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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telephone Conversation with President Turgut Ozal of Turkey

PARTICIPANTS: The President
President Turgut Ozal
Nicholas Burns (notetaker)

DATE, TIME February 28, 1991, 8:05 a.m. - 8:17 a.m.
AND PLACE: The Oval Office

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

President Ozal: I am calling to congratulate you for a speedy victory. (U)

The President: Thank you for the call. I should be calling you for your total cooperation on this. The trouble is Baghdad radio is saying the Iraqis won the war and that the U.S. quit. That makes finding an end to this difficult. (S)

President Ozal: Will your commanders meet with their commanders? (S)

The President: There will be no formal conference through that channel. But we hope to be able to arrange a meeting to work out details on prisoners of war. (S)

President Ozal: They will have some difficult conditions. (S)

The President: Do you think so? (U)

President Ozal: Their commanders may have some. (S)

The President: The Iraqi commanders are in no position to make conditions. They must accept the just conditions we have laid down. We will not give one inch. They will meet our demands. Our military is comfortable with the cease-fire. We destroyed their offensive capabilities. There is no point in killing individual soldiers. (S)

President Ozal: You destroyed their armor? (S)

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The President: That is true. The damage was enormous. My problem is that they don't realize that because the radio is saying otherwise. We have work to do. I share your enthusiasm that the killing is probably over but we also need to make sure there will be no SCUDs fired against other countries like yours. (S)

President Ozal: Your commanders should ask that their SCUDs be eliminated. (S)

The President: We're discussing that now -- the elimination of the SCUDs and the other rockets. I know that is important to all of you who are within range. (S)

President Ozal: There are Republican Guards in Baghdad. (S)

The President: Yes, but they are infantry. They are not heavily mechanized. I'm not sure there are armored units there. Brent Scowcroft says no, there are no heavy guard units near Baghdad. (S)

President Ozal: You should ask the Iraqis to put their forces under UN control. He should accept disarmament of his army. (S)

The President: The only danger to total disarmament is that would make them a target for others. We don't want to tempt Iran. But they shouldn't be able to rearm. Our military says Iraq is destroyed as an offensive threat. We have destroyed over 4,000 tanks. (S)

President Ozal: George, I want to humiliate him even more. He is making propaganda. (S)

The President: I agree. I want him out. We can't have normal relations with him. I agree with you. I want to find ways to do anything to encourage them to get him out. We can't have him there. (S)

President Ozal: Yes. On our border there are ten Iraqi divisions. One is a Republican Guard Brigade. I am not afraid of them and do not rate them highly. (S)

The President: We will cover Turkey's security requirements. We will be in close touch. Don't worry. Maybe we can make this a condition. Please stay in close touch. (S)

President Ozal: I am not afraid of Iraq. But the problem is Saddam Hussein and the Revolutionary Command Council will be in power. They could launch terrorist activities in the future. There will be lots of problems in Iraq in the future. (S)

The President: I am sure of it. We will consider any positive suggestions you have. We are interested in the same thing: getting Saddam Hussein out. I was just handed a note that says Iraqi forces outside the Kuwaiti theater are smaller and lower in quality than those in the Kuwaiti theater. (S)

President Ozal: The question is you must put Iraq in a difficult situation by asking it to disarm. (S)

The President: Brent Scowcroft pointed out there are two Republican Guard infantry brigades in Baghdad. They have some armor but our assessment is they are not a threat. They remain there and there is a chance they could reposition these forces to block a coalition advance. But the Iraqis are decimated and their morale is gone. They did exactly what you said they would do. There are 50,000 POWs. It was a one hundred hour war. That is humiliating for them. (S)

President Ozal: You should leaflet them. (U)

The President: We will do so. (U)

President Ozal: Will you fly your planes over Iraq? What will you do if they attack them? (S)

The President: We will hit back. We won't let up on them. I will keep in mind your security requirements. If you don't feel Turkey's interests are being properly considered, give me a call. Okay, Turgut, it has been a joy to work with you. We'll stay in touch by phone. Don't watch CNN so much. Get some rest. I'm turning them all off. I'm getting tired of it. (S)

President Ozal: Okay, I'll watch BBC. (U)

The President: We want to do what is right by Turkey. (S)

President Ozal: You tell Powell that I remember he said we shouldn't underestimate the Iraqi forces. When he told me that in September, I disagreed. (S)

The President: I'll tell him. I'll remind him. He has done a marvelous job. Thank you so much for your support. (U)

-- End of Conversation --