

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telephone Conversation with King Hassan of Morocco
on November 19, 1991

PARTICIPANTS: The President
King Hassan
Interpreter: Eliza Burnham
Notetakers: Edmund Hull and John Montgomery

DATE, TIME November 19, 1991; 1:30 - 1:42 p.m. EST
AND PLACE: The Oval Office

The President: Hello Your Majesty, how are you? (U)

King Hassan: Hello, how are you? (U)

The President: Very good, mon ami. (U)

King Hassan: I am sorry to disturb you now. I had hoped to speak to you last night. King Hussein (of Jordan) called me last night and informed me the Israelis had broken into and set fire to the religious court (building) in Jerusalem. The Israelis burned many papers that were 500 to 800 years old on Jerusalem. It is the Islamic religious court in Jerusalem. As you know, I chair the Jerusalem committee. This is not an Israeli-Arab problem but an Israeli-Muslim problem. This is why I am calling at King Hussein's request. (S)

The President: We are very concerned about reports from Jerusalem about the forced entry into the Islamic court offices by Israeli authorities. We realize how sensitive Jerusalem is for all Muslims and have asked Israel to avoid such provocations. Our embassy has been instructed to get back to me with a report on this. I understand and share your anxieties. I don't know if we can be helpful, but we will try. (S)

King Hassan: Mr. President, I want to stress to you what I told a Jewish group in New York. This is a political problem and should not be turned into a religious problem. If that happens, the consequences could be disastrous. (S)

The President: Yes. (S)

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King Hassan: Because there are many Muslims around the world in Africa, Asia, Europe and America, and religion must be kept out. (S)

The President: We agree. We don't like this either. I don't know what we can do except make representations to Israel so that this does not happen again. (S)

King Hassan: In any event, I will be making a trip to Italy later this month. I will see the Pope on November 28th and will discuss the Jerusalem problem. Besides Jews and Muslims, it also concerns Christians. (S)

The President: That is true. I am glad you will be talking to the Holy Father about it. (S)

King Hassan: Furthermore, there is a meeting of the OIC in Dakar in December. As I told General Walters, Morocco is not a party to the conflict and cannot be a full participant as such, but as chair of the Jerusalem committee, Morocco has to be a participant at those talks. (S)

The President: Yes, I understand. (S)

King Hassan: This is why I need the support of friends. The problem can be considered only in the context of the political, economic, social, and regional situation. (S)

The President: I see. (S)

King Hassan: Mr. President, I wanted to share these concerns with you. (S)

The President: I am glad you called. I have talked with General Walters. Did he tell you I met with him yesterday? I awarded him the highest civilian honor: the Medal of Freedom. (U)

King Hassan: I am happy to hear the news. (U)

The President: Thank you for calling. We are very concerned about the incident in Jerusalem. (S)

King Hassan: Thank you and give my greetings to Barbara. (U)

The President: I will. We are still reveling in your visit. (U)

Good byes. (U)

-- End of Conversation --