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IRAQ/KUWAIT: DELEGATION FROM EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

CALL ON PRESIDENT MUBARAK, RAS EL TIN PALACEN ALEXANDRIA, 3  
SEPTEMBER

## SUMMARY

1. PRESIDENT IN EXCELLENT SPIRITS. LONG RECITAL ON ORIGINS OF THE CRISIS. IMPLICATION THAT HE DOES NOT EXPECT SANCTIONS TO WORK BUT WE MUST GIVE THEM A CHANCE. HARSH WORDS FOR SADDAM HUSSAIN, KING HUSSAIN, ARAFAT AND OTHERS. MUBARAK MAY HAVE SLIGHTLY MISJUDGED HIS AUDIENCE BUT HE IS UNDOUBTEDLY IN A DETERMINED MOOD.

## DETAIL

2. DHM (AS CHARGE) ACCOMPANIED A VISITING FACT-FINDING DELEGATION FROM THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT WHO SPENT TWO HOURS WITH PRESIDENT MUBARAK AT THE RAS EL-TIN PALACE IN ALEXANDRIA. THE GROUP CONSISTED OF TWO ITALIANS ROBERTO FORMIGONI AND ADREA BONNETTI (BOTH PPE), TWO BRITONS, PETER CRAMPTON (SOC) AND JAMES MOORHWUD (ED) AND CLAUDE CHEYSSON (SOC). THEY FOUND THE PRESIDENT IN FINE FETTER. HE LED OFF FOR AN HOUR WITH HIS VERSION OF THE ORIGIN OF THE CRISIS.

3. MUBARAK SAID THAT HE HAD NOT EXPECTED ANYTHING FROM THE MEETING BETWEEN THE IRAQI FOREIGN MINISTER AND UN SECRETARY-GENERAL. IRAQ HAD NO INTENTION OF WITHDRAWING FROM KUWAIT: SADDAM HAD ASPIRATIONS TO BE A REGIONAL SUPERPOWER. AS MRS THATCHER HAD SAID, FOR ONE MAN TO BE IN THIS POSITION WAS VERY DANGEROUS.

4. SADDAM SPOKE OF HELPING THE POOR IN THE ARAB WORLD, BUT HE HAD NO THOUGHT FOR THEM. DID HE HELP THE POOR IN 1973 WHEN THE OIL PRICE WENT SO HIGH? ALL HE HAD TRIED TO DO WAS CUT THE THROATS OF

EGYPTIANS. HE THREATENED THE OTHER ARAB LEADERS AT THE BAGHDAD SUMMIT OF 1979 AND FORCED THEM TO BREAK RELATIONS WITH EGYPT.

5. MUBARAK THEN BEGAN A LONG RECITAL OF INCIDENTS WHICH SHOWED THAT KING HUSSAIN WAS SIMPLY THE AGENT OF SADDAM HUSSAIN. AFTER THE IRAN/IRAQ WAR KING HUSSAIN HAD BEEN SENT MORE THAN ONCE BY SADDAM TO ASK THE EGYPTIANS TO TAKE PART IN A JOINT JORDANIAN/EGYPTIAN MILITARY FORCE TO HELP THE GULF STATES. YET MUBARAK HAD ASKED THE GULF RULERS AND NOT ONE WANTED SUCH AN ARAB CORPS. THEN CAME THE ACC. KING HUSSAIN HAD ARGUED THAT IT WAS NECESSARY TO HAVE SUCH REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS. THE ACC WOULD BE PURELY ECONOMIC. YET SADDAM HUSSAIN WANTED TO ADD A JOINT DEFENCE TREATY AND THE INTEGRATION OF INTELLIGENCE SERVICES TO THE ACC'S FUNCTIONS. EGYPT COULD NOT ACCEPT THIS, SINCE THE FIRST UNDERCUT THE ARAB LEAGUE AND THE SECOND WAS OUT OF THE QUESTION. SADDAM WOULD NOT GIVE UP - HE SENT HIS DEFENCE INTELLIGENCE CHIEF TO CAIRO TEN DAYS BEFORE THE INVASION TO SEEK EGYPTIAN COOPERATION. THE IRAQI'S HAD PROPOSED A JOINT INTELLIGENCE OPERATION IN THE US DESIGNED TO WIN SUPPORT FOR THE ARABS, AND A JOINT EXERCISE TO ELIMINATE OPPONENTS AROUND THE WORLD. EGYPT DECLINED TO JOIN IN.

6. TWO DAYS BEFORE THE INVASION SADDAM RANG MUBARAK'S OFFICE. (THIS WAS JUST LIKE A FILM, SAID MUBARAK). WOULD HE ACCEPT DOLLARS 50M AS A GIFT TO HELP HIM FEED HIS PEOPLE? (MUBARAK RECALLED THAT SADDAM HAD ALREADY GIVEN DOLLARS 50M TO BOTH JORDAN AND YEMEN IN MAY). MUBARAK SAID THAT DOLLARS 25M ARRIVED THE SAME DAY AND HE RANG SADDAM TO ASK HIM TO TAKE IT BACK, BUT SADDAM PRESSED HIM TO KEEP IT, SAYING THAT THEY WOULD HAVE MUCH MORE MONEY SOON.

7. THE INVASION TOOK PLACE ON 2 AUGUST, AFTER SADDAM HAD ASSURED HIM THAT NONE OF HIS FORCES WERE WITHIN 70 KMS OF THE KUWAIT BORDER. SADDAM HAD LIED TO HIM (FLASH OF ANGER HERE). HE HAD SAID THAT HIS PURPOSE WAS TO FRIGHTEN THE KUWAITIS A LITTLE, NOTHING MORE. HE LIVED IN A DIFFERENT WORLD. KING HUSSAIN RANG THE MORNING OF THE INVASION AND OFFERED TO COME TO CAIRO AT ONCE. HE BEGGED MUBARAK NOT TO PUT OUT ANY STATEMENT. MUBARAK TELEPHONED SADDAM TO SAY THAT IF HE WOULD WHISPER IN KING HUSSAIN'S EAR THAT HE WAS WILLING TO WITHDRAW, HE WOULD ARRANGE A FACE-SAVING MEETING OF A FEW HEADS OF STATE. IT WAS CLEAR HOWEVER THAT KING HUSSAIN WAS ONLY ACTING FOR SADDAM AND WAS TRYING TO NEUTRALISE EGYPT. HE BEGGED MUBARAK NOT TO CONDEMN THE INVASION, ON THE GROUNDS THAT SUCH A STATEMENT WOULD GO DOWN BADLY IN BAGHDAD. MUBARAK HAVING GIVEN KING HUSSAIN A WHOLE DAY, ISSUED HIS STATEMENT CONDEMNING IRAQ ON FRIDAY 3 AUGUST.

8. AFTER MUCH MORE ABOUT HIS SUBSEQUENT FRUITLESS MEETINGS WITH KING HUSSAIN AND THE IRAQ VICE-PRESIDENT, MUBARAK SAID THAT THE PRESIDENT OF YEMEN HAD COME TO ALEXANDRIA FROM BAGHDAD AND JEDDA. ALI ABDULLAH SALEH ASKED MUBARAK IF HE OWED ANY DEBTS TO KUWAIT. MUBARAK SAID THAT HE HAD A LARGE KUWAITI DEPOSIT IN AN EGYPTIAN BANK, WHICH HAD GENERATED DOLLARS 1.6 BN INTEREST. PRESIDENT SALEH SAID THAT SADDAM HAD CANCELLED ALL EGYPT'S DEBTS. MUBARAK COMMENTED THAT EVERYONE KNEW THAT THE KUWAITIS NEVER WANTED THEIR MONEY BACK. THE YEMENI PRESIDENT THEN ASKED HOW BIG WAS EGYPT'S EXTERNAL DEBT (DOLLARS 47 BN SAID MUBARAK). SADDAM SAID SALEH HAD TAKEN DOLLARS 100 BN FROM KUWAIT AND WAS OFFERING MUBARAK DOLLARS 20 BN. SALEH HAD COME TO BRIBE HIM (MORE ANGER). SADDAM HAD LIED TO HIM CONTINUOUSLY. SO HAD KING HUSSAIN. AS FOR ALI ABDULLAH SALEH, HE HAD NO EXPERIENCE. HE HAD BEEN A SERGEANT AND WAS NOW A PRESIDENT. ON THE PLO, MUBARAK WAS SCATHING. THEY HAD BEHAVED STUPIDLY, HOPING FOR MONEY FROM SADDAM. NOW THEY WERE IN A DIFFICULT POSITION AND THE MOVEMENT WOULD SPLIT.

9. CHEYSSON ASKED WHAT NEXT. HE THOUGHT THAT SADDAM HUSSAIN WAS A REALIST. HE WOULD WITHDRAW UNDER PRESSURE OF THE EMBARGO, IF WE COULD MAKE IT WORK. HE FOUND MUBARAK'S ASSESSMENT TOO PESSIMISTIC. MUBARAK CUT HIM OFF. SADDAM WAS NOT REALISTIC: HE WAS A PARANOIAC. SIXTY AMERICAN SENATORS, CONGRESSMEN AND ASSISTANTS HAD JUST BEEN TO SEE MUBARAK AND HAD ASKED THE SAME QUESTION. HE HAD TOLD THEM TO BE PATIENT. IN TWO OR THREE MONTHS THERE MIGHT BE A RESULT, IF SANCTIONS WORKED. BUT SADDAM WOULD NOT WITHDRAW.

10. MOORHOUSE ASKED ABOUT THE ECONOMIC EFFECTS ON EGYPT, AND MUBARAK SAID THAT A PAPER HAD BEEN DISTRIBUTED TO THE OECD COUNTRIES (CAIRO TELNO 535). HE ADDED THAT 200,000 EGYPTIANS HAD RETURNED HOME SO FAR, MOST OF THEM HAVING LOST EVERYTHING.

11. CRAMPTON REMARKED THAT WE SHOULD NOT FORGET THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM, AN EXAMPLE OF ANOTHER ILLEGAL OCCUPATION. MUBARAK SAID THAT THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION WAS BETWEEN THE ARABS AND THE ISRAELIS. BUT SADDAM HAD MADE EVERYONE FORGET THAT ISSUE. ONE ARAB COUNTRY COULD NOT SIMPLY SWALLOW UP ANOTHER. KUWAIT HAD GIVEN DOLLARS 6 BN IN CASH AND DOLLARS 13 BN WORTH OF OIL TO IRAQ. THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM MUST NOT BE LINKED WITH THE GOLF CRISIS TO DO SO WOULD ONLY SERVE TO TAKE ATTENTION OFF KUWAIT. MUBARAK SAID THAT PUBLIC OPINION IN EGYPT WAS SOLIDLY BEHIND HIS HANDLING OF THE CRISIS. PUBLIC OPINION IN THE WHOLE REGION WAS INFLUENCED BY EGYPT. IN JORDAN IT WAS NOT AS FAVOURABLE TO SADDAM HUSSAIN AS WAS

REPORTED, AND IN TUNIS, THE PEOPLE HAD BEEN PROMISED MONEY BY SADDAM. AS IN YEMEN, PRO-IRAQI ELEMENTS WERE FEW IN NUMBER.

## COMMENT

12. MUBARAK WAS CLEARLY ENJOYING HIMSELF. HE LOOKED FIT AND CONFIDENT AND WAS VERY DETERMINED. MAKING ALLOWANCES FOR HIS USUAL KNOCK-ABOUT STYLE WHICH PERHAPS GOES DOWN BETTER WITH AMERICANS THAN THE FRENCHMEN LIKE CHEYSSON, HE DISPLAYED AN ADMIRABLE ROBUSTNESS AND REALISM. THE MEPS DREW COMFORT FROM THE FACT THAT MUBARAK COUNSELLED PATIENCE AND A WAIT OF TWO OR THREE MONTHS TO SEE WHAT WOULD RESULT, BUT HE ALSO REPEATED THAT SADDAM WOULD NEVER GIVE UP KUWAIT AND HAD UNREALISTIC AMBITIONS. THE ONLY PART OF HIS EXPOSE WHICH ONE MIGHT CRITICISE WAS HIS CAVALIER TREATMENT OF REFERENCES TO JORDAN. HIS DISILLUSIONMENT WITH KING HUSSEIN HAS INCREASED STEADILY OVER THE PAST YEAR BUT ONE HOPES THAT HE REALISES HOW MUCH WE WILL ALL HAVE TO LOSE BY A WORSENING OF THE JORDANIAN SITUATION.

13. I AM SENDING SEPARATELY (NOT TO AMMAN) THOUGHTS ON A POSSIBLE EARLY MESSAGE FROM YOU TO THE EGYPTIAN FOREIGN MINISTER SUMMARISING YOUR IMPRESSIONS OF YOUR CURRENT MIDDLE EASTERN TOUR, LOOKING FORWARD TO YOUR VISIT HERE IN OCTOBER AND ALSO (IF YOU CAN SPARE THE TIME) TO A POSSIBLE BRIEF MEETING WITH HIM IN THE MARGINS OF UNGA, IF YOUR RESPECTIVE VISITS COINCIDE. THROUGH NO-ONE'S FAULT, WE HAVE HAD LESS DIRECT HIGH LEVEL CONTACT THAN OTHER MAJOR WESTERN COUNTRIES WITH THE EGYPTIAN LEADERSHIP SINCE THE CRISIS BEGAN AND I THINK WE SHOULD NOW SEIZE ANY OPPORTUNITY TO REMEDY THIS. EGYPT IS NOW MORE THAN EVER THE ESSENTIAL LEG MAN FOR THE ARAB MODERATES.

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