

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

not H/S

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting with Gulf Coalition Financial Contributors (U)

PARTICIPANTS: See attached

DATE, TIME December 21, 1990, 1:40 - 2:05pm EST  
AND PLACE: The Map Room

The President: I appreciate your coming in on short notice for this discussion. I want to speak on behalf of myself and the others about the support for those who have most at stake on the ground, King Fahd and the Amir, those who are closest. We are very grateful. All of you have been a help. I had a meeting the other day with those who'd committed forces into the area. It was a good meeting. We were not sure how it would work. We wanted the effect of sending a strong signal of the alliance represented by our forces together. It was well received. We know Saddam Hussein watches CNN (our intelligence channel). So he would have seen it since he watches and saw the symmetry of our meeting in the Rose Garden and saw the forces arrayed against him. (C)

Here today we have represented the countries who have been helpful financially and economically. It is very important that we hold the solid partnership we've had since the beginning of the crisis. First, I want you to tell your Heads of State and Government that we want to continue to work with you and your leadership. We want to continue close cooperation, and that means close consultations. That means even when the situation is moving fast, consultations will continue. We face tough choices in the coming weeks. It will be tough to consult individually but we do want input from your governments. So you should report back that we are soliciting and need your ideas on how to achieve our united world objectives. I greatly appreciate what I have received thus far. The point I want to keep making is they should continue to provide them to me and others. So please pass your views through Larry. I will see them. I will solicit with you and over the next coming weeks be telephoning to quote ATT to reach and touch to get their advice. They have all been helpful so far. (C)

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Everyone here represents a government that has put economic resources on the line for our objectives. You are sharing the responsibility for carrying them out. Others also have contributed logistics and medical support. But financial aid is being provided in the case of those here. Also we are allowed use of some bases, like in Greece and Turkey; that also sends a signal of the seriousness of this world endeavor. (C)

Our clearly held view is that Saddam is not getting the message, however. So, I would like to make two key points: 1) the US will commit forces to combat and 2) if force is used, it will be used in a way that will be devastating. He doesn't believe that. He still thinks he thinks he will prevail, or there will be a stand off, that it will not be a prompt conclusive settlement. He wants to play for a Vietnam-type dragged out solution. His feeling is that Americans won't support the President, so he thinks he is going to get through a delay what he can't get through diplomacy. He has listened to the debate here and is confused by what he hears. At the Congressional hearings they say one thing, and then another. They have these experts for a couple hundred bucks come crawling out of think tanks. I know the powers of the President. We have used force 200 times before in history. (C)

We have never been more determined, and our team has never been more together on what we might have to do. This determination offers the last real hope for a peaceful solution. If Saddam understands our determination, then he will go 180 degrees, turn and get out of Kuwait. Like he did on Iran. But I am not optimistic. (C)

So we will go forward with full determination to implement 678 and all of the other resolutions. I met with a supportive group of Congressmen the other day (Solarz, Torricelli, Lugar). They are also putting out more focus on the reparations resolution in particular. So there is strong determination on our part. You should convey that home. We are not interested in concessions or to lose American and French and Saudi lives. That is not in the cards at least as far as the US role is concerned. I will not have it. (C)

That would denigrate and kill all hope for the new world order we hope can be used to solve other problems with the UN. If we fall short, the UN will become a laughing stock again. Its potential had been far short of what was visualized in 1948. Now there is promise if we succeed to the letter with no concessions. I was pleased with the French President's remarks when he said not one meter. Others around the room have made the same commitment. This is the last shot for peace. I am convinced from the press that this has got to come through to Saddam. If not, we must have full implementation of the resolution. (C)

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On the economic side it is vital to offset the impact of the military effort, sanctions compliance and energy prices for countries affected first and hurt worst. Even we can't afford it. Our country is facing a devastating recession or downturn or slow down. (e)

Another significant point I want to make is responsibility sharing is vital to maintain political support, domestic and international, for the coalition to stay together. I tell our critics that we have a disproportionate responsibility because we are blessed in this country with so much. As President I am prepared to fulfill that responsibility. We are a large, lucky country. I am making this appeal not just to ease domestic pressure from Congress, but to send a strong message that the world is together. The more each country does, the better it is. (e)

I would urge those who for one understandable reason or another can provide no military support, to do so economically. The commitments in '90-'91 were good but short of 91 established needs. And some distribution has been slow. I expect there have been some legislative problems. I would simply urge you to convey home the sense of urgency and this concept of staying together on economic side. The impact of slow disbursement could develop and undermine resolve to stay with sanctions which has held together well. Sanctions are taking longer to work than first estimated, but nonetheless they are holding well. If we are to maintain economic support, we need to get the flow accelerated to needy nations. (e)

For 1991 we haven't presented what is needed yet. We will take the lead to do what is fair and necessary as part of a mutual international world effort. We again will send senior representatives around to discuss and coordinate the next phase. I urge you to tell home that the President made a strong appeal for responsive decisions. It is hard to underestimate the importance of your participation. Each of those countries without troops can help those countries that have sent troops by pledging to defray their costs. And this sends a signal of our determination to Saddam. I am grateful for what has happened already. (The President then told a Winston Churchill joke.) (c)

Secretary Brady: As Congress return in January, the testimony will get into how much has been committed, and how much received. There will be no way to avoid it. Those countries who have committed funds but not dispersed them may want to think about doing so now. We do not want big press items. (e)

The President: This could get bad press, and if it does, could strain bilateral relations. It will be difficult as Secretary Brady said. Well, that is the end of my message. (e)

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Saud Nasser: Thank you for this chance for the second time. We highly appreciate it. On behalf of all here, we greatly admire your leadership and role in this crisis. Your message is loud and clear. I hope to communicate to my government what I heard, and I will urge my government to support you in this end. We will be forthcoming. The negative aspects of this crisis could have a global magnitude. Therefore, we must stand together and resolve it peacefully. We must show our determination. (e)

The President: Two points: I know I hate it when people say have you read this. And usually it's something thick and boring. But I ask, if you haven't seen the Amnesty International report of Dec 19, I recommend you read it and send it home to your decisionmakers. It will bring home the urgency of this. After I read, it made me realize we've got to do something. These tortures are brutal and medieval in their scope and diversity. Barbara could only read two pages, and she ended up in tears. It has provided a strong indictment against what Saddam has wrought on his neighbors. We've got to care. It is powerful stuff. (e)

I know the governments represented here have wanted to know what is public opinion. My view after the Nunn hearings, where they were bringing up all the arguments -- to stay the course, to work with sanctions, you have all the time you need, don't risk American lives -- is that the mood has changed. The next week a survey showed strong support for what the President -- I am doing. When people are asked if they want to go to war, there is, of course, no support. But the support for what we are doing is there. They recognize there is an overriding obligation for the United States to do its part to implement 678. There is too much at stake for the new world order and the promise of peace. It would render the UN impotent and set back chances for peace. So I would like you to report back first, things are solid; and second, we recognize it is vital to keep our end of this commitment. (e)

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