

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting with Lebanese Delegation (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
James A. Baker III, Chief of Staff
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs
Edward Djerejian, Assistant Secretary of
State
Dennis Ross, Director, Policy Planning
Staff
Richard Haass, Special Assistant to the
President and Senior Director, Near East
and South Asian Affairs, Notetaker

Ambassador Souheil Chammas, Head of
Delegation
Ambassador Jaafar Moawi
Ambassador Simon Karam, Lebanese Ambassador
to the United States

DATE, TIME December 17, 1992, 10:00 - 10:15 a.m.
AND PLACE: The Oval Office

The President: Our position on deportations has not changed. We oppose them. There is some hope the court will throw it out, which would be a positive step. I'd love to know what you think can be done about the violence. Deportations are no answer and we will continue to oppose them, but violence is a real problem. (P)

Ambassador Chammas: For reasons beyond your control, there are events which have slowed the peace process. There are people in the territories who could have been contained if the pace of negotiations had been quicker. There is a Palestinian impatience. Maybe the Israelis made a mistake by seeing Hamas as a counter weight. But fundamentalism brings its own dynamic. It cannot be checked. The Israelis must show patience and avoid deportation which will only increase support for Hamas and other radicals. The demographic explosion in Gaza is also feeding this. (P)

The President: We understand your concern. We weighed in with Israel. I can't say I differ with your interpretation. But any thoughts you have on containing violence would be helpful. (P)

Ambassador Chammas: I can't claim to be an expert but the key is to safeguard the peace process. Whatever happens in the territories cannot be allowed to endanger the process. I suggest you talk to the experts on just how to go about this. Take Lebanon. We have a large segment that is active and opposed to the peace process. We decided to act to check them. We are re-equipping our army. We tried to contain them by working around them. Here we have been helped by the U.S Administration. (Ø)

President Hrawi asked that I convey our deepest appreciation and gratitude for your continued support as President for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Lebanon and for your role in bringing about the Taif agreement. Taif is the only basis for national reconciliation. Now we have in place a business-like government. Second, I want to express appreciation for your letter supporting the Harawi government. Third, our commitment to the peace process is total and undivided. We shall spare no effort in bringing under control those opposed to it. Now that we have an operating government we will take the necessary actions for peace, security and tranquility. We will be happy to talk to the Israelis about their serious security concerns in northern Israel, but we cannot talk about security matters related to the security zone. We will accept their use of the word "redeployment." The timing is not key; they can accommodate themselves. But we have a real conviction that the peace process must succeed. There is no alternative. History will speak of President Bush; yours was the most important contribution in centuries and Mr. Baker has been a great help. (Ø)

The President: We salute you. What you said was most appropriate. Having been in Lebanon it would be wonderful to contribute to a return of its harmony and diversity. I have real affection for the people. I will leave office with some regret over what we could not finish but also with pride from what we did accomplish. Lebanon deserves to control its own destiny. I am glad we could contribute to that kind of Lebanon. I hope our successors will have the drive to continue all this. I think that they will. (Ø)

-- End of Conversation --