

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telephone Conversation with Prime Minister Brian Mulroney of Canada

PARTICIPANTS: The President  
Prime Minister Brian Mulroney  
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs  
Adrian Basora, NSC Staff (Notetaker)

DATE, TIME: January 18, 1991, 10:10 a.m. - 10:20 a.m.  
PLACE: Oval Office

The President: Hello, Brian. (U)

Prime Minister Mulroney: Hello, George. (U)

The President: I am in the middle of talking with Gorbachev, but we got cut off and we can talk for now, although I may have to take his call when he calls back. (S)

Prime Minister Mulroney: Yes, I understand. I just had two quick questions that I wanted to ask you on the conduct of the war so far. I was hoping you could give me a general outlook on the situation and anything you can say specifically on Israel. I have to talk to the House of Commons this afternoon. (S)

The President: Things are going well so far. Our casualties are "at an acceptable minimum", whatever that means. The targeting and pinpointing are going very well. The bombing is aimed at military targets and command and control capabilities. (S)

Jim Baker is here and is just leaving. He says hello and asks me to thank you for your hospitality on Sunday. (S)

On the Israel equation, we have been very concerned. The damage from the missiles is limited, but we have to understand this attack in the context of the history of the region. Israel is going to try to respond. We are trying to contain their reaction, and have been up late discussing this with them. I don't think we have been totally successful. We are worried about Jordan and Syria, and a lot would depend on what Israel did. A proportionate response would not cause Egypt, Saudi Arabia or the Gulf states to pull out of the coalition. Turkey will be all right. We are trying to keep the Israelis from over-responding, or from putting Jordan in a humiliating position so that the

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Jordanians feel forced to respond. We are trying to hold the line. It is important to keep them from getting close to Saddam Hussein who is being condemned by a lot of people. (S)

It would be helpful if you could make a statement identifying with the agony of the Israeli people. Gorbachev has condemned Saddam Hussein and what he is doing. Fortunately, no real damage has been done by the Iraqi missiles. (S)

(At this point the White House switchboard operator interrupted to inform the President that the Gorbachev call was back on the line.)

The President: I'll have to go, but Brent Scowcroft is here and he will be able to finish the conversation. (S)

General Scowcroft: I am here. (U)

Prime Minister Mulroney: I want you to know that I don't view you as the second team! (S)

General Scowcroft: The Iraqis launched seven SCUD missiles; four on Tel Aviv, and three on Haifa. There was no serious damage although several people were lightly wounded. But it is hard to talk the Israelis out of responding, even though the situation looks all right for today. (S)

Prime Minister Mulroney: Has the bombing been as successful recently as it was on the first day? (S)

General Scowcroft: Day 2 of the bombing was even better than Day 1. I am very impressed with the precision. We are not doing collateral damage. (S)

Prime Minister Mulroney: If it keeps going on like this, how long do you think it will last? I don't want to pin you down, but just get your current estimate. (S)

General Scowcroft: Oh, maybe a couple of weeks. After the next day or so, we will be able to move from strategic targets around Baghdad and command and control to bombing of their ground forces. It is hard to estimate how long it will take to soften them up. (S)

Prime Minister Mulroney: Thanks for the assessment, Brent. (S)

General Scowcroft: We will try to keep you posted. Goodbye Mr. Prime Minister. (S)

-- End of Conversation --