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THE WHITE HOUSE

#6296

WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with King Fahd of Saudi Arabia

PARTICIPANTS: The President  
King Fahd

Interpreter: Shukran Kamal  
Notetaker: Sandra Charles

DATE, TIME August 4, 1990, 1:50-2:42 pm  
AND PLACE: Camp David

The President: Hello Your Majesty. How are you? I can hear you loud and clear. (U)

King Fahd: How are you, Mr. Bush? (U)

The President: Fine, and you? (U)

King Fahd: Fine and I want to thank you very, very much for your interest and your call. (S)

The President: I know we have both been busy this past 48 hours. I have been in touch with a number of world leaders, and they are terribly concerned and, as we told your Ambassador, we want to help in a military way. I have seen the reports but I wanted to hear from you on the state of play there. (S)

King Fahd: First, my thanks to you, Mr. President, for your interest in Saudi Arabia, a friendly country. I am thankful for our friends in Europe and everywhere for their concern about this unfortunate incident. At the same time, we are waiting for a team of Americans to come so we can organize matters in a desirable and effective fashion. (S)

The President: What is this team supposed to do? I wasn't aware of it. I am prepared to instruct General Powell to start deploying forces to the Kingdom. Is that what you are talking about? (S)

King Fahd: No, I understand from my Ambassador that a team would be sent to organize and coordinate matters that were agreed upon. (S)

The President: I was not told, but it is easily done. We'll get them on the way right away. But we need your view on a US force presence. I am very concerned about a possible Iraqi move south across your border. And I want you to know we will support you

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and stay as long as it takes to protect you, to get the Iraqis out and to restore the government of Kuwait. You referred to this guy as a Hitler and a liar. You are absolutely right. (S)

King Fahd: I am referring to thank you for your interest in Saudi affairs. I am talking about a team that would arrive in Saudi Arabia to coordinate in a fashion that is comfortable to us and you for a resolution. (S)

The President: I understand, but I am worried that this man is talking about withdrawal but is installing a puppet government. This is unacceptable to us and other countries. I have talked with many leaders and there is much unified opinion to make a stand with our Arab friends against this naked aggression. I also want to understand your feelings on why this meeting was postponed and what you are hearing from Iraq now. (S)

King Fahd: I agree with you. I had understood a team would arrive today. That was my understanding yesterday. The team would be able to talk and to coordinate things satisfactorily. (S)

The President: If a team is not underway, I will get it so. This is a matter of extreme urgency. I am glad you want to receive it. I will guarantee that it will be leaving soon. (S)

King Fahd: Thank you, and I will take care of them and meet with them personally. (S)

The President: Good. But I want to know where you think matters stand on the ground. What about Iraq's statements on withdrawal? Will the Amir return? Are you worried about Iraq moving across your border? We worry about that very much. (S)

King Fahd: First, the only solution must involve the return of the Amir to Kuwait. (S)

The President: I am glad to hear you say that. We're for you and will stand with you on that as the only solution. That's good thinking. (S)

King Fahd: Second, there are no Iraqi troops near the Saudi borders, but Saddam is not to be trusted. That is why it is important for a team to come as soon as possible to coordinate matters to prevent that from happening. Regarding the Amir, his family and his government, they are all here in Saudi Arabia and we are communicating and coordinating continuously. (S)

The President: Good, but I would also like your views on this report that Saddam will withdraw tomorrow. Is there any credibility to it at all? (S)

King Fahd: I'll tell you my thinking on this report. With regard to the situation in Kuwait, we sent our people to Kuwait

and they got in. It is in complete chaos. The men in Kuwait are not responding to Saddam's request to form a government. The confirmed news we have shows Saddam may withdraw heavy troops but will organize a militia to control matters there. (S)

The President: I see.

King Fahd: The people we've sent and the news reports we've received on the neutral zone show Saddam has some estimated numbers of troops and hardware there: 20 tanks, 30 armored vehicles and 45 trucks and jeeps. According to the information we've received and the eye witness reports we have, this force is located near Kuwaiti wells in the neutral zone. The guns are pointed out to sea. Apparently, the Iraqi fear of an attack from the sea. In Kuwait City, there is chaos as a result of the Iraqi army and militia they are trying to organize in Kuwait. They also have plundered stores, banks, jewelry stores -- any places where there are valuables, they have plundered in a strange way. (S)

The President: How terrible.

King Fahd: That is why when the team arrives quickly and soon, we can share particulars on the situation that are hard to explain over the phone to enable us to coordinate to develop a positive plan to deal with the situation. (S)

The President: Can you tell me why the Arab Summit was postponed? (S)

King Fahd: The Summit was postponed because the statements by the Gulf States, Mubarak, the Foreign Ministers, Bendjedid, King Hussein showed that if the Summit was held the outcome would not be positive. The Summit would not come out with a unanimous resolution. Because of the seriousness, the resolution should be unanimous. So we are striving to coordinate and organize matters so when the meeting is held, we will have a united resolution. (S)

The President: Let me sum up my feelings for you at this moment on this. (S)

King Fahd: I am happy to hear them. (S)

The President: First, I was disturbed by the response you got from the Iraqi Vice President. As we understand it was not nearly enough. Not only must the withdrawal be immediate, complete and unconditional, it must lead to the return of the legal Kuwait government which I am glad you agree with. It is also important for the west to keep economic sanctions on especially if there is a puppet regime there. We can't let Saddam get control of the economic resources of Kuwait. (S)

Second, I just completed at Camp David getting a total military and intelligence briefing, and in my view, we cannot wait any

longer to effectively deter an Iraqi move south and to pressure Saddam to withdraw and permit the return of the Kuwaiti government. We must now begin taking the actions we described in detail to Bandar. And we can't wait until it is too late. In that regard, the team you want will be on its way immediately. And that team is one that will do total military planning, logistics and what we are thinking in working with you on the military front, correct? (S)

King Fahd: This would be best. I agree also that is very good that the boycott continue and freezing assets and economic sanctions. I will continue my response after the interpretation. (S)

The President: On the team, it will be on its way and it will be prepared to talk about what we think is best -- all the options. I am sorry for the confusion on this. (S)

King Fahd: No, Mr. President, there is no misunderstanding. I agree with you one hundred percent on the team. I would like to add that the larger Iraqi force west of Kuwait is not near the Saudi border. It is there we believe as a precaution in case of involvement in warfare. Therefore, planning is important and needed to deal with this possibility successfully. (S)

The President: I am familiar with that force and while the force differs from the forces to the east, we still view them with great concern. Now, with your permission, I would like to make one or two more points. (S)

King Fahd: Fine. (S)

The President: The first one is a sensitive point. The Amir of Kuwait asked us for military intervention, but Iraqi troops had already occupied Kuwait city and there was nothing the US could do. It takes a long time to deploy troops. And that is why I am worried about Saudi Arabia. It was not possible to help him once they had crossed the border. Maybe we can help him down the line but now we can help Saudi Arabia, but we have long lines of supply and we have to move forces long distances. Saddam lied. He is unpredictable and ruthless. He told you, my Ambassador, Mubarak that he wouldn't attack Kuwait. He told them all and he lied. (S)

King Fahd: I agree with what you are saying. It is probable that Iraq could attack, but then an invasion may not happen. That is why it is important to work with your team on plans for all contingencies to assure success. (S)

The President: Well, we should be developing plans. But we must be viewing this with more urgency. We need to get those forces there soon or Saddam, flushed with victory, might grab the oil fields and the eastern province. We have no credible presence side by side with Saudi Arabia, and without enhanced air, there is nothing to inhibit him militarily. (S)

King Fahd: I agree with you, but my view is based on the information we have. We think we have a few days to coordinate, to make a tight, successful plan. That's all we want. A tight plan that will be successful and resolve the situation once and for all. (S)

The President: I agree. We will get the team underway. Another point I want to make here involves my word of honor. The security of Saudi Arabia is vital --- basically fundamental -- to US interests and really to the interests of the western world. And I am determined that Saddam will not get away with this infamy. When we work out a plan, once we are there, we will stay until we are asked to leave. You have my solemn word on this. I am sick and tired of Saddam and his lying to other countries.

(S)

On the economic points, we need to stay together and we need to vigorously enforce this. I've talked with President Ozal and NATO is taking a collective position. Turkey is a member of NATO. And NATO views this as a matter of extreme urgency.

(S)

King Fahd: I agree with everything you've said, specifically and generally. All I want is that we make a tight, coordinated plan so that the plan is one hundred percent successful. (S)

The President: I agree, and the team is on its way. We also are moving our carrier and the French and the British are moving ships into the Gulf. We need concerted action on economic sanctions. We are pushing Chapter 7 at the UN to tighten sanctions. Everyone must cooperate to economically bring this man to his knees. I've talked with the Japanese Prime Minister, the French President, the British Prime Minister and the West German Chancellor and they are all on your side. They expressed the same outrage about Kuwait and the threat to Saudi Arabia, our valued friend. (S)

King Fahd: I agree with everything wholeheartedly. I thank you so much for everything you said. I am certain this man will come to an end with our efforts. (S)

The President: I also want you to know that I am disappointed with some of our Arab friends. I am not going to mention any names on this call. I understand that there is some pressure from Saddam Hussein on these countries. But this disappointment is being felt in the US Congress and elsewhere. And that will make it difficult to do business as usual with countries being apologists for Saddam. (S)

King Fahd: I appreciate what you've said. When things are hard, some rise to the challenge and others fail. (S)

The President: I have great respect for your leadership. That is why we are prepared to make an enormous sacrifice on the US part and to support you in any way. There is a great sense of

urgency. We will get our team of experts on the way immediately, and if necessary take the lead to show force to convince Saddam that he can't bully us. I have the greatest respect for you and I know you are in a difficult position. That is why you have the complete support of the United States. When our forces are deployed, they will not get out until justice is done. I salute you and respect you. But we must act on the economic and military front. (S)

King Fahd: I want to extend the thanks of my government and people. When we heard your statement, we realized that the United States is a good friend to Saudi Arabia. (S)

The President: Well, we want to do more and soon. I think it is in your interest and the rest of the world. Good-bye and my respects. Please call any time night or day.

King Fahd: To say thank you is not enough. I value your friendship very much. I value the friendship that Saudi Arabia has with a world leader who stands for justice and truth.

The President: God bless you and your country.

King Fahd (in English): And you my very close friend.

The President: I feel I am side by side with you as we fight this terrible problem. Thank you, and good-bye.