

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting with President Turgut Ozal of Turkey

PARTICIPANTS: The President
James A. Baker III, Secretary of State
Samuel K. Skinner, Chief of Staff
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs
Thomas M.T. Niles, Assistant Secretary of
State for European and Canadian Affairs
David C. Gompert, Senior Director, European
and Eurasian Affairs, NSC Staff

Turgut Ozal, President of Turkey
Nuzhet Kandemir, Ambassador to the United
States

DATE, TIME April 28, 1992, 3:00pm
AND PLACE: Oval Office

The President (in the presence of the press): It is a pleasure to have President Ozal here. We have good relations with the government of Turkey and we have good relations as well with President Ozal. He and I have been together through some very interesting times and of course some tough times during the Gulf conflict (press departs). (U)

I miss our daily phone calls Turgut. I hope our personal relationship has benefitted U.S.-Turkish relations. I think it has. We are off to a good start with the new Turkish government. Most importantly, your health? I wish you well. (U)

President Ozal: And I wish you well, Mr. President, in the election. I know you will win. I've told the American people with whom I talk that the whole world depends upon your election because you are the leader of the world. (U)

The President: This is terrible election year here. Our economy is very sluggish though it is getting better. But I appreciate what you say. (U)

President Ozal: Don't forget you were 20 points behind Dukakis this time four years ago. (U)

The President: I do want to emphasize that we have good relations with Demirel's government. (U)

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President Ozal: The main topic on my agenda is Bosnia-Hercegovina. It is a very big problem. We have a large number of Bosnians in Turkey, since half of Yugoslavia was once part of the Ottoman empire. The other half was part of the Austrie-Hungarian empire, which is why the Germans recognized only that half. Milosevic is very tough and he is a serious communist. If he is pushed, however, the Bosnia-Hercegovina situation will be corrected. If not, the problem will continue and spread to Kosovo. (S)

Secretary Baker: And Macedonia too? (U)

President Ozal: Yes. (U)

The President: Will the Macedonians satisfy the Greeks on the name change? (S)

President Ozal: I don't think so. Why are the Greeks insisting on this? Macedonia is a small republic that cannot possibly threaten them. (S)

Secretary Baker: We condemned Serbia because of Bosnia-Hercegovina, and we got CSCE to issue a warning to Belgrade. It looks like it may be pulling back, but it is uncertain still. The best leverage we have on the Serbs is to deny them the international legitimacy that they want. This might make a difference. (S)

President Ozal: The aim of Milosevic is to get part of Bosnia-Hercegovina and maybe part of Macedonia as well for his new Yugoslav state. Izetbegovic is a good man and so is Gligorov. (S)

Secretary Baker: Bosnia-Hercegovina and Macedonia went about this whole matter the right way. They didn't take unilateral action unlike Croatia and Slovenia. The EC recognized those who were the most irresponsible. (S)

President Ozal: You have to keep pushing Serbia. (S)

Secretary Baker: We will to the extent we can. We don't think that peacekeeping in Bosnia-Hercegovina is in cards. (S)

President Ozal: What about the UN? (U)

The President: If you are talking about Vance, yes, we do support that effort. This whole matter is very troubling. (S)

President Ozal: The example being set in Bosnia-Hercegovina is very dangerous. We could see similar problems arise in the former Soviet Union. If Serbia gets something as a result of its aggression, Russia could see that.

Now on Nagorno-Karabakh, I have an idea. Nagorno-Karabakh is 80% Armenian and 20% Azeri. They could swap territory, with Nagorno-Karabakh going to Armenia and Azerbaijan getting the piece of

Armenia that separates the two parts of Azerbaijan. Stalin created the borders down here. He divided Azerbaijan to give it to the Armenians to buy them off. (S)

Secretary Baker: What would happen to the Armenians in the southern part that you would give to Azerbaijan? (S)

President Ozal: All together, not more than 50,000 people would have to be moved. Otherwise this war will continue forever. Turkey has good relations with Armenia, and Armenia needs good relations with Turkey. There is another reason to do this. The Central Asian republics need a connection to Europe. The new Russians want to be like the Tzarist Russians. They want all roads to go to Moscow. Under the communists, everything produced was then processed in Russia. There is still a desire to pull these states back toward Russia. These states could be threatened by Russia. I hope you don't put all your eggs in the Russian basket. All the pipelines go to Russia or through Russia. Even now Turkmenistan gas all goes to Russia. So they are looking for alternative routes such as Tehran and Turkey. With my plan, there could be a connection through Azerbaijan to Turkey and on to Europe. These states need lines of communications to Europe that don't go through Russia. The other route would be through Afghanistan to Pakistan and the Indian Ocean. It is important to make these states independent from Russia by infrastructural development. We have started a telecommunications project, offering them connections that are better than the Russian connections. After that will be television. (S)

Secretary Baker: We are already doing the same thing. All of the states but Tajikistan want this. Do you think that the Tajiks are vulnerable to the Iranians? (S)

President Ozal: No, I don't. I think that the Tajiks will be okay because they are Sunnis. But Azerbaijan is key. They need a corridor, and Azerbaijan could provide it. This would also benefit Armenia. (S)

Secretary Baker: Would the Azeris be interested? Let us know. We might be willing to follow up. We would have to check into the demographics. (S)

The President: What is your latest thinking on Saddam Hussein. I know you have a problem with the Kurds. But what about Saddam himself? (S)

President Ozal: Saddam Hussein has to be eliminated otherwise Iraq will be divided into three parts. He is still very dangerous. The Saudis and Kuwaitis are still afraid of him. In Baghdad, you are known as the big devil and I am known as the little devil. (S)

The President: We are still somewhat worried about Jordan. The King had a good visit here, but the border is still porous. What have you heard about increased dissatisfaction in Iraq? (S)

President Ozal: We have heard some of this too. But Saddam Hussein is merciless. He cares only about himself. He would have run away if you had extended the war by one day. If you had come within 50 kilometers of Baghdad, he would have fled. He thinks only about himself. (Ø)

Secretary Baker: It's a good thing we did not give him a deal he could have accepted. He was too dug in. (Ø)

President Ozal: He thought you would not attack. (Ø)

The President: And he thought that if we did attack, we couldn't handle the casualties. (Ø)

What are your views on Cyprus? (Ø)

President Ozal: The Greek Cypriot Council did not accept the conditions of the United Nations Security Council resolutions. Nevertheless, I believe the federal state will be established. We have to be very careful about mixing Greek and Turkish people. There should be a moratorium on migration. Also, the presidency of the federation ought to be rotated; otherwise one side will have the upper hand. (Ø)

Secretary Baker: We hope you will extend Provide Comfort. (Ø)

President Ozal: The ANAP had taken the decision away from Parliament. Now this government has given the authority to extend Provide Comfort back to Parliament. Nevertheless, I think there is a high probability it will pass. I am not saying that the ANAP will help, because I can't get involved in parliamentary matters. But I am sure the Prime Minister wants it to continue. It is important to get this passed before the 6th or 7th of June, after which there may be some changes in parliament. So be sure you request it before that. (Ø)