

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telephone Call to Francois Mitterrand,
President of France (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Francois Mitterrand, President of France
Notetaker: Stephen E. Benko, NSC Staff

DATE, TIME August 31, 1990, 7:12 - 7:36 a.m.
AND PLACE: Kennebunkport, Maine

The President: Francois, bon soir. Comment allez-vous? (U)

President Mitterrand: Thanks, fine. (U)

The President: May I just bring you up to date on our view of the Gulf situation? (U)

President Mitterrand: Thanks, please do so. (U)

The President: First, I believe we are in pretty good shape. Our military deployment is continuing, as you know, and your own deployment has been indispensable. And now I think we have to see whether these sanctions will persuade Saddam to leave Kuwait. (S)

I just spoke to King Fahd. Yesterday I talked with Ozal of Turkey. I asked both of them if they thought the sanctions were taking effect. Both of them, Fahd and Ozal, tell me they think the sanctions are working. Fahd told me they have reports from both military and civilian sources in Iraq of growing discontent with what Saddam Husayn has done. I hope that's true, but that's what they are reporting. (S)

Ozal also reported to me on a meeting of one of his officials with one of Iraq's officials. Iraq made several offers to Ozal which I interpreted as desperation and an indication that the sanctions are really beginning to have an effect. In essence, Iraq was trying to buy off Turkey in a very open and very embarrassing way. (S)

President Mitterrand: What can they promise Turkey? (S)

The President: As I understand it, they are offering some kind of arrangement so that oil can be delivered through this pipeline

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secretly. There may be other commodities as well, but I think the offer had to do mainly with oil. (S)

I am convinced that some are still surreptitiously and some more openly trying to violate the sanctions. I worry about Libya and Tunisia, and I am worried about overflights. Syria has been good overall, but has not been denying overflights. I'm afraid some goods are still getting through. (S)

In any event, if neither diplomacy nor sanctions work, we will have to review our options. But I am hopeful the reports (of the sanctions having an impact) prove accurate. We cannot let Saddam remain in Kuwait. I think we are in agreement. (S)

I talked to Perez de Cuellar before he left on his mission, which causes us no problems at all. I'm convinced he'll stay within the parameters of the UN sanctions, but I don't see a diplomatic solution yet, based on what Saddam Husayn is telling the press and other people. (S)

We are prepared to join with France and whoever is in the Gulf to stop some ships under the UN mandate. (S)

President Mitterrand: Absolutely. (U)

The President: It's very, very important. Margaret Thatcher just told me about a ship in the Gulf. I didn't know about it. I'm sure our military does, and I'll make sure they stop it if we're the ones in that sector. (S)

Francois, the real purpose of my call is to say a few words about the initiative I announced yesterday to consult and coordinate assistance for those countries that are particularly hurt, like Egypt, Turkey, Jordan, some of the countries of Eastern Europe, Morocco, the Philippines, Pakistan and India. We also need to help defray the costs for those who are in the Gulf. And some of those who are being protected need to help -- here I'm talking about Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the Emirates in particular. (S)

President Mitterrand: Yes, I have the same impression that they want to help. (S)

The President: I also talked to Toshiki Kaifu, who continues to impress me at least. I think he is willing to step up and provide support on the military logistics side, as well as helping some of the countries I mentioned here economically. (S)

In any event, I announced some coordinating measures yesterday. I'd like it very much if you could see Treasury Secretary Brady next week to discuss some of these ideas. I'm sending Brady to some other countries in Europe and Japan. I'm also sending Baker to some European countries. (S)

President Mitterrand: Yes, we will be in touch with him to know when I can receive him. (S)

The President: Thanks; it's very generous of you. Now I'd like to hear your views of the Gulf. And thanks very much for the magnificent French cooperation in the Gulf. (S)

President Mitterrand: My ideas are very simple, my good friend. I do not believe a diplomatic solution is possible, and it is better to avoid a military solution -- so the embargo must succeed. In order to succeed we must spare no effort. There must be a genuine noose around Iraq and we must look at measures that can be taken against any who violate the sanctions. Our ships must be vigilant and very stern, and, as you have said yourself, we must help those countries which seem to hesitate. (S)

We must define for ourselves as a very strong goal that the embargo succeed. A large part of this has been achieved in stopping the flow of petroleum. All outlets must be closed. Tunisia doesn't amount to very much, but we will make a demarche to the Government of Tunisia. Libya is a special case. We should ask Mubarak to intervene powerfully. Both Mubarak and King Hassan of Morocco should make demarches. I don't know what other countries are violating the sanctions; what are the planes overflying Syria carrying? (S)

The President: I just saw some sensitive information of planes from Libya carrying military supplies and food. I'll check the intelligence, but one plane had to stop in Syria and was allowed to continue to Iraq. (S)

President Mitterrand: Yes, but why did Asad do that? (S)

The President: I don't know. He's been pretty good in working with us on the rest of the problem. (S)

President Mitterrand: I believe we have to talk to him very firmly. (S)

The President: Perhaps you'd be a better one than I to talk to him, although I certainly can do it. (S)

President Mitterrand: Yes, I can do this. (S)

The President: I'll get the information on Syrian overflights to Nick Brady and have him give it to you next week. (S)

President Mitterrand: Yes, understood. (U)

The President: Francois, yesterday I made a statement which I hope doesn't cause problems for French families of hostages being held by Iraq. I made a statement that the United States will not change its policy in terms of actions I might have to take based on individuals held in Iraq. I did it because I believe we have to get the message to Saddam. But I worry about the families of those held in Iraq. (S)

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President Mitterrand: Yes, yes. I fully understood your statement. (U)

The President: Good, I just wanted to make sure. There is lots of anguish caused by his brutality in using them as human shields. (S)

President Mitterrand: Yes, but I really believe our entire discourse should focus on one point: the embargo must be successful. (S)

The President: I agree. He might try to use the hostages to change our views not only on military actions, but on the embargo. (S)

President Mitterrand: Yes, but I am not at all opposed to your making that kind of statement. Saddam Husayn must see that we are not prepared to change our views. (S)

The President: Thanks for seeing Brady. I'm grateful for the position taken by France and your magnificent leadership in all of this. France was there early and out front. (S)

President Mitterrand: We will stay the course. I am very glad to hear from you. We'll be talking again soon. (S)

The President: Thank you, and good luck. (U)

-- End of conversation --

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