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IRAQ/KUWAIT: HIGH LEVEL U S BRIEFING OF NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL

SUMMARY

1. U S TEAM GIVES POLITICAL AND INTELLIGENCE BRIEFING: EMPHASISES THE NEED FOR NATO SOLIDARITY, EQUITABLE BURDEN-SHARING, AND READINESS FOR A LONG HAUL.

DETAIL

2. THE COUNCIL WAS BRIEFED TODAY ON THE GULF CRISIS BY A U S OFFICIAL TEAM LED BY ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR POL/MIL AFFAIRS CLARKE.

3. OPENING THE MEETING, THE DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL SAID THE CRISIS WAS A TEST OF THE ALLIANCE'S ABILITY TO HANDLE THREATS TO OUR COMMON SECURITY. HE STRESSED THE NEED FOR COHESION AND RESOLVE.

4. CLARKE SAID IT WAS IMPORTANT TO CONSIDER THE RESPONSE OF NATO, AS WELL AS OF ITS INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS, TO THE CRISIS. ECONOMIC INTERDEPENDENCE WAS A FACT. THE ALLIANCE FACED A CLASSIC OUT OF AREA CHALLENGE.

5. THE ORIGIN OF THE CRISIS WAS MORE THAN JUST AN ATTACK BY ONE THIRD WORLD STATE ON ANOTHER: IT WAS A MILITARY ANNEXATION, AND ATTEMPT BY A DICTATOR TO TAKE CONTROL OF 20 PERCENT OF WORLD OIL RESERVES. SADDAM WANTED MORE, AND IN THE ABSENCE OF THE U S AND OTHERS' REACTION COULD HAVE TAKEN MORE. THE U S HAD TOLD KING FAHD THAT AMERICAN FORCES WOULD COME IF REQUESTED, WITH GREAT STRENGTH AND SPEED: THEY WOULD ALSO LEAVE WHEN REQUESTED. THE CURRENT DEPLOYMENT WAS THE LARGEST U S OPERATION OF ITS TYPE IN HISTORY IN SUCH A SHORT TIME. THE BUILD UP HAD INVOLVED ONLY MINOR WITHDRAWALS FROM THE EUROPEAN THEATRE: THIS HAD BEEN POSSIBLE BECAUSE OF THE DEFENCE BUILD UP OF THE 1980S, WHOSE WISDOM WAS NOW APPARENT.

6. CLARKE SAID THAT, IN RESPONSE TO THIS OUT OF AREA CHALLENGE, WHICH ALSO THREATENED THE BORDER OF AN ALLY, NATO OR ITS MEMBERS SHOULD:

- CONTINUE SUPPORT OF THE OVERALL GLOBAL STRATEGY EMBODIED IN THE UN RESOLUTIONS.
- SEND FORCES TO THE REGION (CLARKE SINGLED OUT THE UK, FRANCE AND TURKEY FOR MENTION).
- PARTICIPATE IN MARITIME INTERDICTION (CLARKE REFERRED TO THE BAHRAIN CONFERENCE: NATO COMMUNICATIONS PROCEDURES WOULD FACILITATE CO-OPERATION).
- MAKE A FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION TO STATES SUFFERING AS A RESULT OF THE SANCTIONS (ESPECIALLY TURKEY, EGYPT, JORDAN).
- CONTRIBUTE THE LOGISITC SUPPORT NEEDED BY THOSE STATES SENDING FORCES. CLARKE STRESSED THE URGENT U S NEED FOR AIRCRAFT AND SHIPS TO BE MADE AVAILABLE IMMEDIATELY AND FOR THE INDEFINITE FUTURE.

7. O'DONNELL (STATE DEPARTMENT) SAID THAT AT THE END OF THE IRAN/IRAQ WAR IN JULY 1988 SADDAM BELIEVED HE HAD SAVED THE WORLD FROM KHOMEINI AND ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM. YET HE BELIEVED THAT HE HAD RECEIVED LITTLE GRATITUDE AND NO REWARD FOR THIS ACHIEVEMENT. IRAQ'S FINANCIAL POSITION HAD SUBSEQUENTLY DETERIORATED.

8. THE U S ASSESSED THAT SADDAM HAD NOW PROBABLY ACHIEVED ALL THAT HE WANTED TO ACHIEVE BY MILITARY ACTION AND WAS HENCE SEEKING A PEACE PLAN THAT WOULD LEGITIMISE WHAT HE HAD OBTAINED BY FORCE. HIS TERMS FOR SUCH A SETTLEMENT WERE, HOWEVER, UNACCEPTABLE, SINCE HE HOPED THAT BY PLAYING A WAITING GAME WESTERN RESOLVE WOULD EVAPORATE. HE WOULD WISH TO RETAIN CONTROL OF ALL OR MOST OF KUWAIT, ALTHOUGH IT WAS POSSIBLE THAT HIS RECENT DIVISION OF KUWAIT INTO TWO PROVINCES MIGHT INDICATE A READINESS TO CEDE ONE OF THEM. IT WAS, THEREFORE, IMPORTANT THAT THE WEST SHOULD REMAIN UNITED. THE U S BELIEVED THERE WAS A VERY GOOD CHANCE THAT SANCTIONS WOULD SUCCEED, GIVEN IRAQ'S HEAVY DEPENDENCE ON IMPORTS AND OIL EXPORTS.

9. FOLLOWING DETAILED BRIEFING ON U S AND ALLIES' MILITARY DEPLOYMENTS TO THE REGION, GLASPIE (U S AMBASSADOR TO BAGHDAD) PROVIDED AN ASSESSMENT OF THE POSITION IN IRAQ. THE ANNEXATION OF KUWAIT WAS UNIVERSALLY POPULAR IN IRAQ AND SADDAM HOPED THAT IN TIME HIS APPEALS TO THE ARAB WORLD WOULD WEAKEN ARAB OPPOSITION. HIS ACTIVITIES TO THIS END HAD SO FAR BEEN TOTALLY UNSUCCESSFUL. INDEED, WHILE THE PRO-SAUDI COALITION WAS GROWING STRONGER, THE MINORITY PRO-IRAQI FACTION WAS BECOMING WEAKER AND LIBYA WAS NOW WAVERING IN ITS SUPPORT. THE DIFFICULTY FOR WOULD-BE ARAB MEDIATORS WAS THE LACK OF ANY FLEXIBILITY SHOWED BY SADDAM. THE U S BELIEVED THAT SADDAM

WAS CAPABLE OF TACTICAL RETREAT, AS EVIDENCED BY HIS RECENT CONCESSIONS TO IRAN AND THE OBJECTIVE OF MILITARY-BACKED SANCTIONS WAS TO OBLIGE HIM TO SHOW THE NECESSARY FLEXIBILITY.

10. IN DISCUSSION, FULCI (ITALY) SAID THAT ROME TOO ASSESSED THAT LIBYAN SUPPORT FOR IRAQ WAS WEAKENING. A LIBYAN EMISSARY RECEIVED IN ROME THE DAY BEFORE HAD SAID THAT TRIPOLI CONDEMNED THE INVASION, TREATMENT OF EMBASSIES AND FOREIGN NATIONALS AND CALLED FOR THE IMMEDIATE WITHDRAWAL OF IRAQI TROOPS. ROBIN (FRANCE) SAID THAT NATO WAS AN APPROPRIATE FORUM FOR CONSULTATION OF THE KIND EVIDENCED BY TODAY'S WELCOME MEETING. IT WAS ALSO IMPORTANT TO REAFFIRM THE ALLIANCE'S SOLIDARITY WITH TURKEY. THE CRISIS WAS, HOWEVER, NOT IRAQ VERSUS NATO BUT IRAQ VERSUS THE REST OF THE WORLD. IT WAS THEREFORE IMPORTANT TO AVOID ANY ACTION ON NATO'S PART THAT MIGHT GIVE A CONTRARY IMPRESSION.

11. IN ANSWER TO QUESTIONS FROM FULCI, JACOBVITS (NL) AND ROBIN, CLARKE EXPLAINED THAT U S THINKING ON WHAT REGIONAL SECURITY STRUCTURE MIGHT BE REQUIRED ONCE THE CONFLICT HAD BEEN RESOLVED WAS STILL AT AN EARLY STAGE. IT WAS CLEAR THAT IRAQI POWER IN THE GULF NEEDED TO BE BALANCED. THIS HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN ACHIEVED BY IRAN BUT IRANIAN FORCES HAD BEEN LARGELY DESTROYED IN THE WAR. SOME RESIDUAL U S PRESENCE IN THE LONGER TERM MIGHT BE NECESSARY. IT WOULD ALSO BE NECESSARY TO DEAL WITH THE NBC THREAT POSED BY IRAQ. THE LATTER WAS A GLOBAL PROBLEM FOR WHICH GLOBAL SOLUTIONS WOULD BE SOUGHT BUT THERE WAS ALSO A PARTICULAR REGIONAL THREAT POSED BY IRAQ'S POSSESSION OF SUCH WEAPONS. IT WAS NOW TOO LATE TO STOP IRAQ FROM ACQUIRING AN INDEPENDENT CW CAPABILITY BUT THEIR ACQUISITION OF A NUCLEAR CAPABILITY - WHICH THE U S ASSESSED WOULD NOT BE BEFORE THE MID TO LATE 90S - WAS DEPENDENT ON CLANDESTINE PROCUREMENT ESPECIALLY IN EUROPE. AS REGARDS THE JUSTIFICATION FOR THE SIZE OF THE U S MILITARY BUILD-UP, WHILE THE U S NOW HAD AIR SUPERIORITY, THEIR GROUND FORCES WERE STILL SUBSTANTIALLY LESS THAN THOSE OF IRAQ. THE U S REQUIRED FORCES IN THE THEATRE OF A SUFFICIENT SIZE TO ENABLE THEM TO DEFEND THEIR ALLIES IN THE REGION AND TO DELIVER A MASSIVE RETALIATORY STRIKE SHOULD IRAQ LASH OUT OR DO SOMETHING TO THE HOSTAGES REQUIRING A RESPONSE. AMBASSADOR GLASPIE SAID THAT THERE WAS STRATEGIC ADVANTAGE TO IRAQ IN ACQUIRING KUWAIT SINCE IT GAVE THEM THE ACCESS TO A WARM WATER PORT WHICH THEY HAD FAILED TO ACQUIRE IN THE IRAN/IRAQ WAR.

12. BOURLOYANNIS-TSANGARIDIS (GREECE) ASKED ABOUT SOVIET ATTITUDES. UNSAL (TURKEY) PRAISED U S LEADERSHIP. IT WAS TIME TO FOCUS ON THE BURDEN-SHARING ISSUE. TURKEY HAD DONE MORE THAN HER FAIR SHARE. THE

CRISIS COULD BE A SPRINGBOARD FOR THE SOLUTION OF THE ARAB/ISRAEL DISPUTE: BUT IT WOULD ALSO BE ESSENTIAL TO MAKE PROGRESS TOWARDS GREATER RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE GULF STATES. HE QUESTIONED THE REACTION OF THE IRAQI MAN IN THE STREET TO THE EFFECTIVE SURRENDER TO IRAN. UNSAL ASKED ABOUT BAKER'S IDEAS ON NEW REGIONAL SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS.

13. KRISTVIK (NORWAY) SAID IT WAS VITAL TO MAINTAIN INTERNATIONAL CONSENSUS. NORWAY WAS MAKING A NAVAL CONTRIBUTION AND HELPING REFUGEES WITH GRANTS AND TRANSPORT. HE ASKED ABOUT THE POLITICAL INFLUENCE OF PUBLIC OPINION IN THE MIDDLE EAST. CAJAL (SPAIN) ASKED TO WHAT EXTENT IRAQ'S CLAIM TO KUWAIT WAS HISTORICALLY BASED: HOW THE SOVIET UNION VIEWED THE U S BUILD UP: AND WHETHER THE U S HAD THE CAPACITY TO REMAIN IN THE AREA LONG ENOUGH FOR SANCTIONS TO WORK.

14. FOR THE UK, I EMPHASISED THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE THREAT TO STABILITY, THE WORLD ECONOMY, AND TO SMALL STATES EVERYWHERE. ALL ALLIES SHARED THE OBJECTIVE OF ACHIEVING IMMEDIATE AND UNCONDITIONAL IRAQI WITHDRAWAL FROM KUWAIT. I STRESSED THE GREAT DEBT OWED TO THE U S FOR ITS SWIFT AND EFFECTIVE ACTION. THE WEAPON CHOSEN BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY WAS SANCTIONS. THEY NEEDED TIME TO WORK: MEANWHILE WE SHOULD SHOW RESOLVE AND UNITY. BUT SANCTIONS NEEDED TO BE BACKED BY A MAJOR MILITARY DETERRENCE PRESENCE. THEY WERE MORE LIKELY TO WORK IF WE WERE SEEN TO HAVE THE OPTION OF RESORTING TO MEANS OTHER THAN SANCTIONS. I NOTED THE SUBSTANTIAL UK CONTRIBUTION TO ALL OF CLARKE'S FIVE HEADINGS.

[He's seen we light!!] 15. ON THE ROLE OF NATO, I SAID THE ALLIANCE COULD NOT EXPECT THE U S IN FUTURE TO BEAR ALONE THE BURDEN OF ENSURING INTERNATIONAL SECURITY. ALL ALLIES MUST SHARE THIS TASK. WE MUST MAKE FULL POLITICAL USE OF THE NAC TO CONSULT ON THE PROBLEMS OF THE WIDER WORLD, AS WE WERE DOING TODAY. WE WOULD NEED IN FUTURE FORCES CAPABLE BOTH OF PRESERVING PEACE IN EUROPE AND OF RESPONDING TO RESPONSIBILITIES AND CHALLENGES FURTHER AFIELD. AS PRESENT COOPERATION IN THE WEU SUGGESTED, THE CRISIS UNDERLINED THE NEED FOR A REASSESSMENT OF THE READINESS OF ALLIANCE COUNTRIES TO UNDERTAKE COLLECTIVE DEFENSIVE ACTION OUTSIDE THE NATO AREA. IT WAS NOT MY INTENTION TO PRE-JUDGE THIS QUESTION - BUT CURRENT EVENTS MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE QUESTION WAS THERE AND WOULD HAVE TO BE TACKLED. IN CONCLUSION I ASKED HOW VULNERABLE THE IRAQI REGIME WAS TO THE FOOD WEAPON: IT MIGHT NOT BE EASY TO PROLONG A FOOD EMBARGO ONCE THE MEDIA STARTED SHOWING PICTURES OF 'STARVING' IRAQIS. I ALSO ASKED HOW MUCH SUBSTANCE THERE WAS IN THE ASSERTION THAT SYMPATHETIC ARAB

REGIMES RISKED BECOMING INCREASINGLY VULNERABLE, WITH THE PASSAGE OF TIME, TO THE CHARGE THAT THEY WERE WESTERN PUPPETS.

16. BACHMANN (FRG) SAID SOLIDARITY MUST BE MAINTAINED AND UN DECISIONS UPHELD. HE WELCOMED CONSULTATIONS AT NATO. HE AGREED THAT IRAQ WAS PLAYING FOR TIME, BUT BELIEVED THAT SANCTIONS WOULD WORK. FARIA (PORTUGAL) ASKED WHETHER AN HONOURABLE WAY OUT COULD BE ENVISAGED, WHICH WOULD PRESERVE THE ESSENTIALS. HE ALSO REFERRED TO THE RISK OF TERRORISM, AND TO THE PREDICAMENT OF KING HUSSEIN OF JORDAN. GUNNLAUGSSON (ICELAND) SAID HIS GOVERNMENT WAS ACTIVELY STUDYING HOW TO HELP. HE ASKED WHETHER THE DISAPPEARANCE OF SADDAM WOULD MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE.

17. IN REPLY, GLASBIE REFERRED TO THE COMPLEX HISTORY OF THE KUWAIT/IRAQ BORDER SINCE 1923. THE U S HAD NEVER TAKEN A POSITION ON THIS. BUT KUWAIT HAD BEEN SOVEREIGN FOR NEARLY 30 YEARS. AN HONOURABLE SETTLEMENT WAS A MATTER FOR THE ARABS TO NEGOTIATE AFTER IRAQI WITHDRAWAL AND THE RESTORATION OF KUWAIT SOVEREIGNTY. WHILE THE U S WOULD NOT NEGOTIATE ON THE UN RESOLUTIONS, IT WAS OPEN TO DIPLOMATIC CONTACT, WHICH TOOK PLACE DAILY. ANY SUCCESSION TO SADDAM WAS A MATTER OF SPECULATION, BUT THE CONSENSUS WAS THAT SOME FORM OF COLLEGIAL RULE BY THE REST OF THE PRESENT LEADERSHIP (WHO THEMSELVES REPRESENTED MINORITIES) WOULD BE ESTABLISHED FOR MUTUAL PROTECTION. KING HUSSEIN OF JORDAN HAD UNDER-ESTIMATED INTERNATIONAL REACTIONS TO THE INVASION, AND NOW REALISED THAT HE HAD MADE A MISTAKE IN REMAINING CLOSE TO SADDAM (THE PLO APPEARED TO HAVE REACHED THE SAME CONCLUSION).

18. O'DONNELL SAID THAT IN TERMS OF ARAB PUBLIC OPINION, SADDAM HAD CHOSEN HIS ENEMIES WELL. THE SHEIKHS WERE NOT POPULAR IN THE WIDER MIDDLE EAST. BUT SADDAM'S POPULARITY WAS BASED ON HIS IMAGE AS A STRONG MAN AND WINNER. IF HE WERE PERCEIVED TO WIN THE PRESENT CONFLICT, HE WOULD BE MUCH MORE DIFFICULT TO DEAL WITH IN FUTURE. O'DONNELL SAID THAT ALTHOUGH IRAQ WAS 80 PERCENT DEPENDENT ON IMPORTED FOOD, IT HAD STOCKS SUFFICIENT FOR 3-6 MONTHS. AMBASSADOR GLASBIE SAID THE ATTITUDE OF EGYPT WAS CRUCIAL: THIS IN TURN WAS AFFECTED BY THE VIEWS OF RETURNING EGYPTIAN GUEST-WORKERS WHO WERE UNIFORMLY ANTI-IRAQI.

19. CLARKE SAID THAT THE SOVIET UNION WAS NO LONGER A MONOLITH: ELEMENTS OF OPINION OPPOSED THE VIEW OF GORBACHEV AND SHEVARDNADZE THAT IRAQ WAS AN OUTLAW NATION. THE ABSENCE OF SOVIET SPARE PARTS WOULD IN TIME SERIOUSLY HAMPER THE IRAQI FORCES. CLARKE SAID THAT THE U S COULD STAY IN THE AREA FOR A VERY LONG TIME IF NEEDED. IF

SANCTIONS WERE VIOLATED, THE U S WOULD CONSIDER OTHER ALTERNATIVES 'COLLECTIVELY'. AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION WAS OVER-WHELMINGLY SUPPORTIVE, ALTHOUGH THERE WERE CRACKS APPEARING OVER THE QUESTION OF BURDEN-SHARING. KUWAIT, UAE, SAUDI ARABIA AND JAPAN HAD ALL MADE SUBSTANTIAL PAYMENTS. SOME EUROPEANS WERE DOING A GREAT DEAL, OTHERS WERE STILL CONSIDERING THEIR POSITION. EUROPEAN FUNDING WOULD HELP, AS WOULD THE SIGHT OF AMERICAN SOLDIERS EMBARKING IN EUROPEAN SHIPS. IN CONCLUSION CLARKE SAID THAT FURTHER INTENSIVE CONSULTATION WOULD BOTH BE USEFUL AND NECESSARY. (HE SUBSEQUENTLY EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR AND AGREEMENT WITH THE LINE I HAD TAKEN EARLIER).

ALEXANDER

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