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REPLY BY THE AMBASSADOR OF ISRAEL TO QUESTIONS ASKED REGARDING
MINISTER OF STATE FCO MR W. WALDEGRAVE'S REMARKS CONCERNING *Hanau extract attached*
ISRAEL AND THE ARAB-ISRAEL CONFLICT DURING THE HOUSE OF COMMONS
SPECIAL SESSION ON THE KUWAIT CRISIS. (6 - 7 SEPTEMBER 1990)

ONE CAN UNDERSTAND THE FRUSTRATION OF THOSE WHO HAVE EMBARKED ON THE VERY UNHELPFUL AND UNSUCCESSFUL POLICY OF ENGAGING THEMSELVES IN A DIALOGUE WITH THE PLO AND OF ATTEMPTING TO INTRODUCE IT TO THE POLITICAL PROCESS IN THE MIDDLE EAST. AGAIN AND AGAIN, THE TRUE AND UNCHANGED AGGRESSIVE AND TERRORIST NATURE OF THIS ORGANISATION IS EXPOSED. IT BECOMES AMPLY APPARENT THAT THE PLO AND ITS LEADER YASSER ARAFAT ARE ONLY CAPABLE OF DESTRUCTIVE CONTRIBUTIONS WHICH RUN COUNTER THE ENDEAVORS FOR PEACE AND A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT OF THE ARAB-ISRAEL CONFLICT.

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RATHER THAN SUSPEND THIS DIALOGUE AND ADJUST POLICIES TO REALITY, AS OTHERS DID, THERE IS A CONINUOUS EFFORT TO IGNORE PLO BEHAVIOUR. THE PLO FAILED TO CONDEMN THE ATTEMPT OF A TERRORIST RAID BY ABU AL ABAS PLO FACTION ON ISRAEL'S SHORE AND JOINED THE UNHOLY TRINITY WITH IRAQ AND LIBYA ON OBJECTING TO THE ARAB LEAGUE CALL TO BRING AN END TO THE IRAQI INVASION OF KUWAIT,

MOREOVER ONE CAN ONLY REGRET THE EFFORT TO JUSTIFY THE UNEXPLAINABLE BY A DISTORTED PRESENTATION OF ISRAEL POSTURE AND SIGNIFICANCE IN THE CURRENT SITUATION AND OF THE TRUE CAUSES FOR THIS INTER ARAB CRISIS. TO INSINUATE THAT THE ARAB WORLD DIFFICULTIES EMANATE FROM ISRAEL PRESENCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND THE ARAB-ISRAEL CONFLICT IS TO TRY AND IGNORE THE TRUE CAUSES - THE OLD INTER ARAB RIVALRIES, THE CONTINUED INSTABILITY AND THE LACK OF FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY. THESE HAVE MANIFESTED THEMSELVES NOT JUST IN THE CURRENT OCCUPATION BY IRAQ OF A SISTER ARAB COUNTRY BUT ALSO IN THE PAST IN THE IRAQ-IRAN EIGHT YEARS LONG WAR, THE LIBYAN INVASION OF CHAD OR NASSER'S INVASION OF YEMEN WHICH HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH ISRAEL.

[Mr. George Robertson]

Many hon. Members on both sides of the House have drawn attention to the way in which the world has now concentrated its concern on the part of the world affected by the invasion. That concern will not end; it will not go away, however the matter is resolved—even after the defeat of Saddam Hussein. The message of our debate today has been clear enough: we stay tough, we stay cool, we stay united. Because for as long as Saddam Hussein threatens his neighbours, he threatens us all.

9.35 pm

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mr. William Waldegrave): Today the House has spoken for our nation as only the House can speak. The hon. Member for Hamilton (Mr. Robertson) spoke well in winding up the debate for the Opposition, and we have heard some other outstanding speeches, led by the magnificent speech of my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister. Let me also pay tribute to the speech made by the Leader of the Opposition, and to the fine speeches of the right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen), my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine), the right hon. Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore) and, of course, to the splendid speech of the Father of the House, my right hon. Friend the Member for Castle Point (Sir B. Braine).

The whole House is united on certain objectives. Aggression cannot be allowed to pay. A pirate state with a strong army cannot be allowed simply to loot resources that it may need because it has got itself into debt. Above all, once engaged as they are now engaged, the international forces of law represented by the United Nations cannot be allowed to be defeated. If that were to happen, anarchy would be loosed on the world.

Some have said, "Why the excitement? There have been other invasions and other territorial disputes." They should remember this: never before, since the foundation of the United Nations, has one member state attempted to obliterate another. That is the difference between this and many other crimes and problems of the past.

The strategy formed by the United Nations and the allies of the legitimate Government of Kuwait is also clear and, I believe, has received the almost unanimous backing of the House. The first weapon to be tried was the economic embargo; second came the rapid movement of forces from an amazing variety of nations to defend the other vulnerable states. I was pleased that the hon. Member for Hamilton's speech did not contain that strain of anti-Americanism which, I thought, spoilt one or two speeches made by his hon. Friends. He paid tribute to the extraordinary effort which the United States has made, and which only the United States could have made. We have contributed; but 20 other nations, from literally every other continent of the globe—from Australasia, from Asia and, of course, from the middle east, including the majority of the Arab League—are there as well.

Then comes the next stage. Who knows? We cannot rule out anything, as long as it is firmly based in international law. In the absolute unity that the nations have shown and that the House has shown today, we are all agreed that we should give no comfort whatever to Saddam Hussein.

There have been some dissentient voices. After listening to the speech of my former neighbour, now the right hon. Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn), I asked myself whether I would feel more secure in my arguments if he was agreeing with me, and came to the conclusion that I would not.

Mr. Kinnock: Join the club.

Mr. Waldegrave: I cannot refrain from repeating the Leader of the Opposition's sotto voce remark—"Welcome to the club".

Let us pause for a moment—as did the hon. Member for Walsall, North (Mr. Winnick) in a useful intervention—to consider Saddam Hussein's strategy. It is pretty clear. He will try to divert us from his central act of aggression: he has been doing so with the inhumane and intolerable treatment of the hostages. He will find other strategies of this kind. He will encourage other people, some of them well meaning, to look for half-baked solutions, conferences, intermediary stages and means to divide those United Nations resolutions by two. We must be alert to that strategy. The hon. Member for Walsall, North did not fall for that strategy—nor, in a fine speech, as I have already said, did the right hon. Member for Devonport and my right hon. Friend the Member for Blackpool, South (Sir P. Blaker). The hon. Member for Warley, East (Mr. Faulds) did fall for it in his speech—understated, as is his wont.

Mr. Faulds: Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Waldegrave: No. The hon. Gentleman would try to divert us, but he would not succeed. I cannot give way to interventions; I have little time.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Shoreham (Mr. Luce) said, rightly, that Saddam Hussein likes to liken himself to Nebuchadnezzar and spoke of the hanging gardens. May I direct the attention of Saddam Hussein, who may not be familiar with this verse, to the book of Daniel, chapter five, verse 21, after the deposition, which is referred to in verse 20;

"And he was driven from the sons of men; and his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild asses; they fed him with grass like oxen."

I must concentrate a little on one section of the Leader of the Opposition's speech, not necessarily because I disagree with it but because I am not sure that I understood it. Several hon. Members have said that clarity of speech is important here. There is no disagreement with the legal position as set out by the Leader of the Opposition. We totally share it. However, there are three international grounds for military action: first, article 51, after a request from Kuwait; secondly, a response to an attack—what after today we may call the Yeovil rules; thirdly, an explicit United Nations mandate. Any of those three would do. The Leader of the Opposition's legal analysis was entirely justified. Where we departed from him—perhaps we did, perhaps we did not—was when he and the hon. Member for Edinburgh, East (Mr. Strang) seemed to predict a scenario ahead of time that cannot be predicted. We do not know which of those grounds would be the best to use to bring about the objective that all of us share: to avoid the defeat of international order.

The hon. Member for Edinburgh, East sketched one scenario where there was total unity for military action. That might be one scenario, but let us not predict in advance. We cannot rule out any action, so long as it is

based—as it would be based, as the Leader of the Opposition made clear—on article 51 after a request from Kuwait. The right hon. Member for Leeds, East (Mr. Healey) in his interesting speech—the former beachmaster at Salerno and at Anzio, even more dangerous—speaking with the authority of having been under fire, made the same point. Just for a moment I thought that he was going to say that we must go back for another resolution under any circumstances, but he did not. He said that we must get as much support as we can. That must be the objective of British, American and Arab League majority diplomacy. However, what we must not do is to take the further fatal step of predicting now that in every circumstance we must go back for a new resolution. That would be most unwise.

Ms. Short: Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Waldegrave: The hon. Member for Hamilton did not give way. [Interruption.] He was not asked to give way, but I shall give way to the hon. Lady.

Ms. Short: The Minister said earlier that it would be a mistake to allow Saddam Hussein to stand on the moral high ground. He must know that the real danger is that many people in the Arab world believe that the west is deeply hypocritical because of its different evaluation of the situation of the Palestinians in the occupied territories and the situation in Kuwait. Does he not agree that the west could be accused of bias, that it needs to stand firm on international law and that it would be a disaster, unless there were further aggression, if there were to be any offensive military action without a United Nations resolution and without the agreement of the whole of the Arab world?

Mr. Waldegrave: I have just explained why the opposite would be a disaster—a far more profound disaster that might endanger the whole operation and put the basis of international order at risk: that is, if we were to try now to play the game of prediction as to what exactly the circumstances would be in which sanctions were presumably being judged by the wider community not to be working and we went for further action. We cannot judge that now. I shall return to the other issues in the middle east. That is vital. The hon. Lady has made a point with which I have more sympathy to which I shall return in a moment.

Let us not forget that the refugees are Saddam Hussein's refugees. It is a most attractive capacity of the western democracies to take all burdens upon themselves and usually to blame themselves for everything. We are already talking as if in some way we are responsible for those refugees. We are not: Saddam Hussein caused those children to die in the desert by driving out Palestinians, Egyptians, Indians and Philipinos who were working and supporting their families back home with remittances.

We must act and we must, above all, help the nations from which those people come to get them home. We do not want to institutionalise this crisis. We do not want another lot of Gaza camps with permanent refugees in the area. We want to help them get home. That is why the money that my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister announced today is going not to the non-governmental organisations in the ordinary way of a famine crisis but to a specific organisation designed to deal with this situation

—the International Organisation for Migration, which was set up in 1951 to deal with displaced people. We have given it that money to help those migrants get home.

As my right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath) said, an airlift may be needed. We may have to help the poor countries from which many of the refugees come to finance that airlift, and we will do so. Several hon. Members said that we must help and we will do so.

Mr. Robert Hughes (Aberdeen, North): I do not dissent from the proposition that the refugees are Saddam's refugees. While there must be a massive airlift to get them home, they must remain alive to be taken home. We have a desperate responsibility to do that for the refugees now and to sustain them.

Mr. Waldegrave: We already are. The Overseas Development Administration has joined many others in the world in providing immediate aid, which is arriving. The refugees are trying to get home. That is what they want and it is the best way of preventing the tragedy from continuing indefinitely. We have given that money to the International Organisation for Migration as well as to the immediate humanitarian organisations—the Red Crescent, Red Cross, Oxfam and so on—to support them in the meantime.

That brings me, naturally, to a subject of some interest to my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer and to every taxpayer in this country—burden sharing; who is going to pay. After the titanic contribution of the United States, we have made perhaps the second largest contribution in terms of military aid. The French have also provided major military support, but it is legitimate to look to countries that have not provided very much on the military side, and that point was made by the right hon. Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney. It is legitimate to say to them, "The world is under pressure: what will you do to help?" I shall go at some intolerable hour tomorrow morning to Rome, fortified by the support of the Leader of the Opposition, to address in tactful style, I hope, with some of our colleagues the idea that, although no frigates are available, some money could be supplied.

I must pay tribute to the Japanese, who have already talked in large sums. This is perhaps the first international crisis in which the Japanese, who are talking in terms of \$1 billion, have started to put big money on the line. The fact that the Japanese, for the first time, are saying, "We share the responsibility with the rest of the world for seeing this matter through" seems a very important step forward. Others, we hope, will follow. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister made that point very clearly in her speech.

The hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood (Ms. Short) and other hon. Members referred to the underlying tensions in the middle east, which it is not unfair to say have contributed to regimes such as that of Saddam Hussein. It is easy to try to shift the blame from individuals and say that they are created by the conditions, and we must not fall for that, but it is noticeable that regimes in the middle east, with the great exception of Egypt, have become more radical since the Arab-Israeli wars and the further defeats and humiliations, as they were seen in so many parts of the Arab world, of Arab people. I am not saying that those wars were caused by the Israelis, but the conflict, and injustices to the Palestinians that have emerged out of it have contributed to the situation.

[Mr. Waldegrave]

Three or four months ago, my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary came back from the middle east and rightly described the whole region as a tinder box. My right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup, the Leader of the Opposition, and the right hon. Member for Leeds, East, in a powerful speech, all made that point. The hon. Member for Dundee, West (Mr. Ross) rightly pointed out that two wrongs cannot make a right, so although that situation has not been corrected, it does not undermine the rightness of the action that we are taking in regard to Saddam Hussein.

The hon. Member for Warley, East made his point in his inimitable style but many others made it slightly more moderately and carried the House with them more. One factor that has emerged today is an extraordinary unity across the parties on the issue of the injustices done to the Palestinian people.

Mr. Faulds: The right hon. Member has referred to me twice, and I am grateful to him for giving way. If he disagrees so much with the burden of my speech, would he care to make his own comments on the implications for the situation in the Gulf of the strategic alliance between Israel and the United States?

Mr. Waldegrave: The interesting point about it is that it has no implications. What strikes me is what a small part Israel is playing in any of these events. That may lead certain people in the United States Congress to learn a lesson. Some people think of their relationship with Israel in terms of a strategic alliance, but they should realise that it is not particularly useful if it cannot be used in a crisis like this. In such a situation, the United States is bound to want invitations from the Arab nations, and to seek allies in the wider Arab world. The dog that has not barked in the night is interesting. Israel has kept out of this because, as has been said, were it to be involved, the result would be consequences and instabilities that would be difficult to handle.

With the support of the House, my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary asked me to establish contacts with the PLO leadership after it had made the Geneva declaration and its London declaration about its new strategy in relation to a peace process. Therefore, along with many others, I was saddened by the way in which the PLO missed a wonderful opportunity, which it should have judged right. Palestine is a small country, resting on international law and suppressed by a stronger neighbour, and if the Palestinians had stood by that international law, they could have pointed out to the international community that they had supported this principle when it cost them a great deal and now they should be helped. Their already just case would then have been unanswerable in all the forums and Parliaments of the world. Many in the Palestinian movement are beginning to understand that, and are shifting their position. We understand the pressures on that disparate movement, but many hon. Members have, like myself and many of my Palestinian friends, have been disappointed by the position taken initially by the leadership of the PLO. We hope to see that position revised. I was glad to see that the Opposition did not pursue that line.

The right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) made an interesting speech the other day. He

did not, in a Saddam Hussein way, want to link the issues together, but he called for a conference to look at all the wider issues at the same time. Mr. Shevardnadze made a slightly similar speech.

Mr. Kinnoek: My right hon. Friend said it first.

Mr. Waldegrave: I think that the right hon. Member for Gorton came first.

Who knows what the correct conference structures will be? I beg the right hon. Gentleman—and I think that he shares this view—to agree that we should not be trying to introduce grand conferences and complicated issues before we have settled the issue of the sovereignty of Kuwait.

Mr. Gerald Kaufman (Manchester, Gorton) *indicated assent.*

Mr. Waldegrave: I am gratified to see the right hon. Gentleman nodding. Resolution 660, in relation to Kuwait and to Iraq, refers to negotiations when people have returned to their own countries. That is fine. We could then negotiate about any underlying problems that may have contributed to the conflict in the first place. The same is true in relation to the far more complex and deeper issues of the Palestinians in relation to Israel. That must come afterwards and those who seek to drag across the trail the idea of grand conferences at this stage are contributing to what I call the Saddam Hussein strategy of trying to take our eye off the central issue of his aggression, off the central issue of obedience to international law and off the central issue of absolute concurrence with the Security Council resolutions. None of those points can be divided by two, and none is up for negotiation now. It is only when those resolutions are obeyed that other issues can be addressed.

We hope—and I believe that this will be so—that the middle east will never be quite the same again and that the whole world, even those countries that were not concerned and that have not been interested in the problems, will now focus on the underlying causes of conflict, of dissent and of danger in the middle east. If we can bring back, as I am sure that we shall, the Palestinian leadership into a position of diplomacy and of commitment to diplomacy, there will be progress. I hope and pray that that will be so.

Mr. Nellist: Does the right hon. Gentleman agree that the central issue is not what he has just described? It is not about democracy. There was precious little of that in Kuwait even before the invasion. The central issue is cheap oil. Does the right hon. Gentleman agree with a former United States Assistant Defence Secretary? He said that it boils down to the great powers defending their interests and that if Kuwait grew carrots, we would not give a damn.

Mr. Waldegrave: The central issue of of obedience to international law. The hon. Member for Coventry, South-East (Mr. Nellist) will find flip remarks from former politicians round the world. If Saddam Hussein and the current leadership of Iraq are allowed to win against the painfully assembled forces of international legality, the world faces anarchy. All that Saddam Hussein has to do is to withdraw. That is a clear issue.

These events will define the nature of the world that will succeed the world in which I was brought up and in which I now live—the world of the cold war. This is a defining event. We cannot allow the forces of international law to

be faced down and we cannot allow the United Nations in its first rebirth, to be defeated. Ernie Bevin must be proud of what is happening now at the United Nations. This is what the founding fathers meant it to do. If the first time that we have this unity, with the Security Council working as it is supposed to work and with the military staff committee for the first time in its history meeting with a substantive agenda, we allow them to be defeated, the world will face unparalleled anarchy. That cannot happen.

Aggression must not be allowed to pay. We must not let the message get out that the old stalemate of the cold war was the only way to keep peace. We hear backward-looking people—funny old Russian generals with rows of medals—say, "Those were the days."

Mr. Canavan: And others.

Mr. Waldegrave: Doubtless there are equivalents elsewhere. They say, "Let us go back to the safe old days of the cold war." If that is the message, what a depressing message it will be. Without the cold war, there is far more

room for flexibility, for danger, for shifts, for movements and for changing alliances, so we need the structure of international co-operation and of international law.

There is no question about on which side of the argument the House and the Government come down. Our hearts are out there with our hostages, but their safety and the safety of innumerable innocent people round the world depend on the strength of the House and its equivalents in the other nations of the alliance which is supporting international law. If anarchy is loosed upon the world, not only their lives will be at risk but innumerable unpredictable other people's lives will be at risk for ever.

Some people doubt the staying power of democracy. I do not. Democracies are slow to anger but, once angered, they go on right to the end of the road. The message has gone from the House today that this British democracy is ready to play its part in that process. I do not doubt that the House and the British people will see it through.

It being Ten o'clock, MR. SPEAKER adjourned the House without Question put, pursuant to the Resolution this day.

Adjourned accordingly till tomorrow.