

THE WHITE HOUSE

#8151

WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon to President Francois Mitterrand of France
(U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
President Francois Mitterrand
Adrian Basora, NSC Staff (Notetaker)
Alec Toumayan, Interpreter

DATE, TIME: October 11, 1990, 3:41-4:00 p.m.
AND PLACE: The Oval Office

The President: Hello, comment allez-vous? (U)

President Mitterrand: Fine. (U)

The President: I am calling on a matter of great importance for me and I would ask you to let me present my thoughts fully before you respond. I think the current situation is vital for the resolution of the Gulf crisis. You had asked that the U.S. show flexibility regarding a resolution on the tragic events of October 8 in Jerusalem. We now have a tough resolution, with support from the Soviet Union and United Kingdom -- it is tough but balanced. My appeal is that the Permanent Five demonstrate unity among themselves so as to ensure that the text gets proper consideration by the Security Council. (S)

I understand that your representative is continuing to lean towards the NAM resolution. If so, this will split the Permanent Five and thus the Security Council. I fear that the NAM delegations will hide behind this split to push for the NAM resolution. If this goes on to the point that a veto by the U.S. is required, it would be damaging to our position in the Gulf. We must not let Saddam Hussein get away with putting the focus on the Palestinian problem. Without intending it, the NAM resolution has this effect. (S)

I knew we would face a challenge from the PLO, since it is so pro-Saddam Hussein. Candidly, I am feeling considerable political pressure at home because of our attempt to get a resolution strongly condemning Israel. I don't like to do this, and I normally don't, but I am making a strong personal appeal to you to support the British text. You know that, a few weeks ago, we wanted to support your resolution, but the moment was not opportune. It is important to focus attention back where it belongs. The Saudis, the Egyptians, and the Soviets will go

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along with the British resolution. I know that you have influence on Zaire and on other countries. Working together, we can get this resolution through. (S)

President Mitterrand: Our representative at the UN expresses the opinion of France based on our instructions. Foreign Minister Dumas told me two hours ago that the NAM had withdrawn its text, but he also feels that the U.S. text is very weak. It has two key parts. The first part condemns the violence. The second part simply observes that the Secretary General will be going to Israel. I personally found the text rather soft. Saddam Hussein's main strategy is to mobilize Arab opinion against the Israelis. If the Israelis commit such a blatant error as to fire with live ammunition at the Palestinians, this gives Saddam Hussein a very strong argument. It is, therefore, essential that the Israeli action be clearly condemned. (S)

The President: Exactly. (U)

President Mitterrand: Can you read me the text of your resolution? (S)

The President: (Reads the text of the resolution.) This third paragraph represents a major departure by the U.S. The NAM wants to talk about dealing with the Israeli-occupied territories and this would permit Saddam Hussein to link his invasion of Kuwait with the Palestinian issue. It is on this one point that I am making my appeal to you. We, and you also, want to avoid this linkage. (S)

President Mitterrand: I understand. The best way to proceed is for me to return to my office and to read the texts, since I do not have them with me. Then I will call you back in half an hour. (S)

The President: I am very sorry that you will need to go back to the office, but it is important to get a good resolution of this issue. (S)

President Mitterrand: Going back to the office at this time is the least of my concerns. Is it all right to call you back in half an hour? (S)

The President: Absolutely, any time of the day or night. The sooner the better, since the political pressure in this country is mounting and I do not want to have to veto a Security Council resolution. (S)

End of Conversation