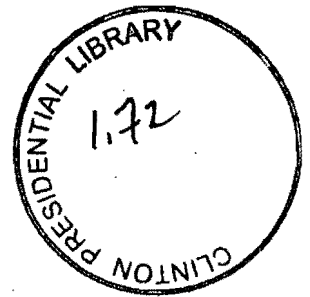


THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia

NOTE TAKERS: Bonnie Glick, Sean Tarver, Joel Schrader, David Higgins, Jim Smith and Roger Merletti

DATE, TIME December 15, 1998 -- 1:00p.m. - 1:15p.m. EDT
AND PLACE: Oval Office

The President: Hello? Your Royal Highness, thank you for taking the call. I wanted to call you to tell you that I have decided to take action against Iraq very soon. I have spoken with Prime Minister Blair, and the British will participate. I know that you would prefer a peaceful solution, as would I, but it is clear that this is not possible at this time.

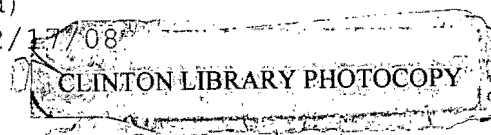
On November 14, I called off a military strike to try one more time to find a peaceful solution. The strong statement by the Damascus Declaration of States, placing responsibility solely on Iraq, helped us to avoid a conflict. Then Iraq committed to provide full and unconditional cooperation as provided by UNSC resolutions. Since that time, Baghdad has repeatedly violated that commitment and consistently refused to provide documents and information, barred access and harassed inspectors, lied repeatedly and destroyed documents.

I hope you will agree that we can't continue this cycle. Our strike will be significant, with the stated aim to degrade his capacity to develop weapons of mass destruction and to degrade his ability to threaten his neighbors, and it will weaken his regime and thus further our long-term goal of changing the leadership in Baghdad.

~~SECRET~~

Classified by: Glyn T. Davies
Reason: 1.5 (a) (d)
Declassify on: 12/17/08

DECLASSIFIED IN PART
PER E.O. 13526



We will not need to use any Saudi-based assets during the strikes I have ordered.

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P1/(b)(1) General Zinni and our military will be in touch with your military for a detailed briefing soon. This has been a difficult decision for me. If I thought diplomacy could get Saddam to comply with the inspections and keep his commitments, I would not have ordered this strike. But the record has shown that he will not voluntarily give up his weapons of mass destruction. The support of Saudi Arabia and the GCC are critical. The statement at the GCC summit made clear that Iraq is responsible for the consequences of its own decisions. I hope you will communicate to your GCC partners your support of our action. Over the next few days, I will be following developments very closely, and our people will be in close touch with yours.

Crown Prince Abdullah: That's fine, and thank you.

The President: Thank you very much, Your Royal Highness.

Crown Prince Abdullah: Thank you, Mr. President, and I hope that God will bring whatever is good for the world and for the people of the Middle East, especially.

The President: Thank you very much.

Crown Prince Abdullah: Can you give me, Mr. President, how many days, what is the time required for what you just said?

The President: We will start now and we expect to finish in a couple of days, before Ramadan. We think it's very important that we finish before Ramadan, which is why time is so short.

Crown Prince Abdullah: I hope everything will be to the best, Mr. President.

The President: I hope so, too. I wish there were another alternative, but I don't believe there is.

Crown Prince Abdullah: Yes, yes. This is understood.

The President: Well, thank you very much.

Crown Prince Abdullah: Thank you, thank you, Mr. President, and I wish you success in your endeavor always.

The President: Thank you. Goodbye, sir.

-- End of Conversation --