

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telephone Conversation with President Turgut Ozal of Turkey (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
President Turgut Ozal
Nicholas Burns, NSC Staff (notetaker)

DATE, TIME: October 24, 1990; 9:41 a.m.-10:04 a.m.
AND PLACE: The Oval Office

The President: Well, how are you, Mr. President? (U)

President Ozal: Fine, thank you. (U)

The President: I'm glad to hear from you. (U)

President Ozal: Everything is fine. I hope you will solve your budget problem today. (U)

The President: It is very difficult. Some members of my own party are in rebellion. We're having a big political fight. But we will not let it divert us from supporting our interests in the Gulf. What is your latest thinking on the Gulf? (U)

President Ozal: I visited the region from 13-18 October. I saw King Fahd, Sheikh Zayed, the Emir of Qatar, Mubarak and President Assad of Syria. I had long talks with all of them. It was a good visit and I think it gave them courage. Some of them hate Saddam very much. (U)

There are maybe some differences among the Arabs. First, in the Gulf area -- the Emirates, Qatar, Saudi Arabia--they want to see a fast solution to the crisis, a speedy solution. I said yes we want a fast solution too but give us time so that the embargo will yield results. I said the embargo is biting Saddam. So give President Bush the time if he wants it. Second, Egypt and Syria understand that we must wait for the embargo to get results. The two groups were different in that respect. (U)

Mubarak is still angry with King Hussein and Saddam Hussein and he suspects there was some kind of understanding between them when they formed the ACC--the Arab Cooperation Council. He thinks King Hussein and Saddam Hussein planned the new organization to isolate Egypt and prevent it from making a move in the region. (U)

After my trip, I sent a special representative to Iran to see Rafsanjani about my discussions in the Middle East and to give my impressions. This went well, and I am also going to see Rafsanjani on 10 November on my way to Japan for the coronation. (S)

The President: Our Vice President will be there. (Ø)

President Ozal: Good. I'll see him. (U)

The President: He'll have my latest sentiments. (U)

President Ozal: I'll give Rafsanjani my views. I'll be there for four hours. As you can see, we're trying to strengthen the coalition. (Ø)

The President: What are Rafsanjani's views on the U.S. and on sanctions. (Ø)

President Ozal: On sanctions, they are hard, as far as we understand. There is the possibility of smuggling on the border. There are good profits there so people do it but it doesn't amount to much. The same is true for the Syrian border with Iraq, but again it is not a big amount. (Ø)

The President: Did Rafsanjani share his thoughts on U.S.-Iranian relations? (Ø)

President Ozal: On U.S.-Iran, we relayed what you told us. Your Ambassador gave me a note about it. They have not answered the note. They just listened. (S)

The President: Okay. Well, that is very interesting. I appreciate very much Turkey's support on this issue. (Ø)

On the Gulf conflict, I haven't changed my views. I don't think we can have any concessions. The Saudi statement surprised us but we have been assured it was not accurate. (Ø)

President Ozal: My friend, the press is always looking for a story. They helped Saddam with this news. When I heard the Saudi statement, I thought it was strange. But Fahd was clear. He wants to almost hang Saddam Hussein he is so angry with him. Before this happened, they wanted to solve the problems between Kuwait and Iraq by dialogue. (S)

Let me tell you that Saddam Hussein is trying to crack the coalition. If he sees any light, he will jump in. I told them in Saudi Arabia to keep a hard line, not give up anything and continue to insist the UN resolutions be fulfilled. (Ø)

The President: I couldn't agree more. Your support has been pivotal. Mrs. Thatcher has been pivotal. Some thought the French would waver, but they have been solid. The GCC is solid and Egypt has been too. (Ø)

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President Ozal: Yes, Syria has also been solid. We're trying to improve relations with the Syrians. (Ø)

The President: I'm worried about the UN and the West Bank problem. (Ø)

President Ozal: Yes, there is a problem there. Some Israelis think that after the crisis you'll try to solve the Arab-Israeli conflict. (Ø)

The President: At the UN, I made reference to trying to solve the problem but I am determined not to link the two. That would divide the coalition. Eventually, we have to be as helpful as we possibly can to solve that problem. My words helped but they also caused concern in some countries. (Ø)

President Ozal: I said the same thing. We can't link the problems but can try to solve the Arab-Israeli after the crisis. (Ø)

The President: This is very important in order to keep the coalition together. Let's stay in close touch on it. (U)

President Ozal: Are your deployments over? (Ø)

The President: No, we are still sending troops. They are not all in place. We'll continue. We have good forces there, especially in air power. We have to give sanctions, as you say, time to work. (Ø)

I'll have you briefed on the deployment and will have that done in private and will give you our military thinking. (Ø)

Another worry, and I'm greatly concerned about it is our Embassy and this guests policy. I'm very concerned about the strain on our Embassy in Kuwait. (Ø)

President Ozal: You are right. You should pull out your Embassy people. (Ø)

The President: That would be a problem. We have non-diplomats there and we can't send them into captivity. There are 30-35 people in the Embassy and two thirds of them are non-diplomats. That is something an American President cannot stand for. Those in Kuwait are a worry for me, a big worry. (Ø)

President Ozal: Altogether you have forty people in Kuwait? (Ø)

The President: Less in the Embassy. But there are more in hiding from that butcher. The ones in the Embassy are protected by our flag. If we pull out, it would leave them defenseless. I couldn't do something like that. (Ø)

President Ozal: Can you get any UNSC decision on this? (Ø)

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The President: We are trying to work in the UN. There are resolutions pending on food relief. (Ø)

President Ozal: Reparations too. (Ø)

The President: The agenda has been sidetracked by the Israeli resolution and Jerusalem. The UN is diverted now. We're still interested in more UN support for the crisis. We may want special support for military action someday. We may need that. (Ø)

President Ozal: It would not be vetoed. Some countries might not vote for it, but they wouldn't veto. (Ø)

The President: Maybe. We want to get it done in the UN and we'll stay in close touch. (U)

President Ozal: There are one hundred Iraqi soldiers on our border. They fled to Turkey. We are holding them in a camp. (Ø)

The President: What do they think of Saddam? (Ø)

President Ozal: They all say the army will desert at the start of a war. They also don't want to fight Turkey and Syria in a war. (Ø)

The President: They speak for a lot of Iraqis. (Ø)

President Ozal: Yes, we heard the same thing from Mubarak. He knows the Iraqi army well. The Egyptians helped in training. He thinks the army won't hold together. (Ø)

The President: That is a very interesting question. There is a lot of debate on that here. We have to plan for the worst case but I am interested in this point. (Ø)

President Ozal: I believe Saddam is using the hostages who are being released to create a good impression. We have to be very careful. (Ø)

The President: He is very brutal and is playing with human lives. (Ø)

President Ozal: Thank you, Mr. President. (U)

The President: Thank you. Please, when you see the Vice President, share with him the Iran link. That is a good private channel. I would appreciate that. (Ø)

President Ozal: Okay. I will do that. Good-bye. (U)

The President: Thank you again. Good-bye. (U)

-- End of Conversation --