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TELNO 2487

OF 151600Z OCTOBER 90
INFO PRIORITY BAGHDAD, PARIS, MOSCOW, AMMAN, CAIRO, RIYADH, ACTOR

YOUR TELNO. 978 TO BAGHDAD: CONVEYING MESSAGES TO
SADDAM HUSSEIN

SUMMARY

1. US AGREEMENT WITH OUR DIAGNOSIS. EFFECT OF SANCTIONS SO FAR LIMITED. SEVERAL CHANNELS TO SADDAM HUSSEIN. PRIMAKOV ACHIEVED LITTLE. DOUBTS AS TO VALUE OF A MEETING AT THE PRESENT TIME.

DETAIL

2. WE HAVE GONE THROUGH THE POINTS IN YOUR TELEGRAM UNDER REFERENCE WITH THE STATE DEPARTMENT. THE MINISTER SUBSEQUENTLY CALLED ON ASSISTANT SECRETARY KELLY ON 12 OCTOBER FOR AN ACCOUNT OF AMERICAN THINKING.

3. KELLY SAID THE US AND OUR OWN ANALYSES OF SADDAM HUSSEIN'S MAKE UP WERE VERY CLOSE. THERE COULD IN PARTICULAR BE NO QUESTION AS TO THE NEED AND THE DIFFICULTY FOR US TO GET THROUGH TO HIM THE DETERMINATION AND UNITY OF THE INTERNATIONAL COALITION RANGED AGAINST HIM, AND OF THE REAL POSSIBILITY OF MILITARY ACTION TO EXPEL THE IRAQIS FROM KUWAIT IF NECESSARY. BUT IT WAS ONE THING TO AGREE ON THE OBJECTIVE AND ANOTHER TO DECIDE HOW BEST TO REALISE IT. IF HE WERE A RATIONAL MAN HE WOULD REALISE ALREADY HOW MUCH SANCTIONS WERE HURTING HIS COUNTRY. THE LOSS OF REVENUE WAS ENORMOUS. THE DIRECT EFFECT MIGHT BE LIMITED AS YET, ALTHOUGH THERE WERE ACCOUNTS OF PROBLEMS IN SOME AREAS, INCLUDING SPARE PARTS. BUT THE CUMULATIVE RESULTS WOULD BE CONSIDERABLE. THE TROUBLE WAS OF COURSE THAT, SO FAR AT LEAST, HUSSEIN DID NOT SEEM DISPOSED TO BE RATIONAL.

4. KELLY REMARKED THAT THERE WERE PLENTY OF CHANNELS OPEN TO SADDAM HUSSEIN. HE MENTIONED THE TUNISIANS, ALGERIANS, ROMANIANS, PERHAPS THE SWEDES, AND THE YEMENIS. HE DID NOT THINK THE FRENCH HAD CURRENT CONTACTS. WOOD COMMENTED THIS WAS HIS UNDERSTANDING AS WELL. THE JORDANIANS, TOO, SAID KELLY SEEMED TO HAVE BACKED OFF REALISING THAT THEIR RELATIONS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES WERE BEING HARMED AND THAT THEY WERE GETTING NOWHERE. BUT HE HAD LITTLE DOUBT THEY WOULD BE PREPARED TO RETURN TO THE CHARGE IF THERE WERE ANY HOPE OF PROGRESS. AND

THE RUSSIANS HAD HAD GOOD LINKS. BUT PRIMAKOV HAD GOT NOWHERE. INSTEAD, THERE WERE SIGNS THAT THE IRAQIS WERE THREATENING TO PUT THE RUSSIANS IN THE SAME CATEGORY AS THE WEST. NONETHELESS HIS CENTRAL POINT REMAINED VALID, THAT EFFECTIVE LINES FOR COMMUNICATION REMAINED OPEN IF AND WHEN THE TIME CAME FOR DIALOGUE.

5. KELLY SAID THAT, DEPENDING ON THE REACTIONS OF OTHERS TO WHOM WE HAD BEEN TALKING, IT WOULD SEEM PREMATURE TO CALL A SPECIAL MEETING AT OFFICIAL LEVEL IN LONDON TO CONSIDER THE MATTER FURTHER. HE THOUGHT WE NEEDED SOMETHING MORE CONCRETE THAN WE AT PRESENT HAD TO WORK WITH. MEANWHILE THE BUILD UP OF PRESSURE FROM THE UN, SANCTIONS, AS WELL AS THE MILITARY BUILD UP TOLD THEIR OWN STORY WHICH HUSSEIN COULD NOT ENTIRELY IGNORE. WOOD SAID THAT HE EXPECTED WE WOULD WANT TO REFLECT ON REACTIONS TO OUR INITIAL SOUNDINGS. WE MIGHT WANT TO RAISE THE QUESTION AGAIN ONCE THE SITUATION HAD MATURED FURTHER AND WE WERE IN A POSITION TO MAKE MORE CONCRETE SUGGESTIONS AS TO THE TIMING, LEVEL AND AGENDA OF ANY POSSIBLE MEETING.

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