

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telephone Call to Prime Minister Robert Hawke
of Australia

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Prime Minister Robert Hawke
Douglas Paal, Notetaker

DATE, TIME February 23, 1991, 6:02 p.m. - 6:12 p.m. EST
AND PLACE: Camp David

The President: Bob? (U)

PM Hawke: G'day, George. (U)

The President: How are you? (U)

PM Hawke: Fine. And you? (U)

The President: I am phoning to let you know that at 10:00 p.m. tonight I will be telling the American people that I have given General Schwarzkopf approval to intensify the ground war to liberate Iraq. This will involve a major number of ground units. I have done this because the Iraqis show no sign of complying with our position, because there has been no progress. I talked with Gorbachev -- a long talk. Jim Baker, who is here with me, spoke two times today with Bessmertnykh. It is important that we recognize what they have attempted. But with all the destruction in Kuwait and killing people... I wanted you to know ahead of time. I have worried about it. The loss of ground troops is on my mind. I hope it will be quicker than people's predictions, with fewer casualties. (C)

PM Hawke: George, one question. Will the Soviets pursue some embarrassing or confrontational position at the United Nations Security Council? (U)

The President: I do not think so. Of course, I do not know. Vorontsov has been helpful today. Gorbachev agrees with me on Saddam Hussein. I would be surprised. They were trying to avert this. We have no indication he will lead some nonaligned or Third World coalition. I have that impression -- and Jim Baker has that feeling, John Major has that feeling. (C)

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PM Hawke: Judging from the Security Council, that seems to be the case. (Ø)

The President: That's so, Bob. (U)

PM Hawke: George, if it goes to the Security Council, what indication do you have as to how they will line up? How would they view the difference between the latest Soviet proposal and the U.S. position. Have you got a read? (Ø)

The President: I have a good read. There is a recognition. Some, Yemen and Cuba, may not agree, not everyone is for our position, and may not agree, but dropping sanctions would be a new mandate. They knew the Soviet proposal was a new condition. (Ø)

PM Hawke: That is right. When we looked at the Soviet position we had a view that it would be difficult to hang a war on 7 days or 21 days. But their wanting to suspend sanctions immediately and canceling the resolutions was going too far. (Ø)

The President: This man has been defeated, punished. I do not want casualties, but he has been stalling. (Ø)

PM Hawke: This is to the point of canceling. I do not know if Brent Scowcroft talked about our conversation.

The President: They are trying to avoid the consequences. (Ø)

PM Hawke: With Scowcroft I said what we ought to be saying is nail this bastard on the horns of a dilemma. He has to give public commitment to renounce claims to Kuwait. He must renounce his claim. We have not yet said he must repudiate his claim to Kuwait. If he raises it, he can go to International Court to resolve it. He must repudiate his claim to the retention of Kuwait. (Ø)

The President: I understand, that is a good point. A very good point. We have not said it. We have said we can discuss our differences. (Ø)

PM Hawke: Do not just bugger around the edges -- put him to it. (Ø)

The President: "Must renounce the claim." I will get that going. (Ø)

PM Hawke: If he does, he will lose a lot of face. (Ø)

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The President: He will lose plenty from what is coming his way. This will be fast, I can tell you that. (S)

PM Hawke: Just this point: if he refuses to repudiate it, the whole international community will be in a good position. When he inferred to the Soviets he would withdraw we thought that is what he would do. (S)

The President: That is an important position, something we have been silent on. You are making much... (S)

PM Hawke: He can pull out and that is one thing, but if on the record he repudiates, that is quite another. Thank you for ringing. I know your time is valuable. Of course, as I have done before, I hope for the very best for you and your forces -- speedy victory at lowest cost. (S)

The President: Thanks -- Jim Baker sends his very best, he is right here with me. (U)

PM Hawke: Mine to him too, George. Goodbye. (U)

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