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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with King Fahd of Saudi Arabia on
September 10, 1990 (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
King Fahd
Interpreter: Shukran Kamal
Notetaker: Sandra Charles

DATE, TIME September 10, 1990, 1030 - 1100 EDT
AND PLACE: The Oval Office

The President: Your Majesty, I wanted to give you a call to provide a readout of my meetings with President Gorbachev in Helsinki. (S)

King Fahd: Thank you, Mr. President. (U)

The President: With your permission, I'd like to mention one or two points. And I'd be glad to get your reaction. Although we spent some time on economic matters concerning the Soviet Union internally, most of our time was spent on the Gulf. There were no side agreements, no suggested agreements, and nothing on the table other than what was said at the press conference yesterday. In short, I am very pleased with the statement -- the joint statement is nothing short of historic. In our view, and I'd like to hear your view, this will send a powerful signal to Saddam Hussein to get out of Kuwait. This way he can't divide us and play off the Soviets and the United States against one another. (S)

I've been worried about what I felt might be a weakening of the economic blockade by some countries, even countries who support us, to permit food to go inside of Iraq unfettered -- that is without controls. The statement makes clear there should be no wholesale shipment of food there. Humanitarian -- and that is the word that is used by the UN Security Council -- humanitarian exceptions should be monitored by a force outside Iraq to be sure it gets to those truly in need, such as children. (S)

It also states that we will consider additional measures consistent with the UN charter to accomplish what we should, but that was left very vague. I think that also sends a useful signal to Saddam. Gorbachev did repeat several times that he would like this solved without violence. I said we would too, but this would require a Soviet effort to make sure sanctions worked. (S)

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So I am pleased with the meeting and lastly I want to thank you for your warm reception to Jim Baker and your support, generosity and hospitality shown to our people there. But I would like very much your views and how you felt our meeting played in the Gulf. (S)

King Fahd: First of all, I am pleased with what was accomplished with the meeting of President Bush and President Gorbachev. Most people in the area, in the Gulf especially, had not expected such a positive outcome from the meeting, and for you, Mr. President, to get as much as you did. Our inquiries about the statement and reactions to it follows: everyone in the Gulf was pleased with what happened, and there is agreement that other measures are possible if Iraq doesn't heed the warning and does not decide to withdraw from Kuwait. It seems to me that Iraq is now surrounded in a significant and tremendous way. Iraq is surrounded psychologically and socially and can do nothing but yield to world opinion. Otherwise, it will bring harm to itself. There is evidence for that, Mr. President, that precedes your meeting with Gorbachev. I have seen pictures of Saddam Hussein, and in those pictures, he is unable to complete a sentence and continue his discourse. (S)

The President: That's very interesting. (U)

King Fahd: We believe the man is unbalanced and are confident by this in our contacts with him and by what we've seen in his interviews with the US press. I am sure in the interview with Saddam Hussein and a member of the US press corp -- I believe it was Dan Rather -- I am not sure whether you saw it -- but it shows Saddam is not normal in his movements, behavior and speaking. (S)

The President: No, I didn't see that one. I will get them to play it for me. (U)

King Fahd: I hope you would see that so it will be clear to you that the Saddam we know is not the same Saddam who exists now. A report we received from inside Iraq indicates that there is lots of resentment in the army and the people. And, Mr. President, you may also have heard that he killed many officers close to him recently. (S)

The President: Has that been confirmed? (U)

King Fahd: They are confirmed because we heard it from our sources and the BBC and other broadcasts. We know it is true because I know Saddam and it is as easy for him to kill one as one hundred. Several broadcasts have statements about explosions in chemical plants near the border. Iraq has denied them, but I believe the reports are true. What matters now is the man is in a situation in which all he has to do is yield, in my judgment, which should be in one to two weeks. (S)

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The President: But Your Majesty, do you think it is possible that the pressure will be such that he can say okay, I will leave Kuwait and let the rulers back in? Can he do that and remain the dictator of Iraq? (S)

King Fahd: I think he has to withdraw, that has to happen. But I think and I am confident that he has lots of opposition in Iraq because Iraq gave Iran everything without taking back anything in return. (S)

The President: Yes, exactly. (U)

King Fahd: At the same time, lots of people will expect answers to the mistakes made, people who suffered 8 years of war, if they are not willing to fight, and he gave back all the gained, then why make them fight now? I believe, I think because only God knows, that as soon as he withdraws from Kuwait (and he does so completely), he will come to an end, he will no longer exist by a coup or other means. (S)

The President: I wish it would happen soon to spare the world and the Iraqi people more suffering. There is total world concern. It would be nice if the Iraqi people would move sooner. But there is nothing to do on that. I am pleased you think the sanctions are working and solidarity between us will help get him out of there. (S)

King Fahd: Mr. President, I share your feeling that I'd rather have an end to Saddam Hussein come sooner rather than later. I would like to say, Mr. President, that you may have heard it before but I'll say it in any case, that a large number of Iraqi officers and soldiers have sought refuge in the Kingdom. They relate and report many stories of tragedies that happen to them. Iraq had difficult experiences in the desert when they were invaded. We will continue to debrief them and get information from them and provide it to you. (S)

The President: Thank you. Turkish President Ozal told me some of them were coming his way with the same story. (S)

King Fahd: This is good, Mr. President. It would enable us to collect information from the soldiers coming to us and Turkey and find out exclusive information on chemical plants and products and actions that are banned and share them with one another. (S)

The President: That's right. I am very worried about the nuclear and chemical weapons capability of this madman. (S)

King Fahd: Yes, he has been working on improving these capabilities in the last few years during the war between Iran and Iraq. People were not attentive to it. (S)

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The President: Now we all are alert to it. The Soviet visit went very well. After you've had a chance to analyze the statement, I would be happy to discuss it with you, respond to your questions, and discuss any suggestion you might have. (S)

King Fahd: Thank you Mr. President for your offer. I now have the joint statement, and I will read it and study it and consider it carefully. Let me tell you again what you did in your meeting with Gorbachev will have universal impact. Most did not expect you to accomplish what you did and get what you got from Gorbachev. (S)

The President: Let's stay in close touch until we win what is happening out there. (S)

King Fahd: I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for this call. I want to tell you that as we are talking I see you getting off your plane in Helsinki. (S)

The President: It truly is a small world. (U)

King Fahd: I agree, Mr. President, it is a small world because of satellites. Through satellite communications I follow everything. (S)

The President: Tomorrow night I am giving a speech to the American people, but I hope the message will be received well around the world, and it will certainly be a message of solidarity with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. (S)

King Fahd: Thank you, Mr. President. That pleases me very much. (U)

The President: Good-bye, and my respects. (U)

King Fahd: Thank you, Mr. President. Good-bye. (U)

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