

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with Prime Minister Brian Mulroney of Canada (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Brian Mulroney, Prime Minister of Canada
Notetaker: Philip Zelikow

DATE, TIME: October 24, 1990, 1:44 - 1:52pm
AND PLACE: Oval Office

Prime Minister Mulroney: I wanted to call and congratulate you on the passage of the Clean Air Act. Thank you for your strong stand and consistent leadership. (U)

The President: I appreciate your calling. It was a long struggle. I'm glad it is resolved. (U)

Prime Minister Mulroney: Well it was due to your leadership in the Oval Office. I know it and so does everyone else. (U)

The President: It clears the way for work on other things between us. (U)

What are your thoughts on other subjects, like the Gulf? (Ø)

Prime Minister Mulroney: Derek was in to see Brent about our preparations. We are prepared to support necessary action. (Ø)

I'm intrigued by this release of French nationals. I wonder what moved Saddam to take that step. We had a situation where one of our members of parliament, a Conservative of long standing with ties in the Arab world, was invited to meet with Saddam. His name is Robert Corbett, Member of Parliament for New Brunswick. He was told that, as a result of his visit, Canadians would be freed. I killed the visit. I did not want Canadian MPs in Baghdad trying to get Canadians out while others are left there. But I'm mystified now by seeing everyone from Ted Heath onward going there. (Ø)

The President: The Iraqis are talking to everybody. We just had a Quaker' delegation go there. Saddam's trying to get a little high ground in public relations. I'm concerned because these efforts highlight the propaganda nature of all of this. The

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French have denied vigorously giving any quid pro quo. They've gone out of their way to reassure us about all of that. (S)

Prime Minister Mulroney: In free societies I know it is hard to put the kibosh on things. Maybe Jim should tell our allies that, look, we're all being approached to be used as pawns by Saddam and unless we have a united approach we can get cut off at the knees. Americans are going out there and British are going out there, and I wonder what the hell is going on. (S)

The President: Of course we can't control individual citizens. It is propaganda. I can urge members of Congress not to go, but I think we'll see more left-wing leaders, perhaps like Jesse Jackson, going and bringing home a straggle of hostages here or there. We will continue to resist piecemeal pawn playing that plays right into Saddam's hands. (S)

Prime Minister Mulroney: Have you picked up any new signal how Saddam might be thinking, whether to sit down and talk rather than fight? (S)

The President: Jim Baker is sitting right here; we've received no signal on their willingness to talk. The Saudis, having overstated their position, are now going to great lengths to pull back, to make clear the Prince didn't say what he said. I don't see a great new offensive, except through Tariq Aziz and others saying they want to talk. But each time they reiterate that they won't give up one inch of Kuwait. Some people say give 'em an island, or an election, or access to the sea. Once you start that, you start unraveling a strong coalition. I'm glad to have this chat. I'll talk to Jim about the idea of circulating the thought to beware of Saddam in sending people over there. (S)

Prime Minister Mulroney: It just damages the solidarity of the alliance. If Jim would like, in confidence, to use the Canadian example -- where they made clear that if he went Canadians would be freed, Jim would be free to do so. (S)

The President: Thanks. The name was, again? (S)

Prime Minister Mulroney: Robert Corbett, Member of Parliament. (S)

The President: I'm glad you called. (U)

Prime Minister Mulroney: One last word. You've got an approval rating higher than any freely elected ruler in the world today. It's equal to several others of us put together. Coming from someone with all the scars, let me urge you not to change your approach and your style. Just ride it through. Do what you're doing -- to hell with it. There is a deep well of admiration for you here and in the States. (S)

- End of Conversation -

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