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06. Memcon	Minutes of meeting with Foreign Minister Abd el-Meguid in Oval Office at 1:40 p.m. [SENT FOR AGENCY REFERRAL] (4 pp.)	02/91	(b)(1)	C

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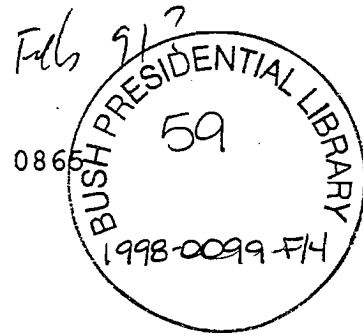
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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Minutes of Meeting with Foreign Minister
Abd el-Meguid (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
The Vice President
James A. Baker, III, Secretary of State
John Sununu, Chief of Staff
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs
Robert M. Gates, Assistant to the President
and Deputy for National Security Affairs
John H. Kelly, Assistant Secretary of State
Richard N. Haass, Special Assistant to the
President and Senior Director for Near East
and South Asian Affairs

Ahmed Esmat Abdel Meguid, Minister of
Foreign Affairs
El Sayed Abdel Raouf El Reedy, Egyptian
Ambassador to the U.S.
Dr. Atef Ebeid, Minister of State for Cabinet
Affairs and Administrative Development

The President and Foreign Minister Abdel Meguid met in the Oval
Office at 1:40 p.m.

The President: Jim has filled me in on the IMF side of things;
we're still taking a few shots on what we did on Egyptian debt,
falsely suggesting there was a quid for it. I have a specific
question, whether you think VOA broadcasting has been almost pro-
Iraqi. (Ø)

FM El-Meguid: We were very surprised. I was in Damascus, and
Foreign Minister Shara told me of VOA's report about pro-Iraqi
demonstrations in Damascus that never happened. It is strange.
And in another case VOA did not broadcast an excellent speech I
heard by a professor providing the religious side of our
position. (Ø)

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The President: I'm glad you'll be seeing Mr. Carlson. We can't control VOA, but if there is a bias toward Iraq -- editorial independence does not mean they have to present Iraq's side. (Ø)

Minister Ebeid: [REDACTED] (b)(1) (Ø)

The President: Are VOA Arabists possibly pro-Iraqi? (Ø)

Minister Meguid: Possibly. There is a pro-Baathist slant. There is at times on the BBC. We can't speak to VOA in Cairo. (Ø)

Mr. Kelly: [REDACTED] (b)(1) (Ø)

The President: Can some individual slant it? (Ø)

Mr. Kelly: We'll have to review transcripts. (U)

The President: I don't want to dwell on this matter. After the first day or second, there was euphoria that the war might end soon. But this has past, we are on the plan. I hope there are no plans to pause, we can't do this. If you see anything we can do with the Maghreb or anyone else, let me know. Mitterrand and Andreotti mentioned the Maghreb to me. (Ø)

FM El-Meguid: We were worried by the Maghreb move in the Security Council [REDACTED] (b)(1); I told him we can't accept a cease-fire; we need withdrawal first. This was and is our position. I will say the same thing in New York tomorrow when I see Arab Ambassadors. I oppose a meeting of the Security Council. Any solution must be based upon full Iraqi withdrawal. (Ø)

The President: That's good. But what do you make of this? Just fundamentalist pressures? (Ø)

FM El-Meguid: It is public opinion. There is sympathetic reaction in the Arab world to air raids in Baghdad. Governments are feeling pressure and need to show they're trying. (Ø)

The President: The air raids are carefully targeted. They are now saying we're killing our own POWs; journalists are being fooled. (Ø)

FM El-Meguid: You have to expect anything from this man. Never trust him. Never expect him to yield. (Ø)

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The President: But he yielded to Iran. (C)

FM El-Meguid: That was different. Now Iran is accepting planes in, it gives them bargaining chips. The Iranians don't trust him. (b)(1)

(b)(1)

The President: We're in no hurry to press our military to do something earlier than is prudent. But I will tell you this - when the ground forces are used, he will not be able to create a stalemate in Kuwait. His air force proved to be over-rated; we've prevailed in every engagement. Our military feels very confident about the outcome of the ground war; that said, our air efforts guarantees the position of coalition ground forces. (C)

FM El-Meguid: He is wrong most of the time. He thought the U.S. would never fight. (C)

The President: He was also wrong in thinking that if we did fight he'd prolong this forever. (U)

FM El-Meguid: In Damascus, I asked Assad for his assessment of Saddam Hussein. Assad said Saddam thought the U.S. would never fight a war because of internal U.S. divisions. (C)

The President: Did Assad share with you his view on how this will end? (C)

FM El-Meguid: Assad is with you. He thinks Saddam will fight to the end; he is not about to give up. (b)(1)

(b)(1)

(C)

The President: That's very reassuring. I'm happy with the coalition. Please tell President Mubarak to let me know if there's anything I can do. (U)

FM El-Meguid: We'd be very grateful if you'd help us with the IMF. (C)

The President: We'll do what we can. What about public opinion? (U)

FM El-Meguid: Our public opinion is holding up. We're not worried by opposition statements. People are strongly backing the President. But the economic aspect is the key. We cannot sustain more economic pressure. I had a good meeting with the IMF head, who was sympathetic yesterday. (C)

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Minister Ebeid: In the Maghreb, we need to make clear the consequences of Saddam Hussein for the masses. Second, without Saddam Hussein, we need to say the future would be better. (Ø)

The President: We're explaining we don't want to destroy Iraq.
(Ø)

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