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ANGLO-SOVIET PLANNING TALKS: THE GULF

1. At the Anglo-Soviet planning talks on 8 October Tarasenko was particularly outspoken on the Gulf. Although he may be ahead of thinking in the Soviet MFA, he is Shevardnadze's closest adviser and their views are probably similar. He had just returned from Shevardnadze's meetings with Baker in New York and his own separate meetings with Ross.

2. The following were his main points on the more immediate issues:

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a) Saddam Hussein must not come out of the crisis a hero, like Nasser. The worst possible scenario would be one in which Saddam withdrew from Kuwait but remained in power with his arsenal untouched.

b) We needed a complete settlement to the crisis, not just Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait. We should demand certain things from Saddam before we would withdraw from the region, including a regional security structure, renunciation of CW and nuclear weapons etc. Sanctions should not be relaxed until these conditions had been met and satisfactory compensation had been agreed.

c) The military option was a real possibility. International forces could not stay in the region indefinitely. It was hard to imagine that by next spring nothing would have happened. Shevarnadze was afraid that Saddam Hussein would strike out at Israel as an act of desperation.

d) The Soviet Government was ready to participate militarily in action taken under Article 42, including the provision of ground forces. This would however require the consent of the Supreme Soviet and there might be problems there. Deputies would object to military action outside the Soviet Union but they might be able to sell it in the context of a Soviet contribution to UN forces more generally. Even if the Soviet Union did not participate the West should go ahead under Article 42. We should begin informal consultations amongst the UNSC5 soon. Consultations should be kept informal so that, if agreement proved impossible, the prospects for action under Article 51 should not be badly damaged. He believed the Chinese might abstain but would not vote against it. They feared isolation. We should look for an enabling resolution that gave no hint on the timing of an attack. The Soviet Union would not object in principle to action under Article 51 (though they would not be able to welcome it in public).

e) He envisaged national contingents acting under national command. Soviet forces could not come under US command. Some practical coordination arrangements in the region would have to be worked out on the spot. The UN Military Staff Committee would exercise political coordination functions but would not directly command forces.

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f) He expected Saddam to let Soviet hostages out gradually. The Soviet expatriates in Iraq were claiming that they had been abandoned by the government, but when it had been possible for them to leave they had refused to do so. There was considerable support for Iraq in Soviet military and the military-industrial circles. The government would be criticised in the Supreme Soviet for its failure to look after its people.

3. On the longer term issues, his main points were:

a) We should create a regional security structure. US ground forces could not remain in the region indefinitely. It might take 3 to 5 years to create such a structure.

b) A key element in the new security structure should be the renunciation of CW, BW and nuclear weapons and limits on armed forces (possibly based on a sufficiency rule). There should be a strict verification regime allowing access to any site in Iraq. There might be differentiated zones in the region with tighter verification in the centre and less rigorous measures at the periphery. Verification could be undertaken by neutral parties or by the UNSC5. All countries in the region should participate. The Israelis should see it as in their interests to go along with it.

c) As part of an overall package there would have to be progress on Arab/Israel. The Russians were no longer pushing for an international conference. They favoured a flexible approach beginning with practical confidence building measures on the ground. Without progress on substance a Conference would solve nothing: trying to get it organised would create new problems and would distract attention from the real issues.

d) The Americans had told them that they had decided to push the Israelis towards acceptance of CSBMs. They would start a dialogue with Israel as soon as they had concrete ideas, and had asked the Russians if they had any proposals. The PLO had made a terrible mistake and would pay for it.

e) He believed the crisis would have long term consequences for Iraq and for the region. The existing party and military structures would collapse. If Saddam Hussein was toppled new people would appear. This did

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not mean Iraq would become a democracy in one step. It would probably pass through a number of mixed regimes but the changes would be in the direction of democracy; we should encourage this. Likewise, while the Russians supported the reinstatement of the Al Sabah in Kuwait he doubted they had a long term future.

4. Tarasenko's comments on other issues are covered in a separate minute.

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