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SIC AAA/I9M/A2P

IRAQ/KUWAIT: YOUR VISIT TO SAUDI ARABIA AND TO KUWAIT
GOVERNMENT IN EXILE

SUMMARY

1. USEFUL DISCUSSIONS WITH KING FAHD AND OTHER SAUDIS DEMONSTRATE DEEP APPRECIATION FOR OUR MILITARY RESPONSE, AND A READINESS TO GIVE SANCTIONS A CHANCE, THOUGH THE MILITARY OPTION, PREFERABLY UNDER UN AUSPICES, IS KEPT VERY MUCH IN VIEW. RELIANCE ON UNITY OF APPROACH AMONG PERMANENT FIVE. SAUDIS MORE READY TO ACCEPT IDEA OF KEEPING KING HUSSAIN ON HIS FEET IF ONLY HE WOULD DECOUPLE FROM SADDAM. YEMEN IN DISGRACE. SAUDIS MAY BE MAKING HEADWAY IN CHECKING SADDAM'S APPEAL AMONG WIDER ARAB OPINION INCLUDING ISLAMIC ELEMENTS. NATIONAL RESOLVE FIRM. CONTACT WITH KUWAITIS AT TAIF SHOULD HELP THEIR CREDIBILITY AND SELF-CONFIDENCE. POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION OF YOUR PRESS CONTINGENT. YOUR MESSAGE OF THE UK'S COMMITMENT, REJECTION OF COMPROMISE AND DETERMINATION TO SEE SANCTIONS WORK WHILE KEEPING FURTHER OPTIONS OPEN CAME ACROSS WELL.

DETAIL

2. THE BROAD OBJECTIVES OF YOUR VISIT TO SAUDI ARABIA AT THIS POINT IN THE CRISIS WERE SATISFACTORILY ACHIEVED. WITH PRINCE SAUD, PRINCE TURKI (HEAD OF GID), AND (EVENTUALLY) KING FAHD YOU WERE ABLE TO EXCHANGE IDEAS ON DEVELOPMENTS AND HOW THE NEXT STAGES SHOULD BE HANDLED, AND TO CONFIRM HOW VERY CLOSELY OUR APPROACHES RUN. DETAILS OF THESE MEETINGS HAVE BEEN REPORTED SEPARATELY. THE MAIN STRANDS, RELEVANT TO HOW THE SAUDIS SEE THINGS DEVELOPING, AND LIKELY TO CONDITION OUR COOPERATION OVER THE NEXT FEW WEEKS, CAN BE SUMMARISED AS FOLLOWS:

A) OUR MILITARY CONTRIBUTION, AND IN PARTICULAR THE PROMPTNESS OF OUR RESPONSE AT THE OUTSET WHEN KING FAHD SAW AN IRAQI ATTACK AS IMMINENT, HAS PRODUCED AN EVEN STRONGER POLITICAL BOND. THE KING DESCRIBED THE SPEED OF THE RESPONSE ON THE PART OF THE AMERICANS AND OURSELVES AS WITHOUT PRECEDENT.

B) THE SAUDI EMPHASIS THAT THERE MUST BE NO DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE FIRM COMMITMENT SHOWN BY THE SECURITY COUNCIL AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO ACHIEVE SADDAM'S WITHDRAWAL FROM KUWAIT AND THE RESTORATION OF A LEGITIMATE GOVERNMENT, AND THE APPROACH ADOPTED BY THE ARAB WORLD. BOTH THE KING AND PRINCE SAUD WERE CRITICAL OF THOSE IN THE ARAB WORLD WHO SOUGHT (FOR THEIR OWN ENDS) TO PEDDLE COMPROMISE AND DILUTE THE IMPERATIVE OF UNCONDITIONAL WITHDRAWAL. IT MADE SENSE TO CONTINUE TO WORK FOR AN ARAB SOLUTION, BUT ONLY ON THESE TERMS. (OUR INTERLOCUTORS CLAIMED KLIBI'S RESIGNATION WOULD NOT AFFECT THE PRIMARY ROLE OF THE ARAB LEAGUE HERE AND THE FIRM STAND TAKEN BY ITS MAJORITY IN SUPPORT OF SAUDI ARABIA AND EGYPT, THOUGH THE LOSS OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL AT THIS JUNCTURE MUST SURELY GIVE A KNOCK TO THE LEAGUE'S CREDIBILITY.)

C) THERE WERE CONTINUING SIGNS OF IMPATIENCE OVER THE TIME SANCTIONS MIGHT TAKE TO WORK, AND SOME CONSEQUENT ADVOCACY OF MILITARY ACTION TO DRIVE THE IRAQIS OUT OF KUWAIT, PREFERABLY UNDER UN AEGIS. PRINCE SAUD PRIVATELY SHOWED AN INCLINATION TOWARDS THIS LINE. BUT IT WAS INTERESTING TO FIND KING FAHD LESS INSISTENT OF A MILITARY APPROACH THAN WHEN THE DEFENCE SECRETARY SAW HIM LAST WEEK. WITH YOU THE KING STRESSED THE NEED FOR THE PERMANENT FIVE TO CONTINUE TO TAKE THE MATTER IN HAND AND STAND UNITED: TIME WAS SHORT. BUT HIS MENTION OF UN MILITARY ACTION TO RESTORE THE SITUATION BY FORCE OF ARMS WAS MORE TENTATIVE, AND HE HAD MORE TO SAY FOR ECONOMIC AND DIPLOMATIC PRESSURES. THE SAUDIS ALSO TOOK SATISFACTION IN THE SOLIDARITY OF THE POPULAR HOME FRONT, AND SPOKE OF 100,000 YOUNG VOLUNTEERS FOR MILITARY SERVICE IN THE FIRST WEEK OF NATIONAL RECRUITMENT.

D) I HAD THE IMPRESSION THAT KING FAHD AND OTHER SAUDIS ARE CONCLUDING THAT SADDAM FINDS HIMSELF ON THE DEFENSIVE. THE KING CLAIMED SADDAM WAS NOW LOOKING FOR A WAY OUT, THOUGH HE WOULD NEVER WITHDRAW WITHOUT PRESSURE. IN YOUR BRIEF TALK THIS MORNING, SAUD ACKNOWLEDGED GROWING GROUNDS FOR CONFIDENCE HERE. ADVOCACY OF MILITARY

E) IT MAY ALSO BE THAT THE SAUDIS FEEL THAT, ALONGSIDE THE SOLIDARITY BEING SHOWN AMONG THE PERMANENT FIVE AND WITHIN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY (TO WHICH THEY RIGHTLY ATTACH MAJOR IMPORTANCE), THEY ARE STARTING TO GET A BETTER HEARING WITHIN BROADER ARAB OPINION. THE SAUDIS ARE UNDERTAKING A MAJOR CAMPAIGN TO THIS END. THIS INVOLVES KEY ISLAMIC SPOKESMEN. THE ALGERIAN, AL MADANI, WAS HERE YESTERDAY, AFTER VISITING BAGHDAD, AND THERE HAVE ALSO BEEN CONTACTS WITH THE TUNISIANS. ARAFAT'S ADVISER, HANI AL HASSAN, WAS ALSO IN JEDDAH (GORE-BOOTH AND I HAD A SESSION WITH HIM), AND THE SAUDIS ARE PREPARING A MAJOR ISLAMIC CONFERENCE, INCLUDING SOME KUWAITI RELIGIOUS FIGURES, UNDER MUSLIM WORLD LEAGUE AUSPICES NEXT WEEK. SAUD CLAIMED THAT HIS COUNTRY'S POSITION WAS BECOMING BETTER UNDERSTOOD IN SUCH CIRCLES. THEY ARE ALSO WORKING ON THE SUDANESE THROUGH TURABI. COMMENTING ON YESTERDAY'S VISIT OF THE TUNISIAN JUSTICE MINISTER WITH A MESSAGE FROM BEN ALI, SAUD SAID THAT HERE TOO SADDAM'S BRIBERY HAD BEEN EXPOSED: THE INITIAL TUNISIAN SUPPORT FOR SADDAM'S HEIST HAD BEEN PROMPTED BY A PROMISE THAT THE SUBSTANTIAL KUWAITI ASSETS IN TUNISIA WOULD BE HANDED OVER. SAUD SPOKE UP FIRMLY FOR SYRIA'S SUPPORT, AND FOR THE NEED TO KEEP LINES OPEN TO THE PALESTINIANS AT THIS TIME.

F) SAUD WISHES TO KEEP YOU POSTED ABOUT THE VARIOUS ARAB PROPOSALS NOW BEING PROMOTED. HE SAID HE WOULD GO ON MAKING IT CLEAR TO THOSE CONCERNED THAT, WHILE HE DID NOT RULE OUT THE NEGOTIATION OVER THE FUTURE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN KUWAIT AND IRAQ, THIS COULD NOT (NOT) BE UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO TOTAL WITHDRAWAL. YOU UNDERTOOK TO LET KING FAHD AND SAUD HAVE AN ACCOUNT OF YOUR IMPRESSIONS FOLLOWING TODAY'S VISIT TO AMMAN.

G) THE SAUDIS WERE INTERESTED IN YOUR ACCOUNT OF YOUR DISCUSSIONS IN SANA'A, BUT MADE IT EVIDENT THEY WERE NO LONGER PREPARED TO SHOW ANY GESTURE OF FAVOUR TO ALI ABDULLA SALEH, WHO FOR ALL HIS PUBLIC DISAVOWAL OF IRAQ'S ATTACK AND PROFESSION OF SUPPORT FOR SANCTIONS, WAS ENGAGING IN DOUBLE TALK AND OPERATING ON IRAQ'S BEHALF, INCLUDING WITH THE IRANIANS. ARAFAT AND SUDAN ALSO CAME IN FOR THE KING'S CRITICISM. KING HUSSAIN ON THE OTHER HAND WAS SEEN TO HAVE ALLOWED HIMSELF TO BE LED BADLY ASTRAY BY SADDAM'S EVIL GENIUS. YOU OBTAINED AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FROM KING FAHD, THAT THE SURVIVAL OF THE JORDANIAN MONARCHY WAS NECESSARY. THE DISCLOSURE THAT THE KING HAD SENT PRINCE TURKI LAST WEEK TO AMMAN GAVE AN INDICATION OF SAUDI CONCERN TO TRY TO KEEP LINES OPEN. KING FAHD MADE IT PLAIN THAT, TO MERIT FURTHER FINANCIAL SUPPORT AT THIS JUNCTURE, KING HUSSAIN HAD TO COME OFF THE FENCE. BUT

THE POSSIBILITY OF SAUDI ASSISTANCE IN THIS EVENTUALITY LOOKS MORE HOPEFUL. THERE WAS APPRECIATION FOR THE FIRM LINE THE PRIME MINISTER HAD TAKEN WITH KING HUSSAIN. SAUD CONFIRMED READINESS TO GIVE FINANCIAL SUPPORT LINKED TO SUPPLY OF OIL TO TURKEY.

3. OTHER DETAILED POINTS USEFULLY COVERED IN YOUR DISCUSSIONS INCLUDED THE STATUS OF FORCES AGREEMENT, COOPERATION IN A POLITICAL OFFENSIVE THROUGH THE MEDIA (YOU UNDERTOOK TO PURSUE THE IDEA OF A VISIT BY A CORRESPONDENT FROM THE BBC ARABIC SERVICE TO SAUDI ARABIA), INTELLIGENCE BRIEFING FOR THE SAUDI MILITARY, AND INFORMATION EXCHANGES OVER POSSIBLE SANCTION BREACHES (I GAVE SAUD AN ACCOUNT OF THREE POSSIBLE SAUDI BREACH CASES WHICH HE INSTRUCTED HIS STAFF TO FOLLOW UP IMMEDIATELY). IN ADDITION YOUR REASSURING TALK TO MEMBERS OF THE BRITISH COMMUNITY IN JEDDAH WILL HAVE HELPED TO STEADY THEM, AS WELL AS OUR COMMUNITY ELSEWHERE IN THE KINGDOM. IT WAS USEFUL THAT YOU WERE ABLE TO HAVE A TALK WITH AVM WILSON, COMMANDING BRITISH FORCES IN THE ARABIAN PENINSULA. UNFORTUNATELY THE DELAY IN THE AUDIENCE WITH KING FAHD MEANT THAT THE GCC SECRETARY GENERAL'S CALLA WAS SQUEZZED OUT. BUT WE REMAIN IN CLOSE TOUCH HERE WITH BISHARA.

4. YOUR VISIT TO THE RULER OF KUWAIT AND MEMBERS OF HIS GOVERNMENT IN THEIR ISOLATED EYRIE AT AL HADA ON THE TAIF ESCARPMENT (DETAIL REPORTED SEPARATELY) NOT ONLY CONTRIBUTED TO THE IMPORTANT TASK OF HELPING SHAIKH JABIR AND HIS GOVERNMENT RECOVER FROM THEIR LINGERING SENSE OF SHOCK, BUT ALSO THROUGH YOUR JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE WITH THE KUWAITI FOREIGN MINISTER ENABLED THE LARGE PRESS CORPS ACCOMPANYING YOU TO GIVE A TIMELY LIFT TO THE KUWAITI GOVERNMENT'S EXTERNAL PROFILE. THE ATTENTION YOU PAID THE KUWAITIS WAS ALSO WELCOMED BY THE SAUDIS. PERHAPS THE KUWAITIS ARE AT LAST STARTING TO PICK THEMSELVES UP OFF THE FLOOR AND GO OUT AND DO SOME RALLYING. PREDICTABLY THEY ARE IMPATIENT FOR A MILITARY OPTION (AND ARE NOW REFORMING A KUWAITI BRIGADE AND THE KUWAITI AIR FORCE WITH SAUDI HELP). YOUR TALKS IN TAIF AND THE ATTENDENT PUBLICITY WILL HAVE HELPED. THE OCCASION WAS SHAIKH JABAH'S FIRST PUBLIC APPEARANCE BEFORE THE MEDIA AND HE DID HIS UNINSPIRING BEST. YOU PUT IN A USEFUL WORD OVER HELP FOR TURKEY AND EGYPT BUT GOT LITTLE CHANGE ON JORDAN. YOU ALSO PRESSED THE IDEA OF A GCC SUMMIT.

5. WE HAVE THE BRITISH MEDIA CONTINGENT WITH YOU A BUSY TIME IN JEDDAH, AND THEY APPEAR TO HAVE MADE POSITIVE USE OF IT. PRINCE SAUD HANDLED HIS PRESS CONFERENCE WITH THEM WELL (THIS HAS BEEN

BROADCAST ON SAUDI TV) AND YOUR OWN PRESS CONFERENCE BROUGHT IN A NUMBER OF SAUDI PRESSMEN AND HAS BEEN WELL REPORTED. OUR CASE FOR GIVING SANCTIONS A GOOD TRY BACKED BY FIRM ENFORCEMENT, YET WITHOUT FORECLOSING OTHER OPTIONS, RUNS WELL HERE AND HELPS TO SET THE SAUDI TONE.

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