

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with President Turgut Ozal of Turkey on February 19, 1991

PARTICIPANTS: The President
President Turgut Ozal
Nicholas Burns (notetaker)

DATE, TIME AND PLACE February 19, 1991, 5:03 - 5:16 p.m.
The Oval Office

The President: Hello, Turgut. (U)

President Ozal: Hello, how are you? I was today at the Turkish-Iraqi border. (Ø)

The President: Oh. What did you see? (U)

President Ozal: I visited our army troops in that area. I saw the situation and I have some information for you. (U)

The President: Please. And I have some information for you on the Gorbachev initiative. (Ø)

President Ozal: The numbers of Iraqi army deserters have increased substantially last week. Every day 200 people are coming to our border and more than half of them are soldiers, perhaps 70 per cent. It seems to me that was a fake piece some time ago by the Revolutionary Command Council. The same day our people noticed that their troops on the other side were enjoying like crazy people. And I think when this ground offensive starts, most of the Iraqi armed forces will desert the army or will become POWs. (Ø)

The President: That's interesting. We are encountering the same thing on the Saudi-Iraqi border and the Saudi-Kuwaiti border. More people are coming across discouraged. (Ø)

President Ozal: I told our TV people today when they asked about the Russian initiative. I said I don't know, but I feel they don't want to see a big victory. And they want to protect Saddam. I don't know, but I feel they want to guarantee the regime of Iraq. (Ø)

The President: You made a good statement that Saddam ought to be out of there. (Ø)

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President Ozal: Yes. I also said that their Soviet equipment is no match for the U.S. equipment. They don't want to see that. When the ground war starts, they will see the other equipment is also not matched. (S)

The President: Let me tell you Turgut - very interesting. The Soviet proposal stops short of what we can accept. They did not mention POWs. They said cease-fire and then withdrawal. We can't stop and then withdraw. There's no time set for troop withdrawal -- we said 96 hours. There was no reference to reparations and last week they said we had to pay to reconstruct Iraq. They should be paying for damage to coalition partners and the oil spill and for Kuwait. There are several important points missing: If Saddam Hussein tells Gorbachev he accepts the plan, it would not be acceptable to us. And I am sure it would not be acceptable to Turkey. (S)

President Ozal: I think I would agree. I felt it was guaranteeing the regime of Iraq. I know Saddam. He wants to protect his head. The Iraqi people are at a stage where they want no more war. (S)

The other thing, Rafsanjani called me today. He says that we should go forward in order to reach a peace. I asked do you know the Russian plan. He said no. Did Tariq Aziz tell you about the plan? He had no concrete information. I told him I am going to speak to President Bush, and he had nothing to relay. (S)

The President: There's something strange between Iraq and Iran. Aziz goes and spends the night. On the wire right now is a message to you putting in more detail than what I've told you. Be sure to get it right away. It spells out in detail our concerns. Mitterrand shares our concerns. I have not talked to Major, but Mitterrand tells me that the British share our reservations on the plan. I just talked to the Prime Minister of Canada. They are changing their commitment to participate in the bombing to show solidarity. (S)

Everybody we've talked to including Mubarak, says be careful of tricks. We cannot just jump at this peace proposal. Please read the telegram carefully. (S)

President Ozal: I suggest you should not change your position. (S)

The President: I will stay on the road. We are getting close on when to commit ground forces. Our military people are confident with the planning. We will keep hitting hard. If he said today "I'm getting out" and he does so with his military intact, we would not have done anything. All want to see Iraq without a war machine. Although we have hit him hard, its still a big force. (S)

President Ozal: Yesterday at Incirlik, I saw your people, your generals. They have not lost any planes. They say this base at

Incirlik is the biggest and most comfortable in Europe. (S)

The President: Wonderful. You have been magnificent. If you have any questions, please let me know. (S)

President Ozal: I'll let you know. I may be coming to the U.S. in March before the end of month if you want to talk to me in a relaxed atmosphere. (S)

The President: 22nd? 23rd? We will definitely do that. All the day? (S)

President Ozal: It could be when you want. (S)

The President: I want to talk for sure. The only problem is I have a big dinner on Saturday. Maybe we could do something relaxed on Friday. We could fly to Camp David. (S)

President Ozal: I may be coming on 21st and leaving on 22nd. (S)

The President: Think about coming by here on Friday at 4:00 on the 22nd. We will fly to Camp David. I have to be back by Saturday afternoon at around 3:00 to 4:00 p.m. I'll bring you back. (S)

President Ozal: I will be there in Washington Friday at 4 or 3. Whatever. We will come to the military airport at Andrews Air Base. (S)

The President: Keep it small. Just Barbara and me and maybe one or two others. (S)

President Ozal: Maybe my wife. I don't know if she is coming. (S)

The President: That's wonderful. Hope she does. (S)

President Ozal: Everything is arranged. Thank you. (S)

-- End of Conversation --