

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON



MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with Francois Mitterrand, President of France on February 21, 1991

PARTICIPANTS: The President  
Francois Mitterrand, President of France  
Adrian Basora, NSC Staff (Notetaker)  
Christopher Thierry (Interpreter)

DATE, TIME AND PLACE: February 21, 1991, 2:07 - 2:16 p.m.  
The Oval Office

President Mitterrand: [REDACTED] b1

President Bush: Yes, I think so, because he certainly was hard-lining in that speech, wasn't he? (§)

President Mitterrand: [REDACTED] b1

President Bush: Why, if he is going to be as hard-line as Saddam Hussein, would he be going back to Moscow anyway? That's what I can't quite figure out. (§)

President Mitterrand: [REDACTED] b1

President Bush: Yes, yes, exactly. (U)

President Mitterrand: [REDACTED] b1

President Bush: That's our thinking. And the schedule that we discussed with the Admiral is still workable, unless there is some last minute hitch because of weather. (§)

President Mitterrand: [REDACTED] b1



[REDACTED] b1

President Bush: I think that's exactly right. What we are shooting for would be at 0400 in the morning on Sunday, which is about 8:00 p.m. over here and about midnight or 1:00 a.m. in Paris. (S)

President Mitterrand: [REDACTED] b1

President Bush: What I was thinking of doing -- and I was anxious to talk to you about it. I haven't talked to others in detail -- is that when the military say it is safe to announce, that is when we announce that the ground war has been engaged. I think I have to say that personally for the U.S. forces, not have it coming out of Saudi Arabia. But I should tell you the exact minute that we think that should be done and see if we agree. You have your French troops and Major has his troops. So it should be each person in the coalition making the announcement at the same time. (S)

President Mitterrand: [REDACTED] b1

President Bush: Exactly. (U)

President Mitterrand: [REDACTED] b1

President Bush: That's fine. As of now the go time that our generals all agree on is 8:00 at night here on Saturday, which I think is about 1 or 2 in the morning in Paris, but it is 4:00 in the morning in Saudi Arabia. But the problem is that they may want to wait a couple of hours for the announcement to be sure they don't tip their hand to the movement of troops going across the border. They will tell me when a public announcement could come from the White House and we will coordinate that with you and Major. And I should have a feeling for that tomorrow -- I should have a feeling as to what time. 8:00 p.m. our time would be a time that we would suggest. But we will be flexible and we will accommodate you and John Major. (S)

President Mitterrand: [REDACTED] b1

President Bush: Between Saturday night here and Sunday. (S)



President Mitterrand: [REDACTED]

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President Bush: And we will let you know as soon as we have the suggested time, and if that causes you trouble let me know. I think we are all in agreement. Like you, I don't see any other course of action. (§)

President Mitterrand: That is fine by us. (U)

President Bush: Good. You have been a magnificent partner, and we will stay in touch. Scowcroft and Lanxade can talk tomorrow. (§)

President Mitterrand: [REDACTED]

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President Bush: I agree with that approach totally. (§)

President Mitterrand: Have a good day, and I am glad to have had the opportunity to talk with you. And if there are things we need to talk about beforehand, we'll use the telephone. (§)

President Bush: That sounds good. If we get some last minute surprise out of Moscow, we'll need to talk again -- although I can't imagine what it would be, given Saddam Hussein's speech. So we'll proceed on schedule. (§)

President Mitterrand: We'll communicate if something unexpected turns up. (§)

-- End of Conversation --