

UNCLASSIFIED

FM MOSCOW

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TELNO 1677

OF 071236Z SEPTEMBER 90

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ADVANCE COPY

IRAQ/KUWAIT: CALL ON BELONOGOV

1. I CALLED ON FOREIGN DEPUTY MINISTER BELONOGOV AND HANDED OVER A MESSAGE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER TO PRESIDENT GORBACHEV. IN RECEIVING THE MESSAGE, BELONOGOV TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO REAFFIRM THE SOVIET UNION'S COMMITMENT TO THE USE OF COLLECTIVE MEANS TO RESOLVE THE GULF CRISIS. HE EMPHASISED THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CONSULTATION PROCESS WITHIN THE PERMANENT FIVE AND VOLUNTEERED TO GIVE ME A FULL ACCOUNT OF THE HELSINKI SUMMIT MEETING EARLY NEXT WEEK.

VISIT OF TARAQ AZIZ

2. BELONOGOV SAID WE WOULD SHORTLY BE GIVEN FULLER DETAILS OF THE CALL BY AZIZ ON GORBACHEV. BUT BELONOGOV ADDED THAT FRANKLY THEY HAD FOUND THE MEETING TO BE UNSATISFACTORY AND UNPRODUCTIVE. THE CALL HAD BEEN AT SADDAM HUSSEIN'S REQUEST BUT AZIZ HAD BROUGHT NO NEW PROPOSALS OR ANY MESSAGES WITH HIM. BELONOGOV WENT ON TO EMPHASISE THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTINUING A DIALOGUE WITH THE VARIOUS ARAB STATES AND GIVEN THE DIFFERENT CONTACTS OF THE PERMANENT FIVE, THE IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING COORDINATION WITHIN THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL.

MILITARY STAFF COMMITTEE

3. I TOOK ACTION AS INSTRUCTED (FCO TELNO 1168). BELONOGOV POINTED OUT THAT CONSULTATION SO FAR HAD TAKEN PLACE WITHIN A WORKING GROUP AND NOT WITHIN THE FORMAL STRUCTURE OF THE MSC. THE MSC WAS THE RIGHT PLACE FOR MILITARY ADVISERS. THE RUSSIANS REMAINED READY TO SEE THE MSC REACTIVATED ON THIS BASIS. THEY DID NOT CONSIDER THAT THE WORKING GROUP WAS THE RIGHT PLACE TO DISCUSS SANCTIONS. THAT WOULD CUT ACROSS THE FUNCTIONS OF THE COMMITTEE FOR SANCTIONS, AND WOULD CREATE A BAD PRECEDENT. MEANWHILE IT WAS TOO SOON TO BE GETTING DISAPPOINTED ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE OF THE WORKING GROUP: IT HAD ONLY JUST STARTED ITS ACTIVITIES, AND THE RUSSIANS WERE FULLY PREPARED TO SEE THESE EXPAND. I REITERATED THAT A FULLER EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION WOULD BE A GOOD FIRST STEP.

MIDDLE EAST CONFERENCE

4. I RAISED THE SUGGESTION PUT FORWARD BY SHEVARDNADZE IN HIS SPEECH AT THE ASIA-PACIFIC CONFERENCE (MOSCOW TELNO 1673) FOR A CONFERENCE ON THE MIDDLE EAST. DID SHEVARDNADZE'S STATEMENT MEAN THAT THE SOVIET UNION NOW SAW SUCH A CONFERENCE AS FIRMLY LINKED TO THE RESOLUTION OF THE GULF CRISIS? BELONOGOV REPLIED THAT SHEVARDNADZE HAD NOT YET RETURNED TO MOSCOW AND SO HE COULD NOT COMMENT AUTHORITATIVELY. BUT BELONOGOV WENT ON TO SAY THAT, AS WE KNEW, THE SOVIET UNION HAD LONG ADVOCATED THE HOLDING OF A MIDDLE-EAST CONFERENCE. THE PRESENT CRISIS IN THE GULF HAD ONLY ADDED URGENCY TO THEIR PROPOSAL. THE ARAB WORLD HAD BEEN THROWN INTO CONFUSION BY THE INVASION OF KUWAIT AND THIS, TOGETHER WITH THE PROPAGANDA COMING FROM BAGHDAD, HAD OPENED UP THE RISK OF A SERIOUS ARAB SPLIT. THE PROSPECT OF A CONFERENCE WOULD GIVE THE ARABS SOMETHING TO LOOK FORWARD TO AND HEAD OFF THIS DANGER. THE SOVIET UNION WAS NOT CALLING A CONFERENCE TO BE CONVENED IN THE NEXT 2 OR 3 WEEKS: MUCH WORK STILL NEEDED TO BE DONE BY THE PERMANENT FIVE BEFORE ANYTHING COULD HAPPEN. BUT IF THE PROCESS WAS STARTED IT WOULD FORM A SERIOUS CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS RESOLVING THE PRESENT CRISIS. THE FRENCH AND THE BRITISH HAD SUPPORTED THE IDEA OF A CONFERENCE IN THE PAST. THE AMERICANS HAD BEEN OPPOSED. NO DOUBT THE HELSINKI SUMMIT WOULD SHOW IF THEY WERE NOW PREPARED TO MOVE.

SOVIET MILITARY ADVISERS

5. I ASKED ABOUT THE SOVIET MILITARY ADVISERS IN IRAQ. BELONOGOV DESCRIBED SOME REPORTS IN THE ENGLISH PRESS AND IN PARTICULAR IN A RECENT SUNDAY TIMES AS BEING UNFRIENDLY, EVEN PROVOCATIVE. THEY HAD INFLATED THE ISSUE OUT OF ALL PROPORTION. THE ADVISERS NUMBERED LESS THAN A HUNDRED. THEY WERE TECHNICAL SPECIALISTS WHO HAD NO INVOLVEMENT AT ALL IN CURRENT IRAQI MILITARY ACTION: TARAQ AZIZ HAD CONFIRMED AS MUCH AT HIS PRESS CONFERENCE YESTERDAY. CONDITIONS IN IRAQ WERE CHANGING ALL THE TIME AND SO THE SOVIET UNION HAD THE MATTERS UNDER CONSTANT REVIEW. THERE HAD ALREADY BEEN SOME INCIDENTS INVOLVING SOVIET MILITARY SPECIALISTS. BELONOGOV DID NOT EXPAND. HE IMPLIED, BUT DID NOT CONFIRM, THAT THE ADVISERS WOULD - OTHER THINGS BEING EQUAL - REMAIN UNTIL THE END OF THEIR CONTRACTS.

PRESENCE OF US FORCES IN GULF

6. I ASKED BELONOGOV ABOUT THE WORRIES EXPRESSED IN SOME SOVIET CIRCLES ABOUT THE GROWING PRESENCE OF AMERICAN FORCES IN THE GULF. BELONOGOV SAID THAT THE RUSSIANS HAD NO TROUBLE WITH THE FACT THAT THE SAUDIS HAD INVITED US FORCES TO PROTECT THEM: THAT WAS WITHIN THE RIGHTS OF BOTH COUNTRIES. THE SOVIET UNION HAD BEEN ASSURED BY

BOTH THE US AND THE SAUDIS THAT AMERICAN FORCES WERE IN THE GULF ON TEMPORARY BASIS ONLY. AS LONG AS THAT REMAINED TRUE, THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT WAS CONTENT, THOUGH THERE WAS INDEED UNEASINESS IN THE SUPREME SOVIET AND ELSEWHERE (BELONOGOV AGAIN CAREFULLY STEERED CLEAR OF AN EXPLICIT MENTION OF THE SOVIET MILITARY).

BRAITHWAITE

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