

~~SECRET~~

Informal Memorandum of Conversation:

President Bush-Prime Minister Major call  
16 January 1993

Call initiated at 0731 EST. Call terminated at 0741

BUSH: Good Morning, Can you hear me?

MAJOR: Hello George, yes I can.

BUSH: Our people have been talking and I wanted to touch base with you. The sand is running through the hourglass on Saddam.

MAJOR: Glad to have a word with you. A half baked reply we got. I was sorry last night's activities were canceled.

BUSH: I feel we made the right decision.

MAJOR: I'm glad that's the way it turned out. A half-hearted reply would have diminished our chances for future decisive action. I agree our response should be unequivocal...it is a shame we can't get UNSCOM to give an earlier deadline. A strong P-3 statement would be an attractive option.

BUSH: What concerns me is that he will find some new way to move again. We must find a way to stop this and go ahead with the same plan as before.

MAJOR: A statement by the Perm Three gives us belts and braces in case Ekeus and others are less than fulsome in their response.

BUSH: Yes. Brent didn't mention that option to me...I think it's a great idea. Have you spoken with the French?

MAJOR: I believe the French are coming on board. I haven't spoken to Mitterrand, but Wall has spoken to them.

BUSH: We need their support. I think it should stay on schedule -- possibly set back 24 hours. Saddam keeps pushing the limits. I'm sure you have heard the reports of Iraqi planes scrambling against our aircraft this morning in the north. They are also not dismantling the police posts in Kuwaiti territory. Brent spoke with the French and didn't feel they would have any problems with the new plan.

MAJOR: I am content with it. One timing ripple that makes situation more difficult is the possible arrival of the UNSCOM inspection team. Until the UNSCOM flight takes off at 2:00 in the morning, it will be difficult to fire prior to that.

BUSH: Well, why don't we see what happens with the Perm Three.

DECLASSIFIED  
PER E.O. 13526

2012-2402-148  
11/22/2014 MM

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

MAJOR: UNSCOM needs clearance at 9:00 PM your time, I believe. Is that correct?

BUSH: I'm not sure. Regardless, I think we should go ahead on the same time frame as tonight.

MAJOR: We'll put details to Brent and Jon Howe. We don't want to commit to an irrevocable action and then see that he grants flight clearances to UNSCOM.

BUSH: Well, I hadn't focused on that...if there is a delay, we will have address the problem.

MAJOR: According to the latest information we received about a half hour ago, UNSCOM is prepared to request an "urgent" response, but the statement does not give any specific time.

BUSH: Oh I see...

MAJOR: If you need to speak with me further, I'll be around today.

BUSH: That's a good point. I don't know if UNSCOM has given him a deadline on the inspection flight.

MAJOR: I think that is true.

MAJOR: Have you thought of using the second barrel...returning to the South?

BUSH: I thought you had problems with any further action in the South.

MAJOR: We'd be happy to add Al Kut and Al Jarrah as targets.

BUSH: I think we are on the same wavelength. I think we should go ahead, with Ekeus' support. I think we need to do this. It will take pressure off my successor. I felt the operation in the South was successful, but we still have some unfinished business. The plan to go into the daylight. We liked to do it. But you had some legal problems. We'd like to do it mostly if they are reinforcing the batteries.

MAJOR: We could still go South...the problem is that we have 70 UNSCOM inspectors while we would be there.

BUSH: Yes.

MAJOR: We'll have to regroup after we see what happens on the first event.

BUSH: I worry about the possible UNSCOM presence too. There's a connection there...will cause people to worry. If we had no concern of that we would have gone ahead on the SA-2 and so forth...that complicates things on how this will be read.

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

MAJOR: I don't think people will see the distinction between the two. We don't want public opinion to go to his side.

BUSH: Exactly. I think that's right. We were worried about Arab reactions...but it looks to me as being supportive as we predicted.

MAJOR: How do you think the Turks will respond in the North?

BUSH: I don't know. I haven't talked to them. I think they will be supportive.

MAJOR: I'm pleased to hear that.

BUSH: That's a guess. They are getting pressure from the Arab world. Glad we had this talk...We'll talk and get in touch again.

MAJOR: Lovely. God Bless.

Prepared by Situation Room.

~~SECRET~~