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THE WHITE HOUSE

0039

WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telecon with President Mitterrand of France on
January 3, 1991

PARTICIPANTS: The President
President Mitterrand
Interpreter: Alec Toumayan
Notetaker: Richard Haass

DATE, TIME January 3, 1991, 5:47 - 5:53am EST
AND PLACE: The Oval Office

The President telephoned President Mitterrand concerning the proposed meeting of Secretary Baker and Iraqi Foreign Minister Aziz in Switzerland.

After complimentary greetings, President Bush stated that he hoped President Mitterrand had received his cable, but wished to confirm that President Mitterrand was aware that Secretary Baker would be traveling to Europe and the Gulf to consult with coalition allies. President Bush stated that, as he had mentioned to President Mitterrand at Christmas, Secretary Baker would be his emissary to President Mitterrand and he expressed his hope that Secretary Baker could meet with President Mitterrand on his behalf. President Mitterrand replied that he would meet with Secretary Baker 30 minutes after he arrived. President Bush was glad to hear this.

President Bush then said that he would announce an offer to Iraq that Secretary Baker meet with Iraqi Foreign Minister Aziz in Switzerland between January 7 and 9. President Bush stated that this meeting would be going the "extra mile for peace" and would serve to remove any criticism that the U.S. was not doing enough to find a diplomatic solution to the Gulf Crisis. President Bush then stated that he wished to reiterate that this meeting would not be to negotiate or make any behind the scene deals or compromises.

President Mitterrand again stated he would meet Secretary Baker and inquired as to the dates of Secretary Baker's visit. President Bush replied that the trip was still in the planning stages and much depended on the Iraqi response.

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The President suggested that a meeting between President Mitterrand and Secretary Baker might be best after Secretary Baker meets with Foreign Minister Aziz. President Mitterrand replied that he is prepared to meet with Secretary Baker and asked to be kept informed of his travel plans.

President Bush said that he is disinclined to participate in any further meetings after Secretary Baker meets with Foreign Minister Aziz. He said that this offer of a meeting is a new approach to the Iraqis and feels that this meeting is sufficient to inform Saddam Husayn that he has to withdraw from Kuwait without concessions. He solicited President Mitterrand's Views on this point.

President Mitterrand thanked the President for his advance notice and said that this meeting in Switzerland is a good idea. He added that the delegates at tomorrow's EC meeting will have been briefed on the offer and will understand the situation.

In closing, the President reiterated that this will be the last offer of a meeting. He said that Saddam Husayn is unwilling to be flexible and has been waging a public relations battle. President Mitterrand said he understood and further stated that he would be in touch with President Bush and might telephone later this week.

-- End of Conversation --