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Record Group/Collection: George H.W. Bush Presidential Records
Collection/Office of Origin: Scowcroft, Brent, Collection
Series: Desert Shield/Desert Storm Files
Subseries: Chronological Files

OA/ID Number: 91143
Folder ID Number: 91143-003

Folder Title:
Desert Shield/Desert Storm (May 1990) [1]

Stack:	Row:	Section:	Shelf:	Position:
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3427

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON
May 22, 1990

CHRON FILE

DS/DS

Dear Congressman Saxton:

Thank you for your letter to the President of April 12 in which you expressed your concerns about a potential Iraqi threat to the security of Israel. You also raised a number of significant issues.

Iraq is an important country. Its growing unconventional weapons capability poses a difficult challenge to U.S. foreign policy. This capability, and Iraq's apparent willingness to use it, raise grave concerns. We have made these concerns known to the Iraqi Government, both publicly and privately, and to our allies and other concerned countries. As you know, Senator Dole and his colleagues visited Baghdad in the wake of President Saddam's comments and were satisfied with their discussions.

You have requested specifically that the President reconsider the waiver by which the Export-Import Bank's program of short-term credit insurance for Iraq has been permitted to continue. As Secretary Baker stated in recent testimony to Congress, all of our programs with Iraq are currently undergoing careful review. Our review will take fully into account Israel's security needs, which are a fundamental concern to this Administration. A final decision regarding these programs will be made once that review is completed.

I very much appreciate your taking the time to share with me your concerns on a matter of importance to our national security.

Sincerely,


Brent Scowcroft

The Honorable H. James Saxton
The House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

May 14, 1990

ACTION

MEMORANDUM FOR BRENT SCOWCROFT

THROUGH: *[Signature]* RICHARD N. HAASS

FROM: *[Signature]* SANDRA CHARLES

SUBJECT: Response to Congressman Saxton

Natl Sec Advisor
has seen

SIGNED

Attached at Tab I is a proposed response to Congressman H. James Saxton, who wrote the President (Tab II) to complain about recent Iraqi actions and the threat posed to Israel. State prepared the original draft (Tab III) along current policy lines.

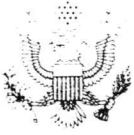
Ginny Landley *[Signature]* concurs.

RECOMMENDATION

That you sign the response to Congressman Saxton at Tab I.

Attachments

Tab I Response to Congressman Saxton
Tab II Letter from Congressman Saxton
Tab III Roy/Scowcroft Memo



Washington, D.C. 20520

May 11, 1990

UNCLASSIFIED

MEMORANDUM FOR BRENT SCOWCROFT
THE WHITE HOUSE

Subject: U.S. Response to Iraqi Threats to Israel's Security

Attached is the draft reply to Congressman H. James Saxton for the President's signature.

J. Stapleton Roy
Executive Secretary

Attachment:

- Tab 1: Draft Reply
- Tab 2: Incoming Correspondence

UNCLASSIFIED

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DRAFT REPLY

Dear Mr. Saxton:

Thank you for your letter of April 12 in which you discuss your concerns about a potential Iraqi threat to the security of Israel. You have raised a number of significant issues.

Iraq is an important country. Its growing non-conventional weapons capability poses a difficult challenge to American foreign policy. This capability, and Iraq's apparent readiness to use it, raise grave concerns. We have made these concerns known to the Iraqi Government, both publicly and privately, and to our allies and other concerned countries.

You have requested specifically that I reconsider the waiver by which we have permitted the Export-Import Bank's program of short-term credit insurance for Iraq to continue. As Secretary Baker stated in recent testimony to Congress, all of our programs with Iraq are currently undergoing careful review. It will take fully into account Israel's security needs, which are a fundamental concern for me. A final decision regarding these programs will be made once that review is completed.

I very much appreciate your taking the time to share with me your concerns about this important issue.

Sincerely,

George Bush

The Honorable

H. James Saxton,

House of Representatives.

H. JAMES SAXTON
13TH DISTRICT, NEW JERSEY

COMMITTEES:
BANKING, FINANCE AND
URBAN AFFAIRS

SUBCOMMITTEES:
FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS
SUPERVISION, REGULATION AND
INSURANCE

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT

CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND COINAGE

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Congress of the United States House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

April 12, 1990

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'90 MAY-02 11:18 PM

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COMMITTEES:
MERCHANT MARINE AND FISHERIES

SUBCOMMITTEES:
FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE
CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENT
OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS

OCEANOGRAPHY

SELECT COMMITTEE ON AGING

SUBCOMMITTEES:
HEALTH AND LONG
TERM CARE
TASK FORCE ON SOCIAL
SECURITY AND WOMEN

F M Cline
President George Bush
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I am writing you regarding the recent 'murderous' threat by Iraqi President Saddam Hussein on April 2, 1990 in which he declares his willingness and ability to unleash an extensive stockpile of mustard and nerve gas on Israel.

This threat carries an even deeper message to the United States and our allies -- Iraq is equipped with a strategic weapons capability of delivering a devastating blow to any country in the Middle East, Israel included.

As a result of Iraq's hostile threats, I strongly believe that the U.S. should apply caution and restrictions against any company or bank that has dealings with Iraq. I also oppose loans to Iraq by international financial institutions, such as the Export-Import Bank for which you recently signed a waiver.

The acquisition over the last several years, by both Iraq and Syria, of chemical warheads and intermediate-range missiles, means that there is a potential strategic imbalance in that region. Coupled with its recent threat to strike against Israel, I find that Iraq has not met Congressionally specified conditions for a trade waiver. Specifically, there are no apparent verifiable assurances that Iraq is not using poison gas or is not planning to do so.

Consequently, in order to better protect Israel in the Middle East against an Arab first strike with chemical or other nonconventional arms, I believe that the U.S. should take more tangible steps to act on this deteriorating situation in that part of the world. We must make it firmly clear that the U.S. will not extend any form of credit, aid, or technology transfer in any form to a nation that is actively acquiring such weapons, or adding to its present stockpile.

REPLY TO:

☐ 324 CANNON BUILDING
WASHINGTON DC 20515
202 224-3745

☐ 115 HIGH STREET
MT. HOLLY NJ 08060
609 261-5800

☐ 23 CRESTWOOD VILLAGE
SHOPPING CENTER
WHITING, NJ 08759
201 350-3535

☐ 1 MAINE AVENUE
CHERRY HILL, NJ 08034
609 671-1212

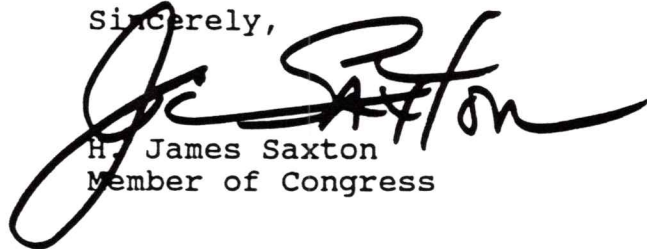
President George Bush

Page 2

April 12, 1990

In an era of increasing superpower cooperation, both the U.S. and the Soviet Union must do all they can to take a strong stand in addressing regional ambitions and conflicts that fuel demands for weapons of mass destruction. I respectfully request that you reconsider your recent finding with regard to extending trade financing to Iraq.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "H. James Saxton". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping "H" and a long, horizontal stroke extending to the right.

H. James Saxton
Member of Congress

HJS/jnb

UNCLASSIFIED
NSC/S PROFILE

RECORD ID: 9003541
RECEIVED: 04 MAY 90 09

TO: DOLE, ROBERT J

PROBATION FILE

FROM: SCOWCROFT

DOC DATE: 22 MAY 90
SOURCE REF:

KEYWORDS: IRAQ
NCO

MIDDLE EAST



PERSONS: HUSSEIN, SADDAM

SUBJECT: THANK YOU LTR RE VISIT TO BAGHDAD

ACTION: SCOWCROFT SGD LTR

DUE DATE: 08 MAY 90

STATUS: C

STAFF OFFICER: HAASS

LOGREF:

FILES: WH

NSCP:

CODES:

D O C U M E N T D I S T R I B U T I O N

FOR ACTION

FOR CONCURRENCE

FOR INFO

CHARLES
HAASS

COMMENTS: _____

DISPATCHED BY D. [Signature] DATE 5/22 BY HAND W/ATTCH

OPENED BY: NSMDC

CLOSED BY: NSDAI

DOC 4 OF 4

UNCLASSIFIED

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

May 22, 1990

BZ
Dear Senator Dole:

Thank you for your letter of May 4 concerning your recent visit to Baghdad. On behalf of the President, let me again express our gratitude to you and your colleagues for taking the time to meet with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein at this particularly sensitive period in our relationship. As you know, Iraq has a major role to play in the region, and as your visit proved, it is a country that we are better off doing business with rather than isolating in order to influence its behavior.

As the President stated to you, we want to maintain our ties with Iraq, since it is in our interest to do so. However, we are continuing to watch Iraqi behavior closely. Through your visit and the other demarches that have been made on our behalf, I think Saddam is beginning to understand the serious problem he has created for us in trying to sustain a "business as usual" relationship. We continue to reiterate at every opportunity our intense displeasure with Iraq's illegal procurement activity related to its nuclear program, his statements on chemical weapons use, and his threatening to retaliate against an Israeli attack.

On his obsession with this conspiracy theory, he apparently believes it is real. I think you have made an interesting point on the fact that he has chosen not to publicly reveal his assurance from the President that you conveyed, leaving him the opportunity to respond privately to the President. We would welcome such a dialogue, particularly if it eases his concerns that we are plotting against him, and reduces tensions in our bilateral relations and throughout the region.

Again, thank you for your assistance and support on this delicate matter.

Sincerely,

Brent
Brent Scowcroft

The Honorable Bob Dole
Republican Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C 20510

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

May 15, 1990

Natl Sec Advisor
has seen

ACTION

MEMORANDUM FOR BRENT SCOWCROFT

THROUGH: *HL* RICHARD N. HAASS

FROM: *co* SANDRA CHARLES

SUBJECT: Response to Senator Dole

SIGNED

Attached at Tab I is a proposed response to a letter from Senator Dole (Tab II) concerning his recent visit to Iraq. He noted a significant omission in Saddam's public reporting on the Senator's visit which he believes leaves open the possibility of a private response from Saddam to the President to express his thanks for the President's assurance that there is no U.S./Israel/UK conspiracy against Iraq.

Ginny *Adley* concurs.

RECOMMENDATION

That you sign the letter to Senator Dole at Tab I.

Attachments

Tab I Letter to Senator Dole
Tab II Letter from Senator Dole

United States Senate

OFFICE OF THE REPUBLICAN LEADER

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-7020

3541

May 4, 1990

The Honorable Brent Scowcroft
Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs
The White House
Washington

Dear Brent:

As you know, I wrote to the President shortly after my recent return from the Middle East, offering some of my private impressions of the trip. A copy of my letter is enclosed.

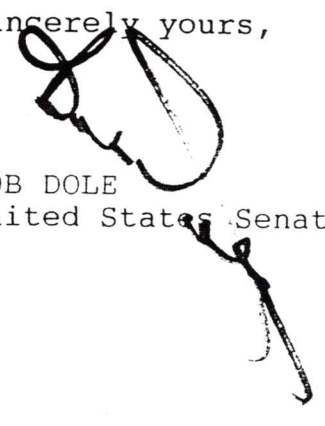
I wanted to follow-up with you on one particular point from the letter -- Saddam Hussein's comment about the President's assurance that the United States was not engaged in an anti-Iraq conspiracy.

To our surprise, the Iraqis have publicly released a transcript of our meeting, apparently taken from a recording made without our knowledge. Except for a few instances where they have attributed comments made by one Senator to another Senator, the transcript appears accurate.

There is, however, one conspicuous omission -- that same Hussein comment about the President's assurance. It seems to me, at a minimum, that this demonstrates the Iraqis see Hussein's comment as a sensitive matter, which they do not wish to have in the public domain. That may reinforce the possibility that the comment could offer an opening for a private response, that could facilitate a constructive dialogue with Hussein.

I will continue to avoid mentioning this small point in my public comments on the trip.

Sincerely yours,


BOB DOLE
United States Senate

United States Senate

OFFICE OF THE REPUBLICAN LEADER

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-7020

April 17, 1990

The President
The White House
Washington

Dear Mr. President:

I appreciate the opportunity to meet with you today, to discuss my Delegation's trip to the Middle East. We visited five countries -- Syria, Egypt, Jordan, Iraq and Israel. In each country, we met with the head of government and other leaders, and -- without exception -- had wide-ranging, candid and useful exchanges.

We intend to raise a number of matters with you today, but in this letter I wanted to pinpoint three personal impressions I feel are among the most interesting from our trip.

As you know, we adjusted our itinerary on short notice to add a stop in Iraq. Our meeting with President Hussein -- which lasted nearly three hours -- covered all of the urgent matters in U.S.-Iraqi relations. We pulled no punches in outlining our concerns, and presented him a letter outlining them -- so there could be no misunderstanding (copy of letter enclosed). Hussein was equally frank in stating his views.

Hussein was somewhat responsive to the issues we raised. But in the short time we spent with him, he continued to put great emphasis on Iraq's military strength and ability to deal with issues through military options. He persisted in being loud and clear in his sharp criticism of the State of Israel.

Among the things Hussein said, one in particular struck me as potentially important.

[No matter how wrong he may be, Hussein appears to be driven in part by a genuine conviction that there is a U.S.-British-Israeli conspiracy to discredit Iraq and undermine his leadership. When we passed on to him your reaffirmation, from the phone conversation we had with you while we were in Amman, that our Government was not engaged in any such cabal, though, his response was immediate: "That [i.e., your word] is sufficient for me."

[It struck me that his declaration might offer an opening to explore privately with Hussein some stand-down in current tensions. I should note that we have purposely avoided any discussion in public of this point from our discussion with Hussein, to preserve the option for you to make a totally private response to him.

In sum, I don't think any of us are inclined to "buy" much of what Hussein said, but I was struck by his willingness to engage in "no holds barred" exchanges. I hope you will agree with my assessment that we ought to pursue a continuation of such exchanges.

A second matter I want to bring to your particular attention is my assessment that the political stalemate in Israel over the formation of a new government is damaging the peace process and, potentially, Israel's regional and international standing.

We met with Shamir, Arens, Peres and Rabin -- and found none of them confident about how or when the current stalemate will be resolved. Peres, in particular, was impressive in his determination and eloquence, but even he offered no real optimism that there will be a stable, effective government in Israel any time soon.

All of us, I think, believe that, as President Mubarak said to us, there is a "window of opportunity" to make progress in the peace process. If that "window" closes before the involved parties take advantage of it, it would be a tragedy. And if the burden of responsibility for that failure falls on Israel, it will significantly damage its international standing and -- perhaps even more important -- undermine its credibility with Mubarak, moderate Arabs and Palestinians, and others who would like to see the peace process move forward. That, in turn, could seriously undermine the prospects for renewing the peace process later, when Israel finally has a government in place.

Obviously, our ability to do anything about this is limited. But it does underscore the importance of all of us speaking with one voice in urging the Israelis to "get their act together," and in the meantime avoiding any actions which complicate the problems that Israel's leaders face.

Finally, I want to note one particular point from a meeting with ten West Bank and Gaza Palestinian leaders,

arranged for us by our Consulate General in Jerusalem. I was struck by the openness of these prominent Palestinians in acknowledging Palestinian responsibility for past terrorism, and their admission that utilizing such tactics had been wrong and, on top of that, counter-productive even from the Palestinian standpoint.

They stuck to their existing line -- that the PLO must ultimately speak for Palestinians in negotiations, either directly or by selecting the delegates to any peace talks, rather than allowing their selection through elections. They asserted, though, that the Palestinian political leadership, including Arafat, has made what they termed a "quantum leap" in the strategy, and that they are genuinely committed to trying to reach a negotiated settlement with Israel, through the mechanism of the Baker Plan. They also cautioned, though, that there is a large segment of the Palestinian public -- which one of them estimated at 30% -- which continues to advocate confrontation, violence and terrorism. Unless their negotiating approach bears fruit in the near future, they concluded, the extremists would grow stronger, and the prospects for a peaceful settlement deteriorate.

As with Hussein, the words of these Palestinians cannot be taken on good faith alone. But they appeared genuine, both in the description of their strategy and the internal machinations of the Palestinian movement. Particularly in the latter regard, what they said seems to make sense -- if "moderates" cannot show results through negotiations, "extremists" will be strengthened.

All that underscores again how important it is that we test all parties through aggressive pursuit of the Baker plan, and other opportunities for advancing the peace process bilaterally and multilaterally.

One other matter concerning Arafat deserves mention and requires follow-up. Prime Minister Shamir gave us a news report of a speech that Arafat reportedly recently gave to his followers, ordering them to "open fire on the new Jewish immigrants, whether they are Russians or Falashas....I present to you my orders to use violence against the immigrants, and whoever fails I will put him in prison." Our Ambassador in Israel, Ambassador Brown, subsequently showed us a cable raising question about the authenticity or reliability of the report of such a speech, but clearly this

matter needs to be further explored, as part of our continuing examination of Arafat's true feelings and intentions.

Mr. President, I hope these observations -- and those we will pass along in our meeting today -- will be of help to you as you grapple with the critical and complex problems of American security interests in the Middle East.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'B. Dole', written in a cursive style.

BOB DOLE
United States Senate