

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: President's Call to the Amir of Qatar on February 2, 1991

PARTICIPANTS: The President  
Amir Khalifa  
Interpreter: Shukran Kamal  
Notetaker: Sandra Charles, NSC

DATE, TIME February 2, 1991; 2:00 - 2:30 p.m.  
AND PLACE: Camp David

The President: Hello, how are you sir? (U)

Amir Khalifa: Well, thank God. (U)

The President: I am calling first to congratulate you on the wonderful success of your forces in helping to retake Khafji, and in helping to save some of our marines who were trapped there. I know you must be very proud of your ground forces, as well as your pilots. I also am going to call King Fahd and congratulate him too. I haven't talked to him yet. (U)

That was one purpose for calling. I think things are going very well, but I am anxious to get your judgement on that. (U)

Amir Khalifa: First of all, Mr. President, I appreciate your call, and I appreciate the position the United States has taken on the occupation of Kuwait by Iraq. Regarding what the Qatari Air Force did, Qatar adheres firmly to the UN resolutions, those for defending Saudi territory and those for the liberation of Kuwait. (U)

The President: We were smart to not permit Saddam to tell us when to start the ground war. He was thinking he could draw us in early and get us to start when we weren't ready. I am confident when if necessary a ground offensive is required our allied forces will do very, very well. And I don't think it will take long. I must admit, Your Majesty, I have trouble understanding Saddam and anyone doing what he is doing to the POWs, and innocent civilians with SCUD missiles, and environmental terrorism. He is hard to predict. But it is all bad. (U)

Your Majesty, what is your view on things in Iraq and what do you think Saddam will try to do next? (U)

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2009-0676-MR  
ZL 8/21/09

Amir Khalifa: Actually, Mr. President, the U.S. position from the beginning of the crisis, the US position has been wise and smart. But my own evaluation on the character of Saddam is that he doesn't know he is a human, because a human being would know how to act. He doesn't. He always said what was important was the survival of the Ba'ath party even at the expense of all of Iraq. (S)

The latest information I received -- I got it today from Syria and I am not certain of its accuracy -- is that the situation in Iraq is critical. Saddam doesn't trust anyone. His son is guarding him. When he moves, he is surrounded by 4-5 people who look like him to deceive bystanders and observers. Actually all the news from inside Baghdad is very bad. We also believe his relations with some religious factions are poor. There was a disagreement between them based on his request that his picture be hung in the mosques, and when they refused, some of them were executed. (S)

The President: He is a bad man. Your Majesty, I think the thing for us to do is not to compromise or agree to a ceasefire, hoping he will do what he should have done long ago. We should stay with our gameplan. We don't seek the destruction of Iraq. But there should be no concessions, no compromises in any way. I am confident we will win the war. I am confident he will be made to comply with every resolution including the one on reparations, 674. He must be held responsible for the environmental damage and to the other claims against him. (S)

Amir Khalifa: Actually, Mr. President, Saddam is worse than just a bad man. That is why any compromise would not only hurt this area of the Gulf but would hurt the whole world if he stays in power. On allied actions targeting civilians, I understand that civilians are not being targeted. They can be spared what they are going through if their President would stop the bombing. (S)

The President: That is a true and wise statement. We will keep our course. I am proud we are shoulder to shoulder with your country and your warriors, ground and air. I hope you will congratulate your commanders for me. (S)

My last point, there has been some confusion about the statement by Secretary Baker and Bessmertnykh of the Soviet Union. I want to tell you there is nothing new in that. Some have interpreted this as our interest in a ceasefire or pause. No -- we will not do that and certainly not without discussion with our coalition partners. There is no interest on my part to stop to make concessions, to stop to see if Saddam is ready to do what he should have long ago. (S)

Amir Khalifa: Mr. President, I have no doubt about U.S. policy, and no doubt about its serious intent. Not stopping Saddam Hussein would have serious repercussions for the whole world. (S)

The President: Thank you again, and again thanks to your young men. I am proud we are together to overcome this evil in the Gulf. Thank you again. (C)

Amir Khalifa: I wish to thank you for your gracious remarks and sentiments toward our young men. I hope your next call will come after the liberation of Kuwait, and I hope it will come soon. (U)

The President: I hope so too. It was good to talk to you. (U)

Amir Khalifa: Thank you. I was pleased to talk with you. God bless you and your troops. Good-bye. (U)

-- End of Conversation --