

# Withdrawal/Redaction Sheet

## (George Bush Library)

Document No. and Type	Subject/Title of Document	Date	Restriction	Class.
10. Memcon	Re: Meeting with John Major, PM of the United Kingdom, March 16, 1991 (9:45-11:45 a.m.) [FOIA EXEMPTIONS REDACTED] (7 pp.)	3/16/91	(b)(1)	S

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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON



MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting with John Major, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

PARTICIPANTS: The President  
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs

Prime Minister John Major  
Sir Charles Powell, Private Secretary to the Prime Minister

DATE, TIME AND PLACE: March 16, 1991 (9:45a.m. -11:45a.m.)  
Government House, Bermuda

The President: Thank you for all your fine cooperation on the Gulf. What do you think is going to happen to Saddam Hussein and Iraq now? (S)

Prime Minister Major: He is certainly not doing too well in the North but he might be prevailing in the South. If he stays, I have made it clear that he must be punished. But it will be very bad he if stays. (S)

The President: Is there anything we can do about it? I hate to see our clear military victory eroded by this messy situation. (S)

Prime Minister Major: Congratulations on the entire war effort including the way you managed the United Nations. (S)

The President: How do we keep this situation from eroding? We must go forward in three main areas, the Gulf, the Arab/Israeli conflict, and finally Lebanon. The Israelis aren't showing much flexibility. I fear that this will be principally a U.S. problem to solve. (S)

Prime Minister Major: The Europeans will be difficult on Israel, especially the French. They will be keen on having a conference and using the United Nations. You are the only one with the clout to move Israel. I think if we push hard on a conference it will make Israel dig in even more. France is asking for a meeting "to see what lessons there are from the Gulf" but it is a way to get the EC going on a conference. (S)

The President: When is that? (U)

Prime Minister Major: April 8th. (S)

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The President: Mitterrand did not press the conference issue with me in Martinique. He did mention the United Nations Security Council summit but he was not pressing it. He tried hard to be congenial. He talked alot about Palestinians and Jordan. (S)

Prime Minister Major: The Soviets will want to be involved alone with the French, and that points to UNSC Perm Reps. But is that the best way to proceed? (S)

The President: What did Gorbachev tell you? (S)

Prime Minister Major: He wants to be involved, but he didn't push any particular scheme. (S)

The President: Now or later I will have to do something. Shamir won't like it but we have to do what is right. I want you to know that at the right moment Israel must be pushed. Jim Baker and I are both suspect, compared to Ronald Reagan. I would like to get your views and those of others. (S)

Prime Minister Major: I will have a clearer European picture on the 8th. There is not a consensus in Great Britain on proceeding separately from our UN role. But I would like to see what can be done bilaterally. (S)

The President: Jim Baker is exploring a two track idea. The problem with the UN I feel is that it is wholly against Israel. It is a very difficult problem. Believe it or not Shamir is a moderate.

Prime Minister Major: Arafat came out badly. But I question who would replace him. We are suggesting no funding as long as he is there. (S)

The President: Jim Baker had a good meeting with the Palestinians. But they made clear that Tunis (Arafat) said it was okay. How about King Hussein? (S)

Prime Minister Major: I don't think we have a better alternative than Hussein. <sup>1.4(b); 1.4(c)</sup> (S)

The President: We have held back on Jordan because of sensitivities of the Arabs. But we will move slowly. (S)

Prime Minister Major: Should I try to get the Europeans to give Baker a few months before they press for a UN initiative? (S)

The President: That would be helpful. (S)

Prime Minister Major: My argument is the Arabs are now showing more flexibility. It is the Israelis who are difficult, and pressing the United Nations initiative would just make them more so.

My foreign office doesn't necessarily agree, so I wouldn't want this to get back to them.

Can we go back and discuss Iraq so more. Should we be offering any help to any of the insurgents? (S)

The President: I think the wisest thing is just to sit still, try to get a cease fire and not to get engaged in an insurrection. (S)

Prime Minister Major: What about using anti-Iraq broadcasts? Shouldn't we continue these? (S)

Brent Scowcroft: I don't think it has stopped; its just changed. But I will check again. (S)

Prime Minister Major: Should we keep the sanctions in place if Saddam Hussein does not leave? (S)

The President: I would like to, but we shouldn't move the goal post. (S)

Prime Minister Major: That's true but then how do we get rid of his nuclear biological-chemical capability? (S)

The President: I agree. What about explicitly forcing Saddam Hussein out? (S)

Prime Minister Major: I don't know if the United Nations would go for it. (S)

The President: I could be wrong about the Soviet Union and maybe about France. (S)

Prime Minister Major: But Gorbachev was scathing with to me about Saddam Hussein. We are currently pulling out British troops about 1,000 per week. (S)

The President: Are you going to leave some there? (S)

Prime Minister Major: Not ground troops. Maybe ships in the Gulf. (S)

The President: I'm not sure we have a problem within our government, but I don't want ground troops or permanent presence. Navy and air rotation, but not ground troops. (S)

Brent Scowcroft: I think we are all together now. (S)

Prime Minister Major: I think keeping troops in Kuwait with the uncertain political developments could be a problem. (S)

The President: (referring to an Arab force in Kuwait) How about Assad? I have never seen anyone so critical of Israel. But I

think we have crossed a bit of a hurdle with our own public opinion on Syria. (S)

Prime Minister Major: I think it is worth trying to bring him along. (S)

The President: We had a long discussion with Mitterrand about the Maghreb. I don't see much of a role here for the Gulf. (S)

Prime Minister Major: I agree. Is there a role for a United Nations force in the Gulf? (S)

The President: Jim Baker is working on these ideas. (S)

Prime Minister Major: I think it is very useful to keep the United Nations involved. It was incredibly useful in the crisis. And I am keen on keeping a United Nations role for that reason. (S)

The President: I agree. We should keep the United Nations involved. We just must be careful with the UN where Israel is involved. (S)

Prime Minister Major: What about arms sales? Gorbachev was quite helpful on that question both with regard to nuclear biological chemical and conventional sales. We don't want to stop defensive arms to our friends but we want to start thinking about what to do about others and in what ways the Perm 5 should get involved, since they sell most of the arms. (S)

The President: This is an important issue. One problem is Israel. I got a question on this in Ottawa which I'm afraid it fumbled. (S)

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Prime Minister Major: I made the point with Gorbachev that we should distinguish between what is for defense and what is for offensive. I recognize that that ~~destination~~ <sup>designation</sup> doesn't carry us very far. (S)

✓  
The President: I got a follow-on question about a cut off of arms and I said we'd had eliminated the biggest threat in Arabians so that the need for arms was down. I got beat up on that by my own people. But my statement has not had serious repercussions. What should we say to the press? (Discussion of press questions) (S)

Prime Minister Major: Do you think Gorbachev will survive? (S)

The President: You just saw him but I tend to think not. (The President described the flap over Baker meeting with Yeltsin) (S)

Prime Minister Major: I got criticism for not seeing Yeltsin. We have some problems with him as do you. (S)

The President: What do you think about Gorbachev? (S)

Prime Minister Major: Which way can he go? I don't see how he can re-introduce reforms. Even if he could, it would take years of pain to do any good. Neither of the two alternatives for Gorbachev look attractive. (S)

I had dinner with Shevardnadze. He was very supportive of Gorbachev. He said his statement on dictatorship didn't refer to Gorbachev but to the overall situation. (S)

The President: If Gorbachev would only do something on the Baltics then the world would be a lot different. (S)

Prime Minister Major: I approached him wrong. I should have put it that way rather than saying how much his Baltics moves were hurting him. I should handle it the way you suggest the next time I talk to him. (S)

The President: I will do that as well. (S)

Prime Minister Major: Are you going to be seeing him? (S)

The President: I don't know when. Jim Baker is telling him that if there is no progress on arms control we will not be able to have a summit. (S)

Prime Minister Major: We have our own problems left over from Thatcher, including having Gorbachev come to the London Economic Summit. We could have him to lunch just before the meeting. (S)

The President: Let me talk to Jim Baker before I reply to that idea. (Both the President and the Prime Minister were cool to the idea of having Gorbachev to lunch). (S)

Prime Minister Major: There is an increasing debate within the EC on defense role. What Delors and Mitterrand want is a direct EC role on defense. We are very negative but it has big head of steam. Kohl is supporting it. (S)

We have suggested increasing the European role in NATO but through the WEU. And we've also favored keeping an integrated command. Kohl was supportive when I talked to him but in a vacuous way. It would be useful if we could raise it with Kohl. It would help a great deal. Mitterrand is beyond hope on this. (Discussion of Mitterrand meeting). (S)

Prime Minister Major: Mitterrand can wrap Kohl around his little finger when he is at his delphic best. I like Kohl and I get along with him, but he is no match for Mitterrand. (S)

The President: We sent a demarche on which Mitterrand demurred. (S)

Sir Charles Powell: We liked your demarche. (S)

The President: Let's discuss trade. (President explained the effort to get extension of our fast-track negotiating authority).  
(S)

Prime Minister Major: I hope the fast-track authority comes through. We would like to finish the Uruguay Round this year. The EC agricultural reform could even come up worse than the mess we now have. The Commission needs its wings clipped badly. These two treaties on economic and political union are disastrous. I'm trying to get Kohl on my side. (S)

The President: Delors wants to be President of France. (S)

Prime Minister Major: Kohl says that he will not make it. He is too conservative for the French left.

(Discussion of Mrs. Thatcher and poll tax and Mrs. Thatcher CNN interview). She doesn't like the way I am playing with the Germans. She doesn't like Kohl. Monetary Union is a big problem. The French wanted to tie Germany into Europe and Kohl wants to show Germany is a good European. It is a bloody mess but a unified currency and a unified bank can't be done like yours. The basics are not there. (Discussion of Mrs. Thatcher and party politics). I can't win, but it must be done. If it must be done; tis better to be done quickly. (S)

Thank you for your response to my letter on South Africa. (S)

The President: (Discussion of Mandela phone call) I want to move on sanctions as fast as possible. De Klerk now deserves our support. (S)

Prime Minister Major: I agree completely. The EC is okay on this because I have Kohl with me. Other countries are reluctant. I tried to push the Commission to move, but it is not going too well.

One simple additional matter: Hong Kong refugees -- the numbers are up 200%, and we can't hold our position any longer. It will blow back to Commons shortly, and the Hong Kong lobby there is very strong. (S)

The President: Well, we've had this difference on the question of repatriation. What do you want? (S)

Prime Minister Major: I would like your acquiescence in reinforceable repatriation under careful conditions. (S)

Brent Scowcroft: Is there anyway we can be sure that Congress would not object? (S)

Prime Minister Major: I could look at that. (S)

The President: We will look at the question again. (S)

Sir Charles Powell: We have some new proposals. (S)

Prime Minister Major: Let us get our people together. (S)

The President: How is Hong Kong going? (S)

Prime Minister Major: The Chinese are deeply suspicious about the involvement of Hong Kong groups in China. There is also a new airport going up and the Chinese are suspicious about that. (S)

The President: We still have a China problem. Most Favored Nation coming up soon, and if Congress kills it the Chinese will blame us. (S)

Prime Minister Major: Hong Kong will be devastated. (S)

My only other point is COCOM and telecommunications. I worry about our allies on this issue. They don't know about the intelligence value of delay. It is very important. (S)

The President: Are we okay? (S)

Brent Scowcroft: Yes, we are very close together on this.

(At this point Robert Zoellick joins the meeting to brief on Baker's meeting with Gorbachev). (S)

-- End of Conversation --