

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with Brian Mulroney, Prime Minister of Canada on February 22, 1991

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Brian Mulroney, Prime Minister of Canada
Adrian Basora, NSC Staff (Notetaker)

DATE, TIME February 22, 1991, 12:49 - 12:58 p.m.
AND PLACE: The Oval Office

The President: Brian. (U)

Prime Minister Mulroney: Hi, George. (U)

The President: A thousand apologies. I've just set a long-distance record: one hour and 15 minutes talking to Gorbachev. I think we paid for the phone call. It will transcend the deficit. (S)

It was a fascinating conversation. He has not heard back from Saddam. I told him of our proposal and our deadline. I was not in the Oval Office when the call started, so when I got in Jim Baker was reading the provisions of this statement to Gorbachev and we assured him that we had tried to get him in advance. He went through a long situation where he said all he was trying to do was to resolve the crisis but avoid force. You're familiar with his proposals, so I won't go into that. I asked if Iraq had agreed to the 6 points. He said no. I told him I thought that our people thought one week was plenty. It was originally 4 days that we had wanted. I told him I welcomed his approach. (S)

The most important thing for Gorbachev is his place in the sun. Gorbachev said "You and I must act together. We will teach a lesson to all the others. The new reality that we all reckon with would be a victory." (S)

He's got all these problems at home, and I've tried to stay in touch with him -- but it comes clearer to me that they have to have a place at the table, a place in the sun as their fortunes at home are getting more complicated. (S)

I tried to give him assurances that no matter what we did here, we wanted to keep cooperative relations with him. I did tell him

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that one thing that has changed is what the Iraqis have done to the oil wells in Kuwait. I don't know if you've heard but, literally, there's a scorched earth policy. Kuwait's oil tanks are burning. I told him the intelligence today shows the biggest fire you can imagine. It is so thick and so pervasive that it blacks out Kuwait City. He was silent. This makes me believe we have to keep on going. I told him how upset I was about the Iraqi civilians that have been killed. I asked him, "Did you know at the same time this was happening the Emir of Kuwait told us that 200 kids aged 14 to 20 were taken out and killed - innocent children killed? And the women had their breasts cut off; they were mutilated." I said, "Mikhail that's why I don't think we have time here and, if you can't support our proposal, at least please be silent. Whatever you do, we should try to keep up our relationship for the future." Gorbachev knows we are deadly serious at this point, and we have to be. That conversation took an hour and 15 minutes! (S)

Prime Minister Mulroney: Are all of our people on-side? (S)

The President: Yes, all of them are on board. Of course we haven't touched base with the Danes. Let me ask Brent. (S)

Yes, all the majors are on board. Mubarak had initially wanted more time. I don't want to misrepresent his position but I said we have to be together on this. He was fine on it, but I didn't want to indicate that from the beginning he was comfortable with the short ultimatum. (S)

Prime Minister Mulroney: We would have liked another 24 hours ourselves, but as soon as we heard about the scorched earth policy, we changed our minds. (S)

The President: It is terrible, and it's not a charade that we've cooked up. Oh, I told Gorbachev at the same time the Iraqi Foreign Minister is talking peace to you, the man is torching wells in Kuwait and launching Scuds -- just the things he said we were doing. I may have made an impression on Gorbachev, but I don't know. (S)

Prime Minister Mulroney: Joe Clark just had a conversation with Prince Fahd in Saudi Arabia. Joe asked at the end of the conversation, "Why would a guy on the ropes seek to burn everything as they leave?" Fahd said, "You are dealing with a very, very sick man, that's why." And that's probably the best answer we can get. (S)

The President: Yes, he's a very sick man. I told Gorbachev, "I know you have differences and I'm respectful of the relationship you've had with Saddam Hussein." And he made it very clear that he is not carrying water for Saddam Hussein. There is no difference in our assessments regarding Saddam Hussein. His fate is foreshadowed. I said, "I know you are under pressure from

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different elements in your country. So am I. They're coming at me from both left and right. In any event, it was a good talk, and good that we had such a frank discussions. If we have any differences with them, I think we want them to know the details.
(S)

Prime Minister Mulroney: Well, they're not going to be able to say the hot line is not working. Tomorrow the other shoe will drop. (S)

The President: Yes, and we'll stay in touch. If you have more thoughts or if Joe picks up anything more, let me know. (S)

Prime Minister Mulroney: I will. So long, George.

-- End of Conversation --

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