

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with Turgut Ozal, President of Turkey
on June 13, 1991

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Turgut Ozal, President
Notetaker: Nicholas Burns, NSC Staff

DATE, TIME June 13, 1991, 3:49 - 4:01 p.m.
AND PLACE: The Oval Office

The President: Turgut! (U)

President Ozal: Yes, yes, hello, George. (U)

The President: How are you? How did your visit go? (U)

President Ozal: That is the point of my call. I am going to tell you about Tariq Aziz. Now I will give you some short explanation. First of all, Tariq Aziz has brought an oral message from Saddam Hussein. They say they are ready to forget the past. They want to turn a new page in Turkish-Iraqi relations. They want to start a political dialogue, and an economic and commercial exchange. They want us to open the pipeline. They tried to convince us that article 51 of the UN Charter permitted us to buy oil from Iraq in spite of the embargo.

Tariq Aziz said they wanted a normal Turkish-Iraqi relationship. There was an additional argument. They emphasized that they gave autonomy to the Kurds in 1974 and that there had been cooperation in the economic and commercial fields. Under present conditions, however, they say they are weak and cannot keep up a long struggle with the Kurds. They therefore might be obliged to give in to their demands and give them autonomy. And they may not be able to keep them under control. He also asked for Turkish cooperation with the embargo and a resumption of the political dialogue right away to determine how we can best help them.

I replied in the following terms. I said we want to improve our relations with the people of Iraq. That is why we are sending humanitarian aid -- food and medicine. But I said the UN resolutions do not permit us to go further. I did not reply to the demands for normalization of relations. I said that the Iraqi negotiations with the Kurds were a domestic affair. I said they would concern us to the extent that they caused instability in the region; that we would not tolerate another mass movement of Kurdish refugees along our borders. I said we would not

~~SECRET~~

Declassify on: OADR

~~SECRET~~DECLASSIFIED
PER E.O. 12958,
AS AMENDED
CA 8/21/2009

object to autonomy and just wanted a fair share for the Kurds. I clearly stated that the West did not want to see Saddam Hussein in power any longer. The embargo would continue as long as he was there. I said this very bluntly. I said the only solution to this whole problem lay in the establishment of real democracy. An important part of our talks focused on this question. I said that it was essential to convince the West that they would start a general process of democratization. I said it is essential to involve international organizations like the UN. Democracy would solve problems and help preserve the integrity of Iraq. They would also have to agree beforehand to hold elections. If Saddam Hussein loses, he loses. I said this is the only course to lead Iraq to an open future. Otherwise there would be other problems.

In reply, Tariq Aziz said they had already started the democratic process before the war. That they were not doing this because the west wanted it. He said Saddam was very popular and would win any election. I said if Saddam is going to win this election, why are you hesitating to have a really genuine democratic system if he is so popular? But Tariq Aziz would not consent to the involvement of the UN or any foreign government in elections. He said that, under present conditions, it would take time to realize this process. I think this visit, George, provided some fruitful talk. He left me with visible disappointment. His eye was blinking. Some kind of tic. (S)

The President: Well, that's a very interesting report. I think that is a very useful stand that you took. Does he think that Barzani and Saddam will work out a deal soon? (S)

President Ozal: I asked him whether they would give back Kirkuk or some other place. They said no. It is very difficult for them to agree. I will see some of the Kurdish leaders very soon, probably tomorrow, and we will learn about it. What I found out, the Iraqis are really in desperate condition. I think you can see it. I told him face to face "you made a big mistake." When it happened, I told Ramadan on August 5 that Iraq should quit Kuwait right away. And then I said to Aziz that they shouldn't have refused Secretary Baker in Geneva. I said that Saddam Hussein would have been a hero if you had accepted the conditions in Geneva but you lost also this chance. And I think he understood all of those things. What I feel, is that they are in very desperate condition. (S)

The President: Well, maybe the pressure will work. I think it took a lot of courage on your part to tell him there will not be normal relations as long as Saddam is there. (S)

President Ozal: I told him very clearly the only oil flow will be permitted through the UN Security Council. Our pipeline is ready but it will require UN permission. (S)

The President: Well, that's an interesting report and I appreciate it. Obviously we agree with your position and we will stay in touch on this. (S)

President Ozal: I think it looks like the pipeline will be closed for a long time. Do you remember I requested you talk to the Saudis about compensation. (S)

The President: We've already made a contact but let me see where we stand. What do you want them to do? (S)

President Ozal: I think they give us 175,000 barrels a day for us free of charge. The total will reach \$1.1 billion and will be completed probably in August of this year. I say that as long as this pipeline stays closed, they should continue to give us this oil. (S)

The President: That's what we said but let me see where we stand. (S)

President Ozal: Let me tell you more about the hostages. In about one week they will let two of them go. It is the first indication of good will. Two of the hostages. Probably one of them will be Terry Anderson. (S)

The President: Terry Anderson, yes. (S)

President Ozal: The longest one. I am not very sure, but they are trying to do it. (S)

The President: That would be very, very good. (U)

President Ozal: They would like to see what will happen with the Shia because they think this will have a big effect on the Lebanese. (S)

The President: You say Israel should let them know how many can leave? (S)

President Ozal: I told you about Sheikh Obeid and some of the others they have taken. (S)

The President: We know they are very interested in Obeid. (S)

President Ozal: They also want information about 2 or 3 Iranian soldiers, whether they are dead or one is alive. (S)

The President: We've told them for all our information, over and over again, it is our best bet that they are dead. They aren't accusing us of complicity. We've told them from the intelligence we can get that these people are not alive but to the degree that someone can get more information, they are entitled to know the disposition of the bodies and what happened. All we know is that, from what we can glean, they are dead. Iran is not accusing us. (S)

President Ozal: They told me that they would try to learn whether they are dead; try to get information. (S)

The President: Okay. Well, Turgut, on another subject, I think we have our itinerary worked out so we get to go to the Bosphorus. (U)

President Ozal: Yes, it will be very good for you. (U)

The President: We are very excited and pleased. (U)

President Ozal: One more thing. I am going to write you a letter on our F-16 program. You know there was the Arab Fund with the Saudis, Kuwaitis, and United Arab Emirates that Mr. Baker told us about. But now we would like to start this project. I will have some other alternatives in case they don't give sufficient money. (S)

The President: Well, send me the letter. (U)

President Ozal: I'll send it before you come. Maybe you'll be able to work on it. (U)

The President: Oh, yes. When we get the letter, we'll take a look at it. And once again, I commend you for this difficult but very important conversation with Tariq Aziz. (S)

President Ozal: They may get another round. I don't know. (U)

The President: Well, I hope so. All that contact, we view that as constructive as long as you hold the line and I can guarantee you I will. (S)

President Ozal: I will hold the line. Don't worry. (S)

The President: Okay. Goodbye, my friend. (U)

-- End of Conversation --