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07. Memcon	Memorandum of conversation between George Bush and Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy [SENT FOR AGENCY REFERRAL] (3 pp.)	12/17/91	(b)(1)	S

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P-1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
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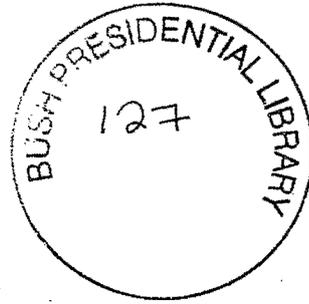
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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON



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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Memorandum of Conversation of Meeting with Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy, Tuesday, December 17, 1991 (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Lawrence S. Eagleburger, Acting Secretary of State
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Edward Djerejian, Assistant Secretary for Near East and South Asian Affairs
Richard N. Haass, Senior Director for Near East and South Asian Affairs
Dina Levine, Interpreter

David Levy, Minister of Foreign Affairs
Zalman Shoval, Israeli Ambassador to the U.S.
Eitan Bentsar, Senior Deputy Director General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Yuri Oren, Advisor to the Foreign Minister

The President and Foreign Minister David Levy met in the Oval Office at 11:00 a.m.

Foreign Minister Levy: I am extremely pleased to be here after the vote in the UN. It was glorious and historic for our two democracies who are allies. Previous Presidents had a clear stand on this issue, but it was our good fortune that you were here to lead our efforts to success. For this we are grateful, both in Israel and Jews everywhere. You have helped relieve our darkness. I am proud to bring the gratitude of Israelis and our thanks as well to Secretary Baker, Lawrence Eagleburger and Ambassador Pickering and to all who worked as one beautiful orchestra in this sacred task. It proves that when we work together we can succeed. (U)

The President: That is just what I wanted to talk to you about. (U)

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Foreign Minister Levy: What happened yesterday was a continuation of the spirit that helped us win the Gulf war. It has been proven that this attitude changed the world in which we live. It is true that only a great President relegates to second place what others would put first. I know of only a few people in this century who would meet this test. It is for this that I am expressing my gratitude. (U)

With your permission I would also like to raise a few other points. We have been party to the Middle East peace process and the search for peace. Here again, you are the one who promoted it. This was made possible by an open dialogue between our two nations. There were many difficulties but we have overcome most of them. We have paved the way forward as the remaining difficulties are negligible compared to what we've done. At long last Arabs and Israelis are meeting face to face. True, there are still difficulties but they must be overcome directly. I want to express my esteem for the Administration which has said that we ourselves must overcome these difficulties, that it is the responsibility of the parties. If the process continues in this manner, I have no doubt the problems will be resolved. There may be a party that believes that if it stalls the U.S. government will intervene, but this is a mistake and there has been a sobering up thanks to the administration. Israel is determined to promote the peace process. (S)

The President: May I make one key point on this matter? I do appreciate what you've told me on the Zionism resolution. This was a team effort. Secretaries Eagleburger and Baker were actively involved. We in the White House supported whenever we could. For us it was a moral position that was proper. Regarding the peace process, it is our view that the parties involved must get on to substance and past procedure. In the U.S. view it would be a tragedy if it just drags on. We want to see substance addressed. Events could crop up which would throw things off the track. My strong appeal--please take this message back to the Prime Minister--is to get into the substance with as many parties as you can. All this jockeying around over venue and procedure will get us nowhere. I am not just signalling Israel over this--I would say the same to the others--but we feel strongly about this. (S)

Foreign Minister Levy: We are determined to get down to substance. We are interested in the success of the process. One point I'd like to draw to your attention is that in the Bija valley there are hundreds of Iranian instructors. They are

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training and guiding Hizbollah who object to peace. They are planning operations. All this is known by the Syrians. I am fearful of an explosion. This must be monitored closely so that our efforts are not in vain. The Syrians are aware. (b)(1)

(b)(1) I hope something can be done. We have done all we can regarding hostages, cooperating with the UN. It would be a humanitarian gesture if you could help us. (S)

The President: I would be glad to say that all those being held hostage should be released. U.N. envoy Picco is in the area working on this. We still want to get back the remains of two of our people. I am sorry to have to rush but I have to take a phone call. (C)

Foreign Minister Levy: I only have one other thing to say. What is happening in the Soviet Union is of big concern to us. We deeply appreciate what you have been doing, but there is the growing problem of the Jews who are still there. We are doing our best to resettle them in Israel; we hope and expect you will have an understanding heart in considering this issue. (C)

The President: We will continue to work with the Soviets. We have not lessened our concerns over freedom to emigrate and anti-semitism there. (S)

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