

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Presidential Phone Call to King Fahd of Saudi Arabia on January 20, 1991 (✓)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
King Fahd
Interpreter: Shukran Kamal
Notetaker: Sandra Charles, NSC

DATE, TIME AND PLACE: January 20, 1991; 3:45 - 4:05 p.m.
Camp David

The President initiated the call to King Fahd. (✓)

The President: Hello Your Majesty. How are you today, sir? (U)

King Fahd: Fine, Mr. President. (U)

The President: I was just calling to check in and compare notes on what is going on in the Gulf. (U)

King Fahd: That pleases me, Mr. President. (U)

The President: Frankly, our assessment is that after these first few days, things are going very well, in fact better than we had thought at the very beginning. We are sorry about the loss of the lives of the pilots, but basically the casualties have probably been less than we would have expected. As you know better than I do, the weather has not been good for the last couple of days, so we don't have the fullest, clearest bomb damage assessments that we would like to have. (✓)

I do worry that Saddam Hussein is trying to draw Israel into this conflict. I have talked several times to Shamir and urged him to let us do what needs to be done to search for and destroy the SCUDs in the western part of Iraq. It is clear what Saddam is trying to do, but Shamir tells me he understands that and so far so good. I have sent Eagleburger and a good team out there to talk with him and other senior Israeli officials urging continued restraint. I am hopeful the Patriot batteries will encourage Israel and Shamir to continue with restraint. (✓)

We have made no other commitments of assistance, political, military or economic. There is no commitment of any kind. I just keep urging them to show restraint even though they tell me it is very hard after having been attacked. (S)

The last point I want to make is that as this campaign continues, there will be more and more people will call out for a ceasefire. Gorbachev talked to me about something like that. Incidentally, I thought your letter to him was outstanding. But we have no intention to let up, no intention of stopping until our full objectives are met, no intention of letting these television pictures of demonstrations worldwide influence the United States or keep the United States from doing what it must do -- and that is to stand with you and the others until our mission is complete. (S)

Your Majesty, that was my message, and I would be very interested in hearing your views of how long Saddam will be able to sustain these losses and keep trying to stand up against the force we will keep bringing to bear against him. (S)

King Fahd: First of all, I would like to thank you for calling so we can confer about these matters. We are not concerned or interested about any demonstrations that occur anywhere. These people do not speak the truth. We know that we are pursuing the proper road, the road of truth, and they are not. They are walking down the wrong path. (S)

Saddam was given opportunities for several months but he did not listen to reason and he didn't comply. As far as I am concerned I am pleased he did not comply. Our position I think is an honorable one. It is a position consistent with justice and fairness and logic. And, the most important thing is that we and our allies are convinced that we are pursuing the proper path. Anyone who is saying that we should stop to negotiate with Saddam only wants to give him a chance to fortify himself so he can continue to proceed with his plans. (S)

The President: Exactly. (U)

King Fahd: The operations that have started are most magnificent and splendid. They are actually achieving more than we expected. History will show that you have done something that is quite great and revolutionary, Mr. President. The question now is this about those asking us to stop these operations and negotiate, why didn't they speak up before? (S)

I believe Mr. President that based on what I have seen in our ongoing operations so far is that Saddam may not last for more than one month. I see, at any rate, that we are certain and convinced that we are on the right track and pursuing the proper course. (S)

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The President: I agree. I just wanted to touch base, and compare notes, and to thank you for all the cooperation on the ground. I gather communications between the forces -- Saudi, US, Kuwait, French and British -- is going very well and that is a good thing. (Ø)

King Fahd: This is true. I frankly did not believe we could achieve this so quickly and meet our primary objectives. (Ø)

The President: Where do you think Saddam is, just sitting there and hiding out in Baghdad? (Ø)

King FAhd: I believe Mr. President he is outside Baghdad, but close to it. (Ø)

The President: I see. I wish we could find out. (Ø)

King Fahd: We will inevitably find out where he is. (Ø)

The President: Exactly. Well, thank you Your Majesty for everything. We will keep working closely together. I just wanted to call you up and touch base with you. (Ø)

King Fahd: I would like to salute you, Mr. President and thank you. I pledge that we will continue to work closely with you. (Ø)

The President: Good. May I make one last point your Majesty? (U)

King Fahd: Yes. (U)

The President: You mentioned the demonstrations. Please don't think the demonstrations you see on CNN represent the total will of the American people. Support from the American people is very strong. And there was an ABC poll yesterday that showed a tremendous number of Americans actually disapprove of the demonstrations themselves. (Ø)

King Fahd: That is true, Mr. President. The other poll that I saw says 86 percent of the American people support you, Mr. President. (U)

The President: I think that is true now. It will fall off, of course, but it still will remain strong even after the euphoria wears off. (Ø)

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King Fahd: At any rate, we know and we have evidence to show that the demonstrations that have taken place and are taking place in Arab countries and in Asia and Africa were paid for by Saddam Hussein. We know he has paid billions of dollars to anyone who will organize them. Eventually, his money will run out. (C)

The President: That is very interesting. Good luck and thanks so much for all you are doing. We will stay in close touch. (U)

King Fahd: Thank you for all you are doing. Good-bye. (U)

The President: Good-bye. (U)

-- End of Conversation --

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