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WEU MINISTERIAL MEETING, PARIS, 21 AUGUST

## SUMMARY

1. GOOD MEETING HELD IN A CONSTRUCTIVE ATMOSPHERE. PRESS COMMUNIQUE (TEXT IN MIFT) INCLUDES DECISION BY WEU MEMBERS ON CLOSE COORDINATION OF OPERATIONS IN THE GULF REGION AND THE SETTING UP OF AN AD HOC FOREIGN AND DEFENCE EXPERTS GROUP. THE LATTER WILL COORDINATE OVERALL OPERATIONS CONCEPTS, AREAS OF OPERATION, TASK SHARING, LOGISTICAL SUPPORT AND EXCHANGE OF INTELLIGENCE. THEY SHOULD ALSO PREPARE FOR AN EARLY MEETING OF CHIEFS OF DEFENCE STAFF.

## DETAIL

2. ALL WEU COUNTRIES WERE REPRESENTED BY FOREIGN AND DEFENCE MINISTERS. DENMARK, GREECE AND TURKEY SENT OBSERVERS.

3. OPENING THE PROCEEDINGS AS PRESIDENCY, DUMAS (FRANCE) SAID THAT THE WEU WAS FACED WITH AN EXCEPTIONAL SITUATION. IRAQI AGGRESSION THREATENED TO WIPE A SMALL INDEPENDENT SOVEREIGN COUNTRY OFF THE WORLD MAP. THIS FLAGRANT VIOLATION OF INTERNATIONAL RULES OF BEHAVIOUR WAS WITHOUT PRECEDENT SINCE WW 2. THE RISK OF ARMED CONFRONTATION IN THE GULF WAS OBVIOUS. IRAQI ACTION AGAINST WESTERNERS WAS DEEPLY WORRYING. FOLLOWING THE ACTION TAKEN IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL, NATO AND BY THE TWELVE, THERE WAS A GENERAL EXPECTATION THAT THE WEU WOULD MAKE AN APPROPRIATE RESPONSE. THESE OPENING REMARKS WERE ECHOED BY ALL DELEGATIONS IN THEIR INTERVENTIONS.

4. CHEVENEMENT (FRENCH DEFENCE MINISTER) SAID THAT THE WINDOW OF SAUDI VULNERABILITY TO IRAQI INVASION HAD PASSED ABOUT A WEEK AGO. WESTERN FORCES ENJOYED TOTAL NAVAL SUPERIORITY AND THE BALANCE OF AIR POWER WAS SHIFTING IN THEIR FAVOUR WITH THE CONTINUING

REINFORCEMENT OF US AND OTHER AIRCRAFT IN THE REGION.

5. CHEVENEMENT GAVE AN ACCOUNT OF FRENCH MILITARY DEPLOYMENTS ON THE LINES ALREADY REPORTED. HE CLARIFIED THE LATEST INSTRUCTIONS TO FRENCH NAVY COMMANDERS: THEY WERE ENTITLED TO STOP AND SEARCH MERCHANT SHIPS AND IF NECESSARY FIRE WARNING SHOTS (BUT NO MORE). FRENCH BOARDING PARTIES WOULD BE ARMED.

6. VAN DEN BROEK (NETHERLANDS) ARGUED THAT ON THE BASIS OF ITS SUCCESSFUL 1987/8 OPERATION THE WEU SHOULD SET OUT CLEARLY THE NEED FOR COORDINATION IN SPECIFIC AREAS AND PROVIDE FOR JOINT COMMAND. THESE SUGGESTIONS DREW BROAD SUPPORT (BUT WITH FRENCH RESERVATIONS IN PARTICULAR ON JOINT COMMAND.)

7. THE SECRETARY OF STATE ECHOED VAN DEN BROEK'S COMMENTS ABOUT THE CONSTRUCTIVE WEU ROLE DURING THE IRAN/IRAQ WAR. WEU WAS HOWEVER NOW FACED WITH A MUCH GREATER CRISIS. IT DIRECTLY CONCERNED A MEMBER OF NATO WITH A COMMON BORDER WITH IRAQ - TURKEY. THE DIPLOMATIC RESPONSE TO IRAQ'S AGGRESSION AGAINST KUWAIT HAD BEEN IMPRESSIVE. MILITARY MEASURES TO PROTECT SAUDI ARABIA HAD BEEN RAPID, EFFECTIVE AND JUSTIFIED. THERE WAS ALSO A NEED FOR THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO LAUNCH A POLITICAL COUNTER OFFENSIVE AGAINST SADDAM HUSSEIN, WHO WAS CLEARLY TRYING TO WEAN ARAB SUPPORT AWAY FROM THE WEST (THIS IDEA DREW GENERAL SUPPORT AND APPEARS IN PARAGRAPH 4 OF THE COMMUNIQUE). THE SECRETARY OF STATE ADDED THAT THE WEU NEEDED TO GIVE A CLEAR POLITICAL SIGNAL TO SHOW THAT IT WAS RESPONDING IN A COORDINATED WAY TO THE CURRENT CRISIS. THE QUESTION OF COMMAND WAS NOT IN DOUBT - IT CLEARLY COULD ONLY BE ON A NATIONAL BASIS. CAREFUL THOUGHT HOWEVER NEEDED TO BE GIVEN TO EFFECTIVE COORDINATED MEASURES. EXPERIENCE DURING THE IRAN/IRAQ WAR SHOWED THAT THIS WAS OFTEN BEST DONE LOCALLY BY NAVAL COMMANDERS ON THE SPOT. BUT THEY NEEDED GUIDANCE FROM CAPITALS. THE WEU'S OBJECTIVE MUST BE EFFECTIVE ENFORCEMENT OF THE UN EMBARGO.

8. MR KING GAVE A DETAILED ACCOUNT OF THE DEPLOYMENT OF BRITISH NAVAL AND AIR ASSETS IN THE REGION, MENTIONING THE PRESENCE OF ROYAL MARINE BOARDING PARTIES AND JAVELIN DETACHMENTS ON BRITISH VESSELS IN THE GULF. AT MIDNIGHT LAST NIGHT BRITISH WARSHIPS HAD BEEN GIVEN NEW RULES OF ENGAGEMENT TO ENSURE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UN EMBARGO. HE ADDED THAT THE KEY TO EFFECTIVE WEU COORDINATION WAS TASK SHARING. IT WAS ESSENTIAL TO AVOID ANY WEAK LINK WHICH SANCTION BUSTERS COULD EXPLOIT. EACH WEU COUNTRY INVOLVED WITH POLICING ARRANGEMENTS NEEDED TO OPERATE IN A CLIMATE OF MUTUAL CONFIDENCE THAT ALL THE WEU FORCES INVOLVED WERE DOING THEIR JOB

PROPERLY. EFFECTIVE COORDINATION WITH NON-WEU FORCES EG US, AUSTRALIA AND CANADA WAS ALSO IMPORTANT.

9. GENSCHER (FRG) DREW ATTENTION TO THE NEW CLIMATE OF EAST/WEST CO-OPERATION IN WHICH THE US AND SOVIET UNION WERE WORKING CLOSELY TOGETHER TO TRY TO RESOLVE THE CRISIS. THE FRG WAS PREVENTED FROM DESPATCHING FORCES TO THE AREA UNDER ITS BASIC LAW. BUT AT A MEETING LAST NIGHT WITH OPPOSITION PARTIES THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT HAD FOUND A CONSENSUS IN FAVOUR OF THE NECESSARY CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT. THIS PROCESS WOULD INEVITABLY BE LINKED WITH UNIFICATION AND WOULD THEREFORE TAKE MORE THAN A FEW DAYS OR WEEKS TO EFFECT. GENSCHER DREW ATTENTION TO THE PROBLEMS RAISED BY THE EMBARGO FOR COUNTRIES SUCH AS JORDAN AND TURKEY WITH CLOSE ECONOMIC LINKS TO IRAQ. THE QUESTION OF AID TO COUNTRIES MAKING FINANCIAL SACRIFICES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED. STOLTENBERG (FRG DEFENCE MINISTER) ADDED THAT AS WELL AS ALLOWING US FORCES SPECIAL FACILITIES AT GERMAN BASES THE FRG WAS PROVIDING SPECIAL CW DETECTION EQUIPMENT (HE DID NOT ELABORATE FURTHER.)

10. SPAIN, BELGIUM AND ITALY ADDED LITTLE TO POINTS MADE BY OTHERS BUT MADE A STRONG BID FOR ADEQUATE SECURITY COUNCIL COVER FOR ACTION BY THE WEU. THE SECURITY COUNCIL SHOULD BE ASKED TO ADOPT ADDITIONAL MEASURES TO IMPLEMENT THE EMBARGO AGAINST IRAQ EFFECTIVELY.

11. IN A HASTY SUMMING UP OF THE DISCUSSION ON WEU COORDINATION, CHEVENEMENT SAID THAT TWO MAIN QUESTIONS HAD BEEN RAISED :

- A) WHAT WAS THE PURPOSE OF WEU COORDINATION ?
- B) HOW AND WHERE SHOULD THAT COORDINATION BE CARRIED OUT ?

THE ANSWER TO A) WAS CLEARLY THE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF UNSCRS ON IRAQ/KUWAIT. APPROPRIATE ROE NEEDED TO BE WORKED OUT TO IMPLEMENT THIS. ON B), CHEVENEMENT SAID THAT WEU SHOULD ESTABLISH AN AD HOC GROUP OF FOREIGN AND DEFENCE MINISTRY REPRESENTATIVES WHO SHOULD BEGIN WORK IMMEDIATELY (THEIR FIRST MEETING WAS SCHEDULED SHORTLY AFTER THE MINISTERIAL SESSION.) THEY SHOULD HARMONISE ROE AND PREPARE FOR AN EARLY MEETING OF WEU CHIEFS OF DEFENCE STAFF. NAVAL COMMANDERS SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO FIND PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS ARISING ON THE SPOT, BUT IF NECESSARY THERE COULD BE MEETINGS IN CAPITALS. COORDINATION SHOULD TAKE PLACE TO ENSURE THE BEST USE OF WEU NAVAL ASSETS AND EFFECTIVE CONTROL AT CHOKE POINTS OF MERCHANT SHIPPING IN THE AREA.

COMMENT

12. ALL DELEGATIONS WERE KEEN TO ENSURE EFFECTIVE WEU COORDINATION WITHOUT QUIBBLING ABOUT LEGAL NUANCES. THE TEXT AGREED PROVIDES USEFUL GUIDELINES FOR FURTHER WORK AT THE EXPERT LEVEL, BEGINNING WITH A MEETING THIS AFTERNOON.

LLEWELLYN SMITH

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