

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with Turgut Ozal, President of Turkey on
February 26, 1991

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Turgut Ozal
Nicholas Burns, NSC Staff (Notetaker)

DATE, TIME February 26, 1991, 2:37 - 2:49 p.m.
AND PLACE: The Oval Office

The President: Well, Turgut, how are you today? (U)

President Ozal: Fine, thank you. I want to congratulate you.
(U)

The President: Well, listen, you were about right. It seems to
me we are making big progress and fast. (S)

President Ozal: Yes, because I didn't rate the Iraqis as strong
as many others did. (S)

The President: It's going very well indeed. We are continuing
after analyzing Saddam's very unsatisfactory statement -- and it
was unsatisfactory -- we are continuing to prosecute the war. We
will not shoot at unarmed people who are surrendering or throwing
down their arms, but he cannot take these armed convoys and say
in his statement that they are going to fight their way out
without running into opposition. We will have to challenge him.
(S)

President Ozal: When I received the 22nd of February proposal
through your embassy, I have two points. They should leave all
armaments in Kuwait. (S)

The President: You made that point. I remember that. (S)

President Ozal: Yes, it is happening. I think the Israelis are
right. This man has to go. (S)

The President: I don't know how we can do that but I agree. We
did not have that as an original objective. Can we appeal to the
Revolutionary Command Council to throw him out or something? (S)

SECRET

Declassify on: OADR

DECLASSIFIED
PER E.O. 12958,
AS AMENDED
BY 8/21/2009
2000-0479-F

President Ozal: But the Revolutionary Council is in his control. I think probably if you take all the Republican Guards prisoner of war, maybe that will affect him. This man has to be humiliated. (S)

The President: Well, I think that's right and I think its good to add to the humiliation by being sure that the armor doesn't get out. But the problem is that we don't think the people in Baghdad know just how bad the defeat is. (S)

President Ozal: Yes, but I think the news will come. I think you must take Basra. (S)

The President: We don't have to do that but what we can do is south of Basra be sure we have troops there -- be sure they don't cross the river. The report is that there is a mammoth really tremendous traffic jam right there where people are trying to flee. But soon they will be engaged by our very strong forces. (S)

President Ozal: Are your forces racing to the Euphrates or do you have your airborne division? (S)

The President: We have both. The airborne is coming up and down the Euphrates Valley -- and the weather is bad -- and we have massive armor trying to cut them off from running away. We have armor above the Republican Guard but below Basra. (S)

President Ozal: That is a point I want to make: those Republican Guards, if they are taken prisoner of war, he will be humiliated very much. (S)

The President: They will be defeated. The problem is there are a lot of them and it is hard to handle. We're tripping all over these people. There are over 30,000 prisoners right now. (S)

President Ozal: George, another thing, in the Kuwait theatre, we're talking about 500,000 people, all these reports. It seems to me there are Iraqi divisions but they are empty inside. (S)

The President: You're right. Right now, the divisions are decapitated. Its called combat ineffective. There are maybe one or two units left but they are running away, breaking up and ineffective. (S)

President Ozal: I think it is the right moment to follow and complete everything. One thing you remember I told you -- this war reparations that we talked about in Washington. I think this will be the most important point. (S)

The President: Excuse me. What did you say? ((U))

President Ozal: War preparations. (S)

The President: We've got to press for that. He is refusing to comment on that and the POWs. Of course, we have very few but every life is special. He better not have killed our prisoners or he will have serious problems. (S)

President Ozal: Look carefully at what they have done in Kuwait. (S)

The President: You know tomorrow Arab forces will go into Kuwait City and liberate it. They'll be backed up by a lot of marines, but I think its better for Arab forces to go in. CBS is in there and Mutual Broadcasting. They've just gone into the city. Our forces are waiting until dawn which comes in a few hours. (S)

President Ozal: In that case, maybe this man could be tried as a war criminal. (S)

The President: We're for that, but if we make it a goal, how do you get a hold of him? How do you capture him to bring him to trial? That's a problem. (S)

President Ozal: We will continue with the embargo. I think we should say very clearly that if this man doesn't go out, we will not go out. (S)

The President: Yes, that's right. But there's a little problem with the Soviets, but I think its manageable. (S)

President Ozal: I think the Soviets should understand because this man is crazy. I know your Arab coalition has been difficult. (S)

The President: That's true. That's one of the reasons we are escalating our call to get him out. We haven't really made that a goal yet. Don't want to set a goal we can't necessarily fulfill. We are trying to think of ways to get him out to save the suffering of his people. Maybe we could say as soon as he leaves, we will provide medicine and clean water. (S)

President Ozal: Maybe you could put some leaflets over Baghdad demanding this. (S)

The President: That's a good idea and I think we're already doing some of that. I'll double check on that and see where we are but the time has come to get him out. (S)

President Ozal: You remember Nasser. He was a hero of the Arabs but his defeat in the 1967 war with Israel brought him down. After he died, he was one of the biggest heroes of the Arabs, but no one talks anymore about him. (S)

The President: We have to get him out some way and maybe the people will throw him out or some army unit who lost a lot of life will do something. There is a humiliation factor but he doesn't know it yet. Did you see his statement? (S)

President Ozal: Yes, I saw CNN and was amazed. When you see a cease fire, he will announce that he is victorious. (S)

The President: We're not going to permit that. (S)

President Ozal: I know the Arab mentality and this man has to be humiliated and demanded by the victors to be removed. I believe the Arabs will forget him. Like they forgot Nasser. (S)

The President: We totally agree with you. Now we have to figure out how to get it done. It's bad if he continues, I don't see a happy ending. (S)

President Ozal: What we can do is get as many prisoners of war as possible, especially from the Republican Guards, then try to put pressure on Baghdad and some way the war will continue. You have liberated Kuwait but if their position is to not accept the other UN Security Council decisions, to continue to push and not only on land but by airpower. Send leaflets and continue the embargo. I believe he will go away. (S)

The President: Well, listen. I think that's right on target, just the way you always have been. I appreciate hearing from you and we will stay in touch. Right now, I have no inclination to permit anything short of total completion of our objectives and disarming the Republican Guard ... blowing up tanks and armor. We won't let their armor get back to Baghdad. (S)

President Ozal: I think you can ask, in my opinion, for complete surrender.

The President: We're told that the word "surrender" is a bad word in Arabic. They say that "surrender" has bad connotations in the Arabic language. (S)

President Ozal: I didn't know that. (S)

The President: Ask your specialists about that. I'd like to know your view. Maybe we're wrong. (S)

President Ozal: I will ask. (S)

The President: The Saudi representative said, "No, that's a bad word. It might turn the Arabs against you if you use that word." But I'd like to know. You have a lot of Arab specialists there. (S)

President Ozal: I will look into that. But, George, I want to say one thing. I am quite happy with this. I remember Tariq Aziz saying America will be humiliated. (S)

The President: Yes, I do, too, but he will be humiliated. He cannot have a victory and we have to get the word out. (S)

President Ozal: He has to be humiliated. (S)

The President: He has to be humiliated. Okay, Turgut, its been wonderful to hear from you. Once again, let me say we are grateful for your steadfast support and standing together. (S)

President Ozal: We will completely support you. Don't worry. (S)

The President: Good-bye. (U)

President Ozal: Good-bye. (U)

-- End of Conversation --