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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telephone Call to Prime Minister Thatcher of
the United Kingdom (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Margaret Thatcher, Prime Minister
Robert Hutchings, NSC Staff (Notetaker)

DATE, TIME August 20, 1990, 9:16 - 9:26 a.m.
AND PLACE: The Oval Office

The President initiated the call. (U)

Prime Minister Thatcher: Hello, George. How are you? (U)

The President: Fine. I am delighted to hear your voice. I just
wanted to call to mention one or two things and compare notes.
(U)

Prime Minister Thatcher: We are both thinking in the same
direction. I just had some political and military advisors here.
(U)

The President: Our ambassador to the United Nations tells me
that we may be in reach of a new resolution that would endorse
the use of force. I hope he is successful. (U)

Prime Minister Thatcher: It is absolutely vital. Otherwise
there will be no way to enforce the sanctions, and we would look
foolish. (U)

The President: On the question of those ships refusing to stop,
it is my view, Margaret, that we must stop them. We cannot
permit the first challenge to be breached. We would have to do
it under Article 51, with the Emir requesting to have UN
sanctions enforced. Even absent UN action, we cannot permit
those ships to go by. (U)

Prime Minister Thatcher: I agree. We were saying this morning
that the UN must agree to the use of force. It is the only way
to bring Saddam Husayn to task. (U)

The President: I agree. I hope you are working with the Soviets
and especially the Chinese so that they will instruct their
representatives to support the resolution. Our ability to deal
with the Chinese, thanks to Congress, is greatly diminished. But
it is very important. I hope all friendly governments will
agree. (U)

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Prime Minister Thatcher: I asked the Chinese Ambassador in this afternoon. He used to be in America and is a very able man. He was born and brought up in America, so he will be the first to understand. (S)

The President: That is very good news, knowing that you can be very persuasive. It would be a very timely message, but if the talks in the UN stall, we cannot permit those two ships into port. (S)

Prime Minister Thatcher: I accept that. You and I take the same view that having 51 and the Emir's request, we have the authority. It would be better with a UN approach. (S)

The President: Right. It would be much, much better. We are stepping up our numbers over there. Something has to happen. We cannot just stand pat. I have heard different views regarding how long it will take for sanctions to take hold. Ozal thinks they will have an effect soon. What are your views? (S)

Prime Minister Thatcher: It depends on how well the sanctions are enforced. It will take some time, but the action itself is important and has an effect on the Iraqi people. We must have full authority to use force. It is the only way to bring Saddam Husayn to task. (S)

The President: Is your UN Ambassador optimistic? Ours seems to be. (S)

Prime Minister Thatcher: He wasn't on the first resolution, which was too wide. He thinks we can win the second. Two things need to be kept in mind: to protect the oil supplies of the West and the security of the region. The rulers of the Gulf states are pretty concerned. We're going to send more, and I gather you are sending more to the Emirates. (S)

The President: Yes. We have some there and have gotten assurances that they will be cordially received. But there are still questions as to what Saddam Husayn will do. Husayn is nutty. It wouldn't be prudent for him to attack Saudi Arabia, but it's hard to know what he will do. (S)

Prime Minister Thatcher: He is playing psychological warfare with his broadcasts. We need to make the case that after eight years of war with Iran, he is one Moslem who attacks another. He did so with Iran. He would do it with Saudi Arabia, as he did with Kuwait, and he will do it again. For us, protecting our oil supplies means doing all we can to keep friendly governments in place. (S)

The President: I am pleased that we look at it the same way. I wanted you to know that we are encouraged about the UN; but regardless, we cannot let ships skip through. (S)

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Prime Minister Thatcher: I agree. We would all look stupid. I don't like bothering you, but I do believe that we must stay in close touch. So I may be calling again. (Ø)

The President: Do, do. I am available any time night or day.
(U)

Prime Minister Thatcher: We will be sending a few more things to the Gulf. (Ø)

-- End of Conversation --

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