

NIACT IMMEDIATE

to London, Paris, Ankara, Cairo, Riyadh, Taif, Damascus, Tel Aviv, Rome, Canberra

1. ~~SECRET~~ (Entire Text)
2. Please pass the following message soonest from the President to the King/President/PM:
3. Begin Text:

Dear

I wanted to bring you up to date on our exchanges with the Soviets and more generally on where we stand. I first heard from President Gorbachev yesterday, February 18, on the visit of Iraqi Foreign Minister Aziz to Moscow. President Gorbachev wrote me that he had proposed to the Iraqis a plan in which Iraq would announce the withdrawal of its troops from Kuwait by a date certain, to be followed by a termination of hostilities and, the next day, by the withdrawal of the troops themselves. Iraq would receive a guarantee that its troops being withdrawn would not be attacked and that there would be no resumption of hostilities.

I immediately responded to President Gorbachev's letter, emphasizing the importance that Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait be unconditional and immediate as called for by Resolution 660. I noted my concern over the unspecified length of the Iraqi withdrawal, suggesting that Iraq should be permitted no more than 96 hours to complete this task. I also underlined the necessity for Iraq to comply with all the relevant Security Council demands and exchange all POWs and other third-country nationals held against their will. Last, I underlined that we could not be drawn into any negotiations about Iraq's withdrawal.

I have since sent a second message to President Gorbachev, one that reflected additional consideration of his letter by me and my most senior advisors. In addition to reiterating the themes of my earlier communication, I impressed upon President Gorbachev that there could be no cease-fire before a massive withdrawal from Kuwait was underway and no cessation of the overall state of hostilities until that withdrawal were completed. Any other arrangement would risk the lives of coalition forces. I made clear that we would not attack retreating Iraqi forces; at the same time, any Iraqi breach of withdrawal conditions would bring instant and sharp response. The exchange of POWs and other third-country nationals would have to be completed within 24 hours. Finally, the Iraqis had to understand that any use of unconventional weapons on their part would trigger not only a massive coalition military response but would affect the coalition's treatment of Iraq in the war's aftermath.

DECLASSIFIED
PER E.O. 12958

78-0099-C/4
20 Mar 03 MW

In short, and as I said publicly, the Soviet initiative as it currently stands does not meet our requirements; that said, we are not closing the door on diplomacy. The Iraqis know as they have for more than six months what they must do. In the meantime, we are continuing with our military activities and preparations. I will endeavor to keep you abreast of any developments; at the same time, I would hope you would not hesitate to contact me about any of the issues raised here.

FLASH

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98-0099-Fly
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(begin)

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98-0099-F4
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~~SECRET~~

2

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