

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telephone Call from President Mitterrand of France (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Francois Mitterrand, President
Notetaker: Robert Hutchings, NSC Staff
Interpreter: Alec Toumayan

DATE, TIME September 16, 1990, 3:17 - 3:23 p.m.
AND PLACE: Camp David

President Mitterrand initiated the call. (U)

The President: How are you, Francois? It is good to hear your voice. (U)

President Mitterrand: I promised to call you, though I haven't very much to tell you that you don't already know, because our decisions were taken yesterday. We decided to send an important number of troops, both land and air, to Saudi Arabian territory. The French Defense Minister has met King Fahd, and our discussions are underway. I wanted to give you a feeling for our decision. It is very difficult to understand Iraqi attitudes toward France, because, like the Soviet Union, we helped them a lot. Each time we did not send them arms they had requested, the King of Saudi Arabia and the Amir of Kuwait sent us letters asking why we had not sent arms to Iraq. It is bizarre. As to why they have taken this step, we have no explanation. Perhaps like all love affairs that turn sour, passion turns to violence. It will be important for us to talk, because our armies will be side by side. (U)

The President: I appreciate your call. We have watched with admiration as you handled this difficult situation. The sending of forces will be well received in various places. I agree we will stay in close touch, especially because we will have forces side by side. I appreciate the phone call and your update. I must say I am confused at some of Iraq's almost irrational actions. (U)

President Mitterrand: I agree. (U)

The President: In any event, thank you for the update. Let's stay in touch. (U)

President Mitterrand: I wanted also to thank you very much for your very friendly phone call while I was in Prague. (U)

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The President: Have a nice remainder of your Sunday. We will talk soon. (U)

President Mitterrand: Tomorrow I will be in Germany with Chancellor Kohl. (U)

The President: You are on the road all the time. You must be tired. (U)

President Mitterrand: I do travel too much, but then there are twelve in the Community. (U)

The President: Exactement. Au revoir. (U)

-- End of Conversation --

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