

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting with Turgut Ozal, President of Turkey
on July 20, 1991

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs
Morton I. Abramowitz, U.S. Ambassador to
Turkey
David C. Gompert, Special Assistant to the
President for European and Soviet Affairs
(Notetaker)

Turgut Ozal, President
A. Mesut Yilmaz, Prime Minister
Safa Giray, Foreign Minister
Nuzdet Kandemir, Ambassador to the U.S.
Mithat Balkan, Presidential Advisor

DATE, TIME July 20, 1991, 2:35 - 3:00 p.m.
AND PLACE: Presidential Palace, Ankara, Turkey

President Ozal: Welcome. We have finally achieved your visit. I hope it will be very successful. I think you will like Istanbul. (U)

The President: I liked very much seeing all the people on the way in from the airport. It was wonderful. (U)

President Ozal: Let me begin with the question of our strategic cooperation. (Ozal produces attached chart.) This chart illustrates the idea of strategic cooperation that is in your letter, Mr. President. For the political group, we understand this will be led by your Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs. In the military area, two principal groups, one on security, the other one on the defense industry. Then there's a third group on economics, science and technology, and so on. Intelligence is also mentioned, though we will not refer to this in the press. This chart is not to be handed out to the press. With regard to economic cooperation, this is very important to us. Perhaps the most important of all. We very much want U.S. investment. This investment in turn would help our relationship. (S)

The President: I think this is in line with our general thinking. We will certainly try on the investment question. Let's also work in small business as part of our follow on. This is something I also emphasized with Gorbachev. Most of our

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businesses are in the small business category. I'm planning to have CEA Chairman Mike Boskin come here to follow up on some economic issues. (S)

President Ozal: Yes, very good, and with regard to the environment, to have Mr. Reilly come. (U)

General Scowcroft: We can work on the specifics after the visit. (U)

Ambassador Abramowitz: The basic structure is agreed. (S)

The President: (To the U.S. side.) Now with regard to the F-16s, is the position that I'm supposed to state something that we have not stated before? How are we handling Congress? (S)

Mr. Gompert: The plan is for you to announce our support for a 160-plane follow on phase. While we have indicated our general support for this program, this will be the first time that you embrace this specific objective in public. However, we will only notify 80 to Congress because as of the moment we can only clearly identify financing for that number. This position was conveyed in your most recent letter, which we understand the Turkish side has accepted. (S)

President Ozal: That is correct. (U)

The President: Fine, then. Someday we're going to get ourselves in some kind of a bind. Even with this sale, because it's so big, we could see some editorials that while we're advocating arms control, we are making too many large arms sales. But we have a security commitment to you and so we don't think that there will be too much opposition. I also am pleased to see that we got large financial commitments from Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. (S)

President Ozal: Yes, we are glad, too. They agreed to this thanks to your efforts, Mr. President. (S)

The President: The Kuwaitis are currently short of cash. The good news is they're putting out those oil fires. (S)

General Scowcroft: 225 are already out, and now we're putting out three new ones per day. That means we'll be done in about five months. (S)

The President: We cannot let the world forget what incredible damage Saddam Hussein did to the environment. We also have to remind the world about this nuclear problem. We have to get the story out better. This man did unprecedented damage to the environment. (S)

President Ozal: What is your current thinking about Iraq, Mr. President? (S)

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The President: Well, I'd like to learn from you, Turgut. But let me give you my views. He continues to lie and cheat, even in his letter, he admits that he is lying. So we're still concerned, and we're still on alert. He is launching a world-wide "save the children" campaign designed to get relief from the sanctions. But there is hard evidence that he diverts food and medicine away from the people. A lot of people are going to say that we are killing babies. We're going to have to stay together on this question of sanctions. We're going to insist that emergency food goes to the people who need it. We cannot let him use humanitarian assistance to coerce his own people or to get the sanctions taken off. We won't budge on this matter. (S)

I'm also pleased about our cooperation to deter Saddam Hussein's resumption of aggression against the Kurds. This is something we might have to use air power against. Our public opinion will not tolerate another massacre of the Kurds. (S)

President Ozal: What about the latest flare-up between the Kurds and the Iraqis? (S)

General Scowcroft: Our understanding is that it is now subsiding. (S)

The President: With regard to this residual force, I want to thank you for your support. The British and the French are willing to contribute air power. We will consult you, of course, before there is any use of force, and we would only use force if the alternative were to allow him to brutalize the Kurds again. With regard to the nuclear problem, I want you to understand that this is something we would deal with from the south. We think we have the cooperation of Saudi Arabia. Jim Baker reports that the Arabs are saying that we should not use force against Saddam Hussein again. This is the view of Syria and Egypt. The Saudis are being cooperative. They say that their territory can be used, but this cannot be just a U.S. effort. It has been a coalition, and it must continue to be a coalition. This is key for me. But I want you to know that we will not be reckless. (S)

The sanctions must remain in place until all UN Security Council resolutions are enforced and implemented. We don't believe we need a new resolution to justify further military action. If Saddam Hussein violates 688 or 687 we are afraid that if we seek a new resolution, we can't count on the Soviets to go along, and we have even stronger doubts about the Chinese. (S)

I also want you to know that we are not in favor of seeing a Kurdish state established. (S)

What do you think we should do? (U)

President Ozal: I have a copy of a letter from Talabani to you and another copy of a letter from the Turkmen to you. Talabani thinks that there is the possibility of a coup d'etat from the military. They think they have some in the Army who might be

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with them. The Turkmen have people in the Air Force that they say are not happy with Saddam Hussein. If the embargo continues, and if some sabotage begins from within, this will put great pressure on him. On top of that, if they are forced to accept free elections, Saddam Hussein will go. (S)

The President: Do you think Talabani and Barzani will make a deal with Saddam Hussein? (S)

President Ozal: Yes. I believe that what they're interested in is democracy within Iraq, not a Kurdish state. (S)

Ambassador Abramowitz: Could you clarify something, Mr. President? If Talabani believes that Saddam Hussein is in such a precarious position, why should he sign an agreement with him? (S)

President Ozal: Well, he may not sign an agreement. But I do know that he wants democracy. They view this as the best way to get Saddam Hussein to keep his word. If he does not keep his word and there is democracy in Iraq, Saddam Hussein will be destroyed. (S)

The President: How do you think we should stop the nuclear program? It looks like he's starting over. Do you think our approach is right? (S)

President Ozal: We should give the embargo another three months. (S)

The President: But what if we find the nuclear rings and he won't let us inspect them? They can't have any other purpose than nuclear weapons. If he says that we cannot see something that we believe can only have a nuclear weapons purpose, don't you think that we should go after it with a smart bomb? We can't just let him proceed. (S)

President Ozal: My opinion is to keep the embargo on and wait. If he keeps going, then I agree you will have to hit him. (S)

The President: I'm not saying we want to do this. I'm not saying we want to get involved in another massive use of force against Iraq. In the north, if he resumes massacring of the Kurds, then we will have to act. But we would not do so if it is the Kurds' fault. In the south, if we have hard evidence that he is continuing with his nuclear program, then we will warn him. If the warning does no good, then we will use a cruise missile or precision-guided munitions to deal with the problem. But I am planning no new offensive. This will be a very precise attack on his nuclear capability. The world opinion should be with us on this. I am reluctant to do this, but if there is a clear violation of his own statement, we must be prepared to challenge it. This man only understands the use of force. Our weapons are very smart and precise. With regard to the British and the French, they are supportive with regard to our action in the north. Can we get allied air power into Turkey? (S)

President Ozal: No problem. (U)

Mr. President, what do you think of the idea of the United Nations giving a special amount of money directly to the needy Iraqi people as a way of taking the pressure off to lift sanctions for humanitarian purposes. (S)

The President: I agree with that type of an approach. But we may have a problem with Suddein Khan. Saddam Hussein says that the embargo has to be lifted in order to save the children. But we think he has enough money of his own to take care of his children. (S)

President Ozal: He is still very good at propaganda. (S)

The President: Yes, it's amazing that he can still fool people. (S)

General Scowcroft: Our analysis indicates that he doesn't need to sell oil in order to feed his own people. He does have the money, we think. (S)

President Ozal: He's buying from Jordan, so that means he definitely has money. (S)

General Scowcroft: It's okay if he buys from Jordan as long as it's for humanitarian purposes. (S)

President Ozal: We are planning to give the Kurds food and medicine. (S)

The President: Are you satisfied that the Kurds are dealing with you in good faith? (S)

President Ozal: Some of the Europeans are thinking along the lines of establishing an independent Kurdistan. This is true of the French, the British and the German Socialist party. I don't think it's necessary. I think democracy is an alternative. Twelve or thirteen percent of the population of Turkey is Kurdish, but we are going to involve them through democracy. This is another reason why Iraq must get democracy. Otherwise there will be pressures for an independent Kurdistan. Most Kurds in Turkey now live in western Anatolia, and they are very well off. This has taken the pressure off of us. Democracy has solved the Kurdish problem in Turkey. It can do the same in Iraq. Once you realize that you need their votes, you have to be more gentle with them. We are doing all right with the Kurds, except for the PKK, who are supported by West European money. (S)

The President: Is this the group that Mrs. Mitterrand supports? (S)

President Ozal: No, she doesn't support the PKK. (S)

The President: Tell me, is there popular support now in Turkey for what we had to do in the Gulf? What is the mood now? (S)

President Ozal: The support for our policies is comparatively high in Turkey. It's over 50%. (S)

The President: Isn't it interesting that some people who failed to support our decision to use force are now saying that we should have gone after Saddam Hussein himself. But that wasn't our goal from the very beginning. I think what we did was right. We would have lost international sponsorship if we had gone into Baghdad. And we would still be there today trying to occupy that country if not bogged down in door-to-door fighting. (S)

President Ozal: Iraq will not be the same country for 20 to 30 years because of what was done to their military capability and infrastructure. (S)

The President: We have to point this out to the Israelis. The Israelis say that we now owe them because they didn't go into the war. Well, I say if anything they owe us because we destroyed the principal threat to them. (S)

With regard to the Middle East, our hope now is that Israel will step forward. I would like to see a trade involving lifting of the Arab boycott in return for a cessation of Israeli settlements. These settlements are a very destructive policy. (S)

Prime Minister Yilmaz: Mr. President, there is some current concern here that the residual force might actually encourage the Kurds. (S)

The President: That's a good point, Mr. Prime Minister. I'm not sure we can count on the Kurds to be restrained. Some of them are half-crazy, too. (S)

General Scowcroft: We have been warning the Kurds directly. (S)

President Ozal: Some of these Kurds are just renegades. They're really just bandits. (S)

The President: Well, the Prime Minister's point is a good one. We don't want to get sucked into a civil war. (S)

Prime Minister Yilmaz: I think we should emphasize that our purpose is stability. The purpose of the residual force is not to encourage the Kurds to pursue their aims. (S)

Ambassador Abramowitz: There has been some speculation here that we may have an ulterior motive in forming this residual force. (S)

General Scowcroft: It's very simple: we want to prevent a repetition of the disaster we had on the Turkish-Iraqi frontier a couple of months ago. (S)

Ambassador Abramowitz: The Prime Minister made a statement about the purpose being to preserve stability. (S)

The President: I'll make it clear that we don't want to use force again. What we want is stability. (S)

With all the turmoil that's been going on here, has your military picked up any interesting ideas or intelligence about dissatisfaction within the Iraqi army? (S)

President Ozal: No, the best information we have is what I told you about Talabani and his connection to the Iraqi military. But his own military is afraid of Saddam Hussein's terror. The key is to get a vote. He won't even get 10%. (S)

The President: Well, that may be so, but how could we get them to agree to internationally supervise elections? You said that Tariq Aziz was unwilling to go for that. (S)

President Ozal: Yes, but as time passes maybe in two or three months we can press for this. (S)

The President: Do you have any questions on our Middle East effort? (S)

President Ozal: No, but I want to make sure you know about the water conference we are preparing for the Fall. I am thinking of inviting Israel, but I'd like to wait and see if there is a way I can handle this that would help the peace process. The idea is to discuss the water pipeline at this conference, but perhaps it could serve as an added incentive to Israel. After all, Jordan and Israel both are badly in need of water. (S)

Foreign Minister Giray: The best place to get water for this part of the world is from Iraq. The Tigris and the Euphrates have a huge water supply. (S)

President Ozal: Yes, but most of that comes from Turkey, where the Tigris and the Euphrates originate. (S)

The President: Do you think you could divert water away from Iraq? (S)

President Ozal: No, but that doesn't mean we can't use a lot of it for irrigation. I want to encourage Israel. My thought is that if you invest in an international pipeline, you're going to want to have peace and stability. (S)

The President: At today's press conference, I am sure to be asked about Cyprus. I think what I will say, if you agree, is that the United States simply wants to act as a catalyst. Is there something else I should say? At some point, I could say that Turkey is willing to attend a quadripartite meeting. (S)

President Ozal: We all want a solution to the Cyprus problem. We should be reasonable on both sides. This is not a simple problem. It is a very complicated one. But we genuinely want a solution. The solution should be based on UN resolution 649, which establishes a basis of 8 points. (S)

The basic problem, Mr. President, is that Cyprus was supposed to be a partnership. But between 1968 and 1974 that partnership collapsed. So my view is that when we hold a meeting, the idea would be for the two partners to deal with each other but with Greece and Turkey there to offer encouragement. From the Turkish side, our demand is that there be an effective Turkish guarantee. Otherwise, the Turkish Cypriots will not be prepared to go into an overall agreement. So this matter is of utmost importance. We also want there to be a bi-zonal federation with political equality between the two communities established in the constitution. The Greek side demands territorial concessions and the related question of the return of displaced Greek Cypriots. (S)

The President: Yes, I know from my discussions in Athens that territory is the key point for the Greeks. (S)

President Ozal: We will discuss these two points with them before a meeting with the Secretary General. I am prepared to be forthcoming and to declare so openly before the meeting. (S)

The President: But what would you declare? Would you offer a line? Mitsotakis asked me to convey to you their strong interest in the territorial question. I was told that if you can get Denktash to accept the Gobbi line, they could accept the points of importance to you. (S)

Foreign Minister Giray: No, the Greek side won't agree to this. They put these items on the table so as to prevent an agreement, not to produce one. (S)

The President: Well, I'm not sure you're right about that. Mitsotakis was quite clear to me. He said if you can agree to the Gobbi line, then he'll get Vassiliou to agree to the rest. I want you to know that I like and respect Mitsotakis. (S)

Foreign Minister Giray: But if we agree to the Gobbi line, the Greek Cypriots would get the high quality land. The Turkish Cypriots would have to give up this good land. (S)

General Scowcroft: Greece clearly wants an indication of flexibility on your part. (S)

President Ozal: We should both be reasonable. I asked the Greek Ambassador today why this land is so important. I pointed out to him that land is not important in Singapore because they have gone into services. The Greek Cypriots are doing the same thing. They are getting into services in a big way; and industry to some degree, but not so much agriculture any more. They don't really need that land; they don't need it as much as the Turkish

Cypriots. But Vassiliou just wants to say that he got some land. It's not important to them, but I can understand why he wants to be able to show that he got something. The Turkish Cypriots will be reasonable. We should be sure that this federation that we're talking about establishing is a stable one. Otherwise, we'll agree to something that won't last. (S)

The President: I guess you're talking about some kind of a loose federation. But tell me, if Mitsotakis said directly to you that he could accept the Gobbi line, what would you say? Would you say that that's way too much of a concession for you? (S)

President Ozal: Mr. President, I want you to know that we will be forthcoming on the question of territory. Not to the Gobbi line, but we will be forthcoming. (S)

The President: I know the UN Secretary General would love to help solve this problem before he leaves. We won't know who the next UN Secretary General will be, so there is a chance now. There is a chance because there are reasonable people on both sides. The United States will not butt into this, but we will help if we can. (S)

On the question of human rights, this is something we're committed to around the world. I know it's a very sensitive question for you here, but I thought I should raise it. (S)

President Ozal: Something has come up recently which gets a lot of press coverage in the west. There were some terrorists. One member of Parliament was killed. They said they were police. But they weren't police. Now this case is being used against us. The news travels quickly to Europe and from there to the United States where there is a hue and cry. (Ozal passes the President a note on human rights.) (S)

The President: If there is abuse here in Turkey, then our position will be that you should change it. If there is not, in your view, then you should explain the real situation to us. But I will be prepared to tell the press that I raised it. (S)

-- End of Restricted Session --