

THE WHITE HOUSE
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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting with the Syrian 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

Mowaffak Allaf, Head of Delegation
 Mohamad Zakaria Ismail
 Dia-Allah El-Fattal
 Walid Al-Moualem, Syrian Ambassador to the
 United States

DATE, TIME December 17, 1992, 10:20 - 10:35 a.m.
 AND PLACE: The Oval Office

The President: We will make a statement after all the meetings covering deportations. I hope you all know that we do not approve. We are not changing our position. We have weighed in with the Israeli government and hope the legal process there will prevent the deportations. I can understand your agony. All this doesn't help the peace process. I hope and pray you will stay involved. I am worried about the violence. Unprovoked violence is affecting all Israelis. I don't know how we can make our position any more clear. What are your views? (Ø)

Mr. Allaf: The violence is not helping at all. Violence only breeds more violence. The occupation is key as are the practices of the occupying power. Palestinians are wounded or killed every day. This is also violence. People see no progress in the peace process; thirteen months after Madrid we are still nearly at square one. On the Syrian track we showed our readiness by tabling our document. Yesterday Rabinovich said only that Israel would "introduce the element of withdrawal" as part of a full peace treaty. This is not serious in light of all that Syria has committed to. (Ø)

The President: Do you think the violence that leads to deportation is stirred up by those opposed to the peace process? (Ø)

Mr. Allaf: What I am sure of is that violence will only create more violence. Also these people should not be kept in these buses until a decision is made. (Ø)

Chief of Staff Baker: Was the treatment of these people touched in on our message to the Israelis? (Ø)

Ambassador Djerejian: No. We didn't know. (U)

The President: When is the Israeli court scheduled to decide? (U)

Dennis Ross: We don't know. I have a question for Ambassador Allaf. You say deportation is not the answer, but what is? (Ø)

Mr. Allaf: Ending the occupation is the best way but for now we need to reverse this. This will only hurt those Palestinians who favor the peace process. But this is only one aspect of what is going on. On the Lebanese track there is no progress given Israeli intransigence. President Assad made an important statement a few days ago. Our patience cannot last forever. We are basing all of our hopes on U.S. efforts. The peace process should not become a repetition of those international conferences where the parties only attack each other. We have agreed to certain ground rules on the understanding that the land for peace principle would be applied by Israel. But is not clear that the new Israeli government is really different from the Shamir government other than its style. (Ø)

The President: Do we agree with such a negative assessment? (Ø)

Ambassador Djerejian: We think the glass is "filling" and that the Syrian-Israeli negotiation is one of the most serious. Extensive discussions have taken place. A big part of the focus is on paragraph 5 and land for peace. Syria demands total withdrawal while Israel demands to hear more of what Syria is thinking about peace and security. (Ø)

Mr. Allaf: I don't want to disagree with my good friend Ambassador Djerejian. (Ø)

The President: Ed deserves credit. He has helped me understand his views. (Ø)

Mr. Allaf: We have done more than demand full withdrawal. We have discussed security guarantees. We have also said we will join the multilateral talks once the core issues were resolved. We hope your efforts will succeed. (Ø)

The President: We will keep trying up to January 20th. Please pass along my best wishes to President Assad. I will miss being involved in this. (Ø)

Mr. Allaf: We hope you will stay involved. (U)

The President: You are kind to say so. (U)