

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting with Roland Dumas, Foreign Minister of France

PARTICIPANTS: The President  
 The Vice President  
 James A. Baker, Secretary of State  
 John H. Sununu, Chief of Staff  
 Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs  
 Robert M. Gates, Assistant to the President and Deputy for National Security Affairs  
 Raymond Seitz, Assistant Secretary for European and Canadian Affairs, Department of State  
 Adrian Basora, Director, European Economic Affairs, NSC Staff (Notetaker)

Roland Dumas, Foreign Minister  
 Jacques Andreani, Ambassador to the U.S.  
 Pierre Morel, Elysee Diplomatic Adviser  
 Patrick Leclercq, Assistant Secretary for Middle Eastern Affairs

DATE, TIME AND PLACE: February 28, 1991, 1:15 - 1:35 p.m. The Oval Office

During the photo session, the President made a for-the-record statement of appreciation for French cooperation on the Gulf crisis. Dumas responded with an equally positive statement along the same lines.

The President: I have a great sensitivity and understanding for French knowledge of the Middle East and I look forward to our consultations as to how to deal with the post-war issues of the region. You'll be talking with Jim Baker, I will be talking with President Mitterrand and Brent will be talking with Admiral Lanxade. We have got to stay together. As you have urged, we have also got to tackle the Palestinian question promptly. I am glad that the border meeting with Iraqi military representative seems likely to take place. It will not be a nice, clean ending, but now we should at least be able to pin down the military side, and you and Jim can work out ways to pin down the UN and diplomatic side. The issue of prisoner of war exchanges is very important. (S)

Foreign Minister Dumas: How do you see things as of now? (U)

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The President: I hope the Iraqis will acquiesce in our military requirements. Their armor was so decimated that they no longer constitute a military threat to their neighbors. Baghdad is waging a big propaganda campaign, but I understand there is also evidence of the beginnings of some dissension at home in Iraq. Clearly, Saddam Hussein has lost and we have won. He won't be able to hide it. (S)

We must use the UN as effectively as possible. We want to work with our coalition partners in restoring the post-war situation. We are anxious to get your views. (S)

Foreign Minister Dumas: It is so important that we work effectively together. (S)

The President: I would welcome our having serious consultations. One area that I'd like us to talk about is the problems of the Maghreb and whether you believe there is anything the U.S. can do. I am pleased that there has been no turmoil there so far, although there have been serious demonstrations. We would be pleased to cooperate with France to strengthen those governments. Bendjedid and King Hassan are both good men, although I'm not so sure about the Tunisian leader. (S)

Foreign Minister Dumas: James and I have talked about this in the past. I believe we can very slowly restore good relations with this area. (S)

The President: I wouldn't be surprised if Bendjedid were to be of help to us in the future, although he does have problems on his own left. (S)

This was a combined victory and we have every reason to be proud. The casualties were remarkably light. Did the French take any casualties? (S)

Foreign Minister Dumas: We lost two dead. (U)

Secretary Baker: How many pilots? Did you lose any pilots? (U)

Foreign Minister Dumas: No, we did not lose any. (U)

The President: The casualties were remarkably low overall, and they would have been lower if it had not been for that one Scud missile which hit our barracks in Saudi Arabia. I very much regret that nine of the UK casualties were from our "friendly fire", but the British have told us that they fully understood that these kinds of things are inevitable in war. (S)

Foreign Minister Dumas: I remember the first conversation we had... (U)

The President: I like the symbolism of this war having been over in just 100 hours. Did President Mitterrand mention to you the

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idea of our getting together? Perhaps you can discuss possible times with Jim. (S)

Foreign Minister Dumas: Yes, he did mention it, and I have some ideas. Pierre Morel, who is right here with me, works directly for the President. (S)

The President: I have no agenda for this meeting. I just want to exchange views and perspectives with Francois. (S)

Foreign Minister Dumas: He remembers his meeting with you in Maine very fondly. (C)

The President: But now it's winter, and I think we should go south! Maybe we should go to the French Caribbean, but I am open-minded. And Brent and Admiral Lanxade could talk about it. (S)

I am feeling quite emotional right now about the success of this military campaign. It was good that we were together in it -- good for French-U.S. relations and good for the world. It tells the French and the U.S. people that we cooperated effectively together. (S)

Foreign Minister Dumas: Yes, there are very positive feelings among the French public. (C)

-- End of Conversation --

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