

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with Prime Minister Hawke of Australia on February 28, 1991

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

DATE, TIME AND PLACE: February 28, 1991 4:10 p.m. - 4:20 p.m. EST
The Oval Office

Prime Minister Hawke telephoned the President to congratulate him on the successful completion of the Persian Gulf War. (U)

PM Hawke: Hi, George. (U)

The President: Yes, Bob, how are you? (U)

PM Hawke: I am very well, thank you. Congratulations my friend on a magnificent effort. Your speech was superb. (U)

The President: Thank you, and I really appreciate your comments to your people, which were reported on the UPI wire, I think, this morning. (U)

PM Hawke: The cease-fire appears to be holding. (U)

The President: Yes, I am grateful it appears to be holding. In fact, Iraq has just agreed to send military representatives to start working out details of the cease-fire. They agreed to begin working on exchanges of people, including POWs, which is of great concern to the American people. The military conditions are there to put a permanent cease-fire in place. (U)

PM Hawke: Do you have any intelligence on where Saddam Hussein may be, on his position? (U)

The President: We have very little. There are reports of unrest in Baghdad. We are unable to confirm them. There is a feeling here that once the people know how devastating the defeat was... Now, Baghdad radio is spouting stuff from "Baghdad command."

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Baghdad radio is still reporting victory. The people are not getting the facts. There is feeling here in the analytical community that the man will not be able to survive this. (Ø)

PM Hawke: I see. I was glad to see that you went to the issues we will have to address after the war in the region. Until we get those other questions settled... We will have to step out. (Ø)

The President: Jim Baker will be going out right away to start working on the other problems, including the Palestinians and trying to do something about Lebanon. (Ø)

PM Hawke: Right! Do you have any sense what difficulties our Israeli friends will be? (Ø)

The President: We are getting differing reports. I think it will be tough. They think we owe them something for staying out of the war, but we have taken care of their number one enemy and it seems there should be some gratitude. I hope they will be more forthcoming. With the PLO fractured by being on the wrong side, maybe we have a chance now. (Ø)

PM Hawke: I certainly hope so. Their intransigence in the pre-war period with you was certainly unhelpful. You have got to hope they understand that they have got to be prepared to show some flexibility. (Ø)

The President: We will be pushing for that. I have an obligation to try very hard here. In diminishing the threat of Saddam Hussein, we have taken care of one of their most threatening enemies. (Ø)

PM Hawke: George, one other question, my dear friend. What is your reading of the position of King Hussein? I know we have been terribly disappointed with his position, how do you read the fallout in Jordan? (Ø)

The President: So far they have been quiet. I recall that King Hussein said he was reflecting the views of the government when he made his first statement. Then we sent a private emissary to see him and he came out very critical of us. Then he issued a blast. I think that set him back in American public opinion. Now he has sent a feeler out that says he wants to have better relations. It is my judgment that we do not want a vacuum there. He turned on us more than he needed. He hurt himself, but I think he is worth trying to work with, but the coalition partners, especially the Arab partners of the coalition, are very, very upset with him. (Ø)

PM Hawke: I agree with your assessment that in the current circumstances he is our best bet. (Ø)

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The President: I like him, and I know you do, too, Bob. He is in a very tough position, I empathize with him, but he went overboard more than he had to. (S)

PM Hawke: George, I know how terribly busy you are. I want to really thank you for how we have been able to share thoughts on this area. I appreciate those opportunities. Again it has been a splendid performance. The way you handled all areas from the beginning, running on about four different tracks -- the logistics, the UN, bilateral relations, and your own constituency and Congress. I have been very proud to be associated with it. (S)

The President: It has been a pleasure to be side by side. Thank you for your call. (U)

PM Hawke: Okay, George, Goodbye. (U)

The President: Over and out. Thank you. (U)