

CONFIDENTIAL
FM BAGHDAD
TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELNO 923
OF 221100Z AUGUST 90
INFO IMMEDIATE WASHIGTON, MODUK, ACTOR, UKDEL NATO

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SIC I9M

IRAQ/KUWAIT: DE-CONFLICTION

1. THE US CHARGE WAS SUMMONED BY MFA UNDER-SECRETARY HAMDOON ON 21 AUGUST. HAMDOON TOLD WILSON THAT IN VIEW OF THE BUILD-UP OF POTENTIALLY OPPOSING FORCES IN THE GULF IRAQ WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS WITH THE US WAYS OF AVOIDING CLASHES (ESPECIALLY BETWEEN AIRCRAFT AND SHIPS). HAMDOON, WHO WAS IRAQI AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON UNTIL LATE 1987, SEEMED TO HAVE IN MIND AN EXCHANGE BETWEEN THE IRAQIS AND AMERICANS OF THEIR RESPECTIVE RULES OF ENGAGEMENT, POSSIBLY DESIGNED TO BUILD ON THE UNDERSTANDING REACHED IN MID-1987 FOLLOWING THE USS STARK INCIDENT, WHICH HAD BEEN SUCCESSFULLY DEFUSED IN THIS WAY. HAMDOON ALSO SUGGESTED THAT THERE MIGHT BE A MEETING OF EXPERTS ON BOTH SIDES TO PURSUE THIS POINT.

Since then Iraq has invaded Kuwait

2. WILSON TOLD US THAT HE HAD SIMPLY UNDERTAKEN TO REPORT THE SUGGESTION AND HAD NOT DRAWN HAMDOON OUT FURTHER ON HOW AND WHERE ANY MEETING OF EXPERTS MIGHT BE SET UP.

COMMENT

3. GRATEFUL IF WASHINGTON COULD REPORT REACTIONS THERE TO THIS PROPOSAL, BOTH ON ITS PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS AND ON WHETHER THE AMERICANS SEE IT AS BEING IN ANY WAY A SMALL OLIVE BRANCH. SEEN FROM HERE THE LATTER LOOKS REMOTE, SINCE THE PROPOSALS WERE CONVEYED AT THE SAME TIME AS SADDAM'S STRONGLY WORDED MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT BUSH WAS BEING READ OUT ON IRAQI TELEVISION (MY TELNO 922 - NOT TO ALL).

4. PS. THE DA WAS INFORMED BY HIS US COLLEAGUE ON 22 AUGUST THAT THE RESPECTIVE RULES OF ENGAGEMENT AND CONTACT FREQUENCIES HAVE NOW BEEN EXCHANGED AND THAT A MEETING AT EXPERT LEVEL IS TO TAKE PLACE.

On whose authority?

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*I hope ours have not
been revealed*

WALKER

YYYY

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