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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Non-log item

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting with Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher
of Great Britain

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs

Margaret Thatcher, Prime Minister
Charles Powell, Private Secretary to the PM

DATE, TIME November 19, 1990, 8:00 - 9:00am
AND PLACE: Ambassador Curley's Residence, Paris

Prime Minister Thatcher: This is a historic day which has been completely overshadowed. (U)

The President: You are so right, but I am dying to know about your situation. (S)

Prime Minister Thatcher: The basic problem is inflation. We didn't deal with it as effectively as you, so we have interest rates of 15%. (S)

(There was then a discussion of the British internal situation, followed by a discussion of King Hussein.)

Prime Minister Thatcher: Jordan is now not observing sanctions too well. (S)

You asked for more forces in the Gulf. We will send another brigade and some minesweepers. (S)

The President: That will be very helpful. The Congress is on my case and this would help a lot. I noticed what Bentsen and Danforth said to you. Congress is not being helpful. The polls are not as bad as they look, but I think the people will support our policy, especially if I am rescuing the people in the Embassy, though I am not getting out the word properly on that. (S)

Prime Minister Thatcher: We have the only two embassies left in Kuwait. (S)

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The President: I want the military to have the forces they say they need. (S)

Prime Minister Thatcher: But I worry the time is being pushed off. I worry about that. I think we will have to have about eight weeks to wrap things up, and we risk going into the hot season. (S)

The President: We should get some of these released hostages on TV. (S)

Prime Minister Thatcher: We have about the same numbers of people still in Kuwait. The Kuwaitis must register by November 25 with the Iraqis, so it will get hard after that to shelter our people. (S)

The President: I have to worry about our political environment. The UN resolution would help a lot, as would a provocation. (S)

Prime Minister Thatcher: I'm not worried about a provocation. We have enough cause, and the hostages are very emotional. (S)

The President: I'm thinking about a replenishment mission. (S)

Prime Minister Thatcher: I worry about anything which would prolong the start of a campaign. He could say, "See, I am reasonable." (S)

The President: I don't think it would do that. (S)

(Discussion of Embassy hostages.)

Prime Minister Thatcher: The danger is he would take the people you sent in as hostages as well and you would be worse off. (S)

The President: I worry about a provocation. (S)

Prime Minister Thatcher: I don't think we need one. He has done terrible things. The UN resolution will give you all you need. That would also be giving warning to everyone to get prepared and out of the way. We do worry about giving a warning to people in the area, like families at Dhahran. (S)

The President: We would hope to get his missiles right away. (S)

Prime Minister Thatcher: Some may get through. We are giving gas masks to our people -- but not yet the children. (S)

The President: We are hopeful about the Soviets. (S)

Prime Minister Thatcher: We think they are trying to get their people out, but in the end I think they will be with the resolution. We do have to worry about our commercial people there. (S)

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(Discussion of states on the UNSC.)

We also must worry about CNN and our country if there is broadcasting of the horrors of a bombardment. (S)

(Discussion of Christmas)

Prime Minister Thatcher: We have strategic objectives. We will be working together. We need to be sure and destroy his capability to attack. We need to do it now so we don't have to do it again in five years. (S)

We're doing our best on GATT. I caused a fearful row when I raised it. (S)

The President: I am very pessimistic. (S)

-- End of Conversation --

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