

FLASH

ADVANCE COPY

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OF 211630Z AUGUST 90
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MY TELNO 455 (NOT TO ALL): FUTURE OF EMBASSIES

SUMMARY

1. PERMIT RECEIVED FOR EC STAFF CONVOY TO BAGHDAD ON 23 AUGUST. FIRST SIGNS OF FLEXIBILITY IN IRAQI POSITION WITH REGARD TO CONTINUED REPRESENTATION HERE AFTER 24 AUGUST.

DETAIL

2. WHEN THE FRG AMBASSADOR AND I CALLED ON AL-DOURI AT 211500Z TO COLLECT THE PERMITS FOR THE STAFF CONVOY ON 23 AUGUST, HE LECTURED US ON THE FUTILITY OF LEAVING AMBASSADORS HERE AFTER MIDNIGHT (MIDNIGHT) ON 24 AUGUST. HE REPEATED WHAT HE HAD SAID BEFORE: WATER, ELECTRICITY AND TELEPHONES LINES WOULD ALL BE CUT. HE ADDED THAT NEITHER THE AMBASSADOR NOR HIS STAFF WOULD BE ALLOWED TO LEAVE THE EMBASSY: NOR WOULD ANYONE BE ALLOWED IN TO VISIT THEM. IN SHORT, THERE WAS NO POINT IN THEIR BEING HERE.

3. AFTER MY GERMAN COLLEAGUE AND I HAD BOTH REPLIED ON STANDARD LINES, AL-DOURI SAID THAT, IF AMBASSADORS LEFT, IT WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE TO LEAVE A MEMBER OF THE HOME - BASED STAFF BEHIND, FOR EXAMPLE THE CONSUL, TO LOOK AFTER THE EMBASSY AND MAINTAIN CONTACT WITH THE COMMUNITY. THE OFFICER WOULD NOT BE PERMITTED TO FLY THE FLAG OR DISPLAY A BRASS PLATE, BUT HE COULD LIVE IN THE EMBASSY AND MOVE IN AND OUT FREELY. SERVICES TO THE EMBASSY WOULD NOT, OF COURSE, BE CUT. THE OFFICER WOULD HAVE NO OFFICIAL POSITION, AND INTERVENTIONS ON BEHALF OF THE COMMUNITY WOULD HAVE TO BE MADE IN BAGHDAD.

4. THE GERMAN AMBASSADOR AND I BOTH UNDERTOOK TO REPORT THIS NEW SUGGESTION. ENCOURAGED BY THIS, AL-DOURI SAID THIS WOULD BE THE FIRST STAGE: THE SECOND STAGE MIGHT BE FOR THE OFFICER CONCERNED TO BE ADDED TO THE DIPLOMATIC LIST IN BAGHDAD. ALTERNATIVELY, A MEMBER OF THE EMBASSY STAFF IN BAGHDAD COULD COME DOWN AND TAKE OVER THE EMBASSY, ON THE TERMS DESCRIBED ABOVE, EVEN BEFORE AMBASSADORS LEFT ON 24 AUGUST.

COMMENT

5. THE IRAQI OFFER IS CLEARLY A STEP FORWARD. IT WOULD ENABLE US TO MAINTAIN A PRESENCE HERE AND PROVIDE SOME SORT OF SUPPORT FOR THE COMMUNITY (AL-DOURI CONFIRMED THAT THE BRITISH COMMUNITY WOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO LEAVE IN PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, THOUGH THE GERMAN MIGHT IN VIEW OF QUOTE THE RECENT PUBLIC STATEMENT BY GOVERNMENT AND OPPOSITION IN BONN UNQUOTE THAT GERMAN FORCES COULD ONLY BE USED IN THE NATO AREA). NOW THAT MOST OF THE OTHER EC COMMUNITIES ARE BEING ALLOWED TO LEAVE, I DOUBT WHETHER IT WILL BE POSSIBLE TO PRESERVE EC SOLIDARITY MUCH LONGER (BOTH THE DANE AND THE SPANIARD ARE HOPING TO LEAVE WITH THEIR COMMUNITIES ON 22 AUGUST). I THEREFORE RECOMMEND THAT WE SHOULD NOT DISMISS AL-DOURI'S OFFER OUT OF HAND, DESPITE THE OBVIOUS LEGAL DIFFICULTIES. THE OFFER NEEDS TO BE DISCUSSED FURTHER URGENTLY, PRESUMABLY IN BAGHDAD EITHER ON A BILATERAL OR AN EC BASIS

6. THE ITALIAN PRESIDENCY HAVE CALLED A MEETING TO DISCUSS THIS PROPOSAL AT 220530ZM. I WILL REPORT FURTHER THEREAFTER.

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