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OF 101141Z SEPTEMBER 90

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INFO PRIORITY OTHER MIDDLE EAST POSTS, OTHER EC POSTS, MOSCOW

TOKYO: FOR SECRETARY OF STATE'S PARTY

IRAQ/KUWAIT: KING HUSSEIN'S VISIT TO BAGHDAD: 5/6 SEPTEMBER

SUMMARY

1. CHIEF OF THE ROYAL COURT CLAIMS THAT KING HUSSEIN URGED SADDAM TO WITHDRAW AND TO HAND OVER WESTERN HOSTAGES. KING LIKELY TO CONTINUE WITH HIS DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS TO PROMOTE A SOLUTION.

DETAIL

2. I CALLED ON THE CHIEF OF THE ROYAL COURT TODAY (10 SEPTEMBER) TO ENQUIRE ABOUT THE KING'S VISIT TO BAGHDAD.

3. ZAID BIN SHAKER SAID THAT THE KING HAD SPOKEN VERY FRANKLY TO SADDAM. HIS MESSAGE HAD BEEN THAT IRAQ SHOULD WITHDRAW FROM KUWAIT: THERE WAS NO CHOICE IN THE MATTER. IF IT CAME TO A WAR, IRAQ WOULD BE DEFEATED EVEN IF IT INFLICTED MUCH DAMAGE ON THE AMERICANS IN THE PROCESS. SADDAM WOULD DO BETTER TO WITHDRAW NOW AND SEEK TO CAPITULATE ON THE GOOD OFFICES OF PEREZ DE CUELLAR TO ENSURE THAT HE WAS NOT THEN ATTACKED BY WESTERN FORCES. BIN SHAKER EMPHASISED THAT SADDAM REMAINED VERY PREOCCUPIED BY THIS LATTER POSSIBILITY.

4. IN RESPONSE TO MY QUESTION, BIN SHAKER SAID THAT SADDAM AND HIS SENIOR ADVISERS (TO WHOM THE JORDANIAN ENTOURAGE HAD SPOKEN SEPARATELY) HAD TAKEN THIS ADVICE CALMLY AND PROMISED TO REFLECT ON IT. THE KING'S IMPRESSION WAS THAT THERE WAS NOTHING IRREVOCABLE ABOUT THE ANNEXATION OF KUWAIT. HOWEVER, HE (BIN SHAKER) HAD NOT BEEN ENCOURAGED BY THE TONE OF THE LETTER WHICH SADDAM HAD SUBSEQUENTLY SENT TO BUSH AND GORBACHEV AT THE HELSINKI SUMMIT.

5. BIN SHAKER ALSO REPORTED THAT THE KING HAD TACKLED SADDAM FIRMLY OVER WESTERN HOSTAGES. THE DISCUSSION HAD BEEN INCONCLUSIVE THOUGH IT HAD CONFIRMED BIN SHAKER'S OWN VIEW THAT SADDAM HAD NOT THE FAINTEST UNDERSTANDING OF WESTERN ATTITUDES AND SENSITIVITIES, AS DEMONSTRATED BY THE EPISODE OF STEWART AND THE CORNFLAKES.

6. I ASKED WHAT THE KING WAS LIKELY TO DO NEXT. BIN SHAKER REPLIED THAT HE WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY WANT TO CONTINUE WITH EFFORTS TO PROMOTE A SETTLEMENT. I REMINDED BIN SHAKER THAT YOU HAD TRANSMITTED TO THE KING THE UNANIMOUS VIEW OF THE GULF STATES THAT THE KING'S MEDIATION EFFORTS WERE COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE SINCE THEY TENDED TO RELIEVE THE PRESSURE ON SADDAM. WE BELIEVED THAT TIME WAS NEEDED TO ALLOW THE ECONOMIC PRESSURES TO BUILD UP ON SADDAM. ONLY THEN WAS HE LIKELY TO CONSIDER SERIOUSLY A CHANGE OF COURSE. BIN SHAKER SAID THAT THE KING HAD NEVERTHELESS BEEN ENCOURAGED AT EVERY PORT OF CALL ON HIS RECENT AFRICAN AND EUROPEAN TRIP, QUOTE EXCEPT LONDON UNQUOTE, TO CONTINUE WITH HIS EFFORTS.

7. BIN SHAKER SAID THAT HE HAD BEEN VERY DISMAYED BY THE HOSTILITY SHOWN TO JORDAN, AND KING HUSSEIN, IN THE BRITISH MEDIA. HOW COULD THEIR POSITION POSSIBLY HAVE BEEN SO MISUNDERSTOOD? I SAID MY PERSONAL VIEW WAS THAT THE DAMAGE HAD BEEN DONE IN THE FIRST 72 HOURS WHEN THERE HAD BEEN NO STRONG SIGNAL FROM AMMAN OF DETERMINATION TO OPPOSE THE IRAQI INVASION. HOWEVER, THIS WAS NOW WATER UNDER THE BRIDGE. WE WERE ENCOURAGED BY SUBSEQUENT STATEMENTS OF JORDAN'S POSITION. BIN SHAKER SAID THAT SANCTIONS WOULD BE FULLY APPLIED. THE IRAQIS HAD MADE NO ATTEMPT TO CHALLENGE THIS: NOR WOULD JORDAN ENTERTAIN ANY REQUEST FROM THEM TO EVADE SANCTIONS. THE KING HAD BEEN UPSET THAT ANYONE SHOULD BELIEVE THAT JORDAN WOULD NOT HONOUR ITS COMMITMENTS AS A UN MEMBER.

8. BIN SHAKER ALSO RAISED THE SEARCHING OF RJ AIRCRAFT AT HEATHROW (MY TELNO 531 REFERS). HE COMPLAINED THAT THE SEARCHING OF PASSENGERS WAS NOT ONLY UNDIGNIFIED BUT UNNECESSARY. JORDAN HAD MADE ITS COMMITMENT TO SANCTIONS CLEAR AND WOULD ABIDE BY IT. I EXPLAINED THAT, HAVING RECEIVED EARLIER REPRESENTATIONS FROM THE MFA, WE HAD ALREADY REPORTED JORDANIAN VIEWS TO YOU.

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38

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