort so that we can come to a peaceful solution with the United States. (U)

The President: Good. I am glad to hear that. (U)

President Saleh: I am willing to receive your envoy as soon as possible. There is still time to do something constructive. We will talk with him about a constructive proposal to resolve the situation. (S)

The President: Is Yemen able to say that it is supporting UN sanctions? I know at one point you said you would. I just want to be sure we are together on that one important point. (S)

President Saleh: We still support the sanctions and are adhering to them. (S)

The President: That is encouraging news. It certainly gives us room to have a good discussion between you and our emissary. You know, Mr. President, we've had -- between you and me -- good relations. I am worried that we are drifting apart on the question of Iraqi aggression. I realize Yemen has close relations with Iraq, but the more I can appeal to you that it is more important for you to stay with the rest of the world and with the Arab world. Having said that I will send an emissary to discuss this with you. I have one last appeal: if you felt you could, make any appeal to Saddam Hussein to stop using hostages as a shield -- hostages from many countries -- because this concept of using innocent travelers, innocent people as pawns is making world opinion solidly opposed to Saddam. If you have any influence if he would stop doing this, it would make things better with many countries. It is brutal and in the past was brought up in many tribunals. (S)

President Saleh: First of all, Mr. President, I would like to say that relations between the United States and Yemen are good, have been good, and will continue to be good. I will never allow anything to stand in the way. I cherish them. They are based on principles. That won't change. The second point about an appeal to Saddam on the hostages, I am willing to do everything in that regard. That is why I asked for an envoy to discuss these matters with him, to have practical steps to be taken to resolve the hostage problem and to bring peace. I believe these steps can be acceptable to the United States, they can be acceptable to Iraq. We want to explore them with the envoy. We are doing this because of our friendship with the United States. We are not biased. We want to be mediators. We feel if we take sides clearly and openly in favor of UN sanctions, then our mediation role would be compromised. That is why, even though we support sanctions, we want to continue to play a role and we need to succeed with both sides. (S)

The President: All right, thank you. We will be in touch with you about the envoy and when he might arrive on the scene. And thank you for calling. (S)

President Saleh: It would help to send the envoy as soon as possible to have your ideas and views on resolving this matter. (S)

The President: He will, but my ideas are very public. I have repeated them over again, and they are the same as the Arab countries and the UN. But the envoy will be instructed to listen carefully to your views and to explore ideas with you. (S)

President Saleh: We are certain that our ideas and efforts will work for a just peace and for preserving world interests, and to avoid an explosion in a manner that preserves and protects everyone's interests. (S)

The President: I appreciate your optimism. Thank you for your call. (S)

President Saleh: Thank you. I am sure that working together we will find a successful, just solution, and I hope you will send your envoy right away. (S)

The President: Good-bye. (U)

-- End of Conversation --