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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon to Pope John Paul II (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Pope John Paul II
Adrian Basora, NSC Staff (Notetaker)

DATE, TIME: March 5, 1991, 7:23 - 7:30 a.m.

AND PLACE: The Oval Office

Call was
made on March 6

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influence. We must also be concerned about human rights in the
region. (✓)

Pope John Paul II: Yes, that is very important. It is difficult
for the many Christian minorities in the Islamic countries,
including the one in Saudi Arabia. (✓)

The President: That is true, and we are trying, even though the
problems are very, very difficult. (✓)

Pope John Paul II: They are still living in some tension. Some
Moslems still view them negatively. (✓)

The President: I hope we are now at the beginning of a new
situation. (✓)

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2009-0674-MR
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The President: Your Holiness, how are you, sir? I am delighted to hear your voice. Now that the war is over, I wanted to be in touch. I believe we have an important opportunity for peace in the Middle East. (S)

Pope John Paul II: Yes, it is an important opportunity from my viewpoint also. (U)

The President: I know of your interest in peace and of your concerns about Lebanon, about the Palestinian question, and about the Christian minorities in several other countries of the region. (S)

Pope John Paul II: It is very important that we work to bring peace to this region, but some problems remain unresolved. (S)

The President: Yes, I realize that and that is why Jim Baker is en route to the region. We want peace, but not peace at any price. I share your concern about the Christian minorities in the Arab countries, and I think that your moral influence can be helpful in the peace process. I have great respect for that influence. We must also be concerned about human rights in the region. (S)

Pope John Paul II: Yes, that is very important. It is difficult for the many Christian minorities in the Islamic countries, including the one in Saudi Arabia. (S)

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Pope John Paul II: Some of the Christians of the region are still having problems with fundamentalist groups. I was concerned that Saddam Hussein would encourage the fundamentalists. (Ø)

The President: I think that was a danger, but putting down Saddam Hussein should help to alleviate the problem. I just wanted you to know of the efforts we are making in the cause of peace, because I know of your commitment to peace in the region. (Ø)

Pope John Paul II: I pray every day for this result. (U)

The President: I hope our paths will cross soon, although I have no plans as yet to be in Italy in the foreseeable future. Despite the war with Iraq, the United States is prepared to do its part for peace. (Ø)

Pope John Paul II: Perhaps there is a new occasion for peace appearing now. (Ø)

The President: All I wanted you to know is that we will be trying. (Ø)

Pope John Paul II: Yes, and I will be praying for the success of your efforts. (Ø)

The President: Please give my respects to Cardinal Casaroli. Barbara joins me in paying our respects to you as well, Your Holiness. (U)

Pope John Paul II: I am very grateful for your call and my respects to you as well. (U)

-- End of Conversation --

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