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FROM WASHINGTON 292115Z NOV 83.

TO IMMEDIATE F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 3586 OF 29 NOVEMBER

INFO IMMEDIATE GULF POSTS, BAGHDAD, TEHRAN,
PRIORITY UKMIS NEW YORK, UKDEL NATO, PARIS, BONN, ROME, TOKYO,
CANBERRA, WELLINGTON.

YOUR TELNO 422 TO JEDDA (NOT TO ALL): THREAT TO SHIPPING IN THE
GULF.

1. RAPHEL BRIEFED MINISTER TODAY ON DECISIONS TAKEN BY
PRESIDENT REAGAN ON US POLICY TOWARDS THE GULF.

2. HE STRESSED THAT THESE WERE TO BE SEEN NOT AS A NEW
US INITIATIVE BUT AS PART OF A CONTINUING EFFORT TO DETER
ESCALATION OF THE GULF WAR ABOUT WHICH WE HAD BEEN CONSULTING
CLOSELY OVER THE PAST THREE YEARS. THE PRESIDENT HAD IN MANY
CASES REAFFIRMED DECISIONS PREVIOUSLY TAKEN IN 1980 AND 1981.
RAPHEL REPEATED THAT THE US SAW DIPLOMATIC ACTION AS THE FIRST
AND MOST IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN THEIR ATTEMPTS TO DETER AND IF
NECESSARY CONTAIN ESCALATION OF THE WAR. IF DIPLOMATIC
ACTION FAILED AND IF POLITICO/MILITARY MEASURES WERE
REQUIRED, THE US WOULD WANT THESE TO BE MULTILATERAL,
INVOLVING THEIR ALLIES AND REGIONAL STATES. ONLY IF MULTILATERAL
ACTION COULD NOT BE AGREED WOULD THE US CONSIDER UNILATERAL
MEASURES, HAVING REGARD TO PRESIDENT REAGAN'S PLEDGE TO KEEP
OPEN THE STRAITS OF HORMUZ.

3. RAPHEL SAID THAT US DIPLOMATIC ACTION MIGHT INCLUDE THE
FOLLOWING ELEMENTS:-

(A) ENCOURAGING THOSE WITH INFLUENCE WITH THE PARTIES TO
URGE THEM TO OBSERVE A CEASEFIRE TO ACCORDANCE WITH SCR 540:

(B) SUPPORTING EFFORTS TO SHORE UP IRAQ FINANCIALLY,
TO REDUCE THE TEMPTATION TO THE IRAQIS TO TAKE RASH ACTION IN
THE HOPE OF WESTERN INTERVENTION TO END THE WAR. THIS WOULD
REQUIRE THE CONTINUATION OF ARAB ASSISTANCE TO IRAQ AT AT LEAST
THE PRESENT LEVEL:

(C) CONTINUING TO ENCOURAGE THE SECRETARY-GENERAL AND THE
ISLAMIC CONFERENCE TO LOOK FOR WAYS TO BRING ABOUT A CEASEFIRE
AND PREVENT ESCALATION (SPEAKING PERSONALLY, RAPHEL ADMITTED
THAT THE CHANCES OF SUCCESS WERE EXTREMELY SLENDER):

(D) A PUBLIC DIPLOMACY CAMPAIGN TO FOCUS ATTENTION ON
THE NEED TO ENSURE FREEDOM OF NAVIGATION (BOTH SEA AND AIR)
IN THE GULF REGION. RAPHEL NOTED THAT THIS WOULD HAVE TO
BE DONE IN SUCH A WAY AS TO AVOID UNSETTLING THE OIL MARKET.
RECENT GCC STATEMENTS HAD BEEN HELPFUL.

SECRET

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(E) IF ESCALATION OF THE WAR APPEARED LIKELY,
ACTION IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL IN THE HOPE OF FORESTALLING IT:

(F) ACTION WITH THE ALLIES TO DISCOURAGE THE
SALE OF CRITICAL ARMS AND COMPONENTS TO IRAN. THE US WERE LOOKING
AT THIS NOW AND WOULD BE CONSULTING ALLIES AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
AN OBVIOUS DIFFICULTY WAS THAT IRAN'S MAIN SUPPLIERS, SUCH AS
LIBYA AND NORTH KOREA, WOULD NOT BE AMENABLE TO WESTERN
INFLUENCE.

4. RAPHEL REITERATED THAT, IF DIPLOMATIC ACTION FAILED AND
MILITARY MEASURES BECAME NECESSARY, THE PRESIDENT'S STRONG
PREFERENCE WAS FOR THESE TO BE TAKEN MULTILATERALLY AND WITH THE
SUPPORT OF THE GULF STATES. IN ADDITION TO OURSELVES, THE
FRENCH, ITALIANS, GERMANS, JAPANESE, AUSTRALIANS AND NEW
ZEALANDERS WERE BEING BRIEFED IN WASHINGTON. HE WOULD BE
LEAVING WITH A SMALL STATE DEPARTMENT/DOD TEAM LATER TODAY
FOR TALKS IN SAUDI ARABIA, OMAN, BAHRAIN, UAE AND PERHAPS
QATAR AND KUWAIT. THE HURRY TO BE OFF WAS DUE TO THE NEED
TO TALK TO PRINCE SULTAN BEFORE HE LEFT FOR A VACATION IN
PAKISTAN. THE TEAM HAD THREE MAIN OBJECTIVES - TO DISCUSS
CONCERTED DIPLOMATIC AND POLITICO/MILITARY ACTION, TO SHARE
ASSESSMENTS OF IRAQI AND IRANIAN INTENTIONS, AND, IN VERY LOW
KEY, TO LAY THE GROUNDWORK FOR POSSIBLE FURTHER POLITICO/MILITARY
TALKS ON MILITARY CONTINGENCIES. RAPHEL STRESSED THAT THIS
ASPECT WOULD BE VERY MUCH UNDERPLAYED.

5. RAPHEL SAID THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD APPROVED THE FOLLOWING
PROPOSALS:-

(A) THAT IN THE EVENT OF INDICATIONS OF AN ESCALATION OF
THE GULF WAR AND IN RESPONSE TO REQUESTS FROM THE GULF STATES,
THE US SHOULD INCREASE ITS MILITARY PRESENCE IN THE AREA, OFFER
TO INCREASE INTELLIGENCE SHARING WITH THE GULF STATES, BEGIN
PLANNING MULTILATERAL ACTION TO PROTECT SHIPPING IN THE GULF
AND TAKE ACTION TO INCREASE THE AIR DEFENCE READINESS OF THE
GULF STATES:

(B) THAT IF THE STRAITS OF HORMUZ WERE MINED, THE US SHOULD
CONDUCT CLEARANCE OPERATIONS, PREFERABLY WITH MULTINATIONAL
PARTICIPATION AND THE SUPPORT OF THE GULF STATES:

(C) THAT IF THE TERRITORY OR OIL FACILITIES OF A NON-
BELLIGERENT WERE ATTACKED, THE US SHOULD HELP WITH ITS DEFENCE:

(D) THAT THE US SHOULD BE PREPARED TO RESPOND TO REQUESTS
TO HELP DETER ATTACKS ON NON-BELLIGERENT SHIPPING.

RAPHEL ADDED THAT THE US DID NOT REGARD AN ATTEMPT TO CLOSE THE
STRAITS OF HORMUZ AS VERY LIKELY.

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6. RAPHEL WAS BRIEFING US FIRST, IN RESPONSE TO OUR STRONGLY EXPRESSED INTEREST. THE STATE DEPARTMENT WOULD ALSO BE BRIEFING THE FRENCH, ITALIAN AND GERMAN EMBASSIES, AS HIS ALLIES WITH THE MOST DIRECT INTERESTS. IN ADDITION THEY WOULD BE BRIEFING THE JAPANESE, AUSTRALIANS AND NEW ZEALANDERS. RAPHEL UNDERTOOK TO BRIEF US AGAIN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AFTER HIS RETURN FROM THE GULF. ONE OF THE ISSUES TO BE DISCUSSED WITH US AND OTHER ALLIES MIGHT BE INTENSIFICATION AND POSSIBLE UP-GRADING OF NAVY TO NAVY TALKS WHICH MIGHT COVER COORDINATION OF DEPLOYMENTS, JOINT EXERCISES IN THE REGION AND POSSIBLY CONTINGENCY PLANNING. SHULTZ WOULD WANT TO TOUCH ON THE GULF DURING THE DISCUSSION OF OUT OF AREA ISSUES AT THE NAC. THERE WOULD ALSO NO DOUBT BE OPPORTUNITIES IN THE MARGINS OF THAT MEETING FOR MORE DETAILED DISCUSSION. RAPHEL ACCEPTED IN PRINCIPLE THOMAS'S SUGGESTION THAT HE SHOULD CALL IN LONDON ON HIS WAY BACK FROM THE GULF, PROBABLY OVER THE WEEKEND OF 10/11 DECEMBER, AND UNDERTOOK TO BE IN TOUCH WITH THE DEPARTMENT ABOUT THIS VIA EITHER THE US EMBASSY IN LONDON OR ONE OF OUR POSTS IN THE GULF.

7. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS RAPHEL SAID THAT THERE WOULD BE NO PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF HIS TEAM'S VISIT. IF ASKED ABOUT IT THE AMERICANS WOULD TAKE THE LINE THAT IT REFLECTED LONG STANDING US POLICY OF KEEPING CLOSELY IN TOUCH WITH ITS FRIENDS IN THE AREA ABOUT THE SITUATION IN THE GULF, AND THE NEED TO ENSURE THAT THE STRAITS OF HORMUZ WERE KEPT OPEN.

8. THOMAS SUGGESTED THAT THE MEASURES RAPHEL HAD OUTLINED, IN PARTICULAR US SUPPORT FOR EFFORTS TO SHORE UP IRAQ FINANCIALLY AND TO SQUEEZE IRAN'S ARMS SUPPLIES, GAVE THE IMPRESSION OF A US TILT TOWARDS IRAQ. RAPHEL SAID THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE IN US POLICY. THEY DID NOT WANT EITHER SIDE TO SUFFER AN IGNOMINIOUS DEFEAT. WHILE THE WAR SEEMED EVENLY BALANCED, A POLICY OF STRICT NEUTRALITY WAS THEREFORE APPROPRIATE. NOW THAT IRAN WAS DOING RATHER BETTER A SLIGHT ADJUSTMENT WAS REQUIRED IN ORDER TO "RIGHT THE BALANCE". THE US WERE HOWEVER DOING WHAT THEY COULD TO DISCOURAGE THE IRAQIS FROM THINKING THAT WESTERN INTERVENTION WAS GOING TO RESCUE THEM FROM THEIR PRESENT DIFFICULTIES.

9. ASKED ABOUT LIKELY IRANIAN REACTIONS, RAPHEL SAID THAT HIS VISIT WOULD BE TAKING PLACE IN THE CONTEXT OF A GREATER WILLINGNESS ON THE PART OF THE GULF STATES TO TALK ABOUT MEASURES TO MAINTAIN FREEDOM OF NAVIGATION IN THE GULF. IT WAS THEREFORE UNLIKELY TO SURPRISE THE IRANIANS OR PROVOKE A SERIOUS ADVERSE REACTION: INDEED IT MIGHT HAVE SOME DETERRENT EFFECT, THOUGH THAT WAS NOT ITS PURPOSE. IN REPLY TO A DIRECT QUESTION, RAPHEL SAID THAT NO DECISIONS HAD BEEN TAKEN ON WHETHER MEASURES TO DEFEND THE GULF STATES (PARA 5 (C) ABOVE) SHOULD INCLUDE PRE-EMPTIVE STRIKES AGAINST IRAN: THAT WAS THE SORT OF DECISION WHICH SHOULD BE TAKEN ONLY IN THE LIGHT OF CIRCUMSTANCES AT THE TIME.

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10. WE DREW ATTENTION TO THE NEED FOR PRIOR CONTINGENCY PLANNING IN REGARD TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL (UKMIS NEW YORK TELNO. 1444), IN ORDER TO COORDINATE WESTERN ACTION AND TO PRE-EMPT UNHELPFUL MOVES BY THE RUSSIANS OR OTHERS. THIS WAS EVIDENTLY A NEW THOUGHT AND RAPHEL AGREED THAT ADVANCE PLANNING WOULD BE USEFUL. THERE WAS A DANGER THAT OTHERS MIGHT SEEK TO USE THE SECURITY COUNCIL TO DELAY OR DETER NECESSARY MILITARY ACTION. WE NEEDED TO BE ON OUR GUARD AGAINST THAT. HE ADDED THAT THE US WOULD CONTINUE TO ENCOURAGE THE UN SECRETARY GENERAL TO PURSUE THE POSSIBILITY OF A FURTHER UN MISSION TO BOTH IRAN AND IRAQ TO DISCUSS THE ISSUE OF DAMAGE TO CIVILIAN INSTITUTIONS. THE TIME WAS NOT RIPE FOR A FURTHER INITIATIVE AT THE LEVEL OF PALME OR CORDOVES.

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