

## ADVANCE COPY

UNCLASSIFIED  
FM BAGHDAD  
TO DESKBY 211630Z FCO  
TELNO 1904  
OF 211530Z OCTOBER 90  
INFO IMMEDIATE AMMAN, UKMIS NEW YORK

MY TELNO 1903: MR HEATH'S PRESS CONFERENCE

## SUMMARY

1. MR HEATH SAYS THAT HE RECEIVED AN ASSURANCE FROM SADDAM THAT A NUMBER OF DETAINEES WOULD BE RELEASED. NO INDICATIONS OF A CHANGE IN SADDAM'S POSITION ON WITHDRAWAL FROM KUWAIT.

## DETAIL

2. THE BRITISH MEDIA WILL NO DOUBT REPORT EXHAUSTIVELY THE PRESS CONFERENCE MR HEATH GAVE THIS AFTERNOON AFTER HIS MEETING WITH SADDAM. 2 SEC WAS PRESENT AND THE FOLLOWING ARE WHAT HE CONSIDERED THE MOST IMPORTANT POINTS.

3. MR HEATH SAID THAT HE HAD MET SADDAM FOR THREE HOURS. THE FOREIGN MINISTER AND THE PRESIDENT'S PRIVATE SECRETARY HAD ALSO BEEN PRESENT. MR HEATH SAID HE HAD RAISED THE QUESTION NOT ONLY OF BRITONS BUT ALSO CERTAIN OTHER NATIONALS TRAPPED IN IRAQ. HE HAD HANDED OVER ALL HIS LISTS OF DETAINEES AND ADDED THAT DISCUSSIONS WERE CURRENTLY TAKING PLACE TO DECIDE WHO MIGHT BE RELEASED. MR HEATH GAVE NO INDICATION OF NUMBERS INVOLVED NOR COULD HE GIVE DETAILS OF EITHER THE NAMES OR THE CATEGORIES UNDER CONSIDERATION, HOWEVER, HE EXPECTED TO RETURN TO THE UK ON THE MORNING OF 23 OCTOBER AND HAD RECEIVED AN ASSURANCE FROM SADDAM THAT SOME DETAINEES WOULD TRAVEL WITH HIM .

4. IN ANSWER TO FURTHER QUESTIONS MR HEATH SAID THAT SADDAM HAD ASKED FOR NOTHING IN RETURN FOR THE RELEASE OF THE HOSTAGES. MR HEATH SAID HE HAD EXPLAINED THAT THERE WERE CERTAIN GROUPS OF QUOTE GUESTS UNQUOTE WHO OUGHT TO RETURN TO THE UK AND THAT THEIR CONTINUED DETENTION CREATED ILL FEELING AMONGST THE BRITISH PUBLIC. SADDAM HAD BEEN SYMPATHETIC TO THIS ARGUMENT AND HAD INDICATED THAT HE MIGHT BE PREPARED TO MAKE FURTHER GESTURES IN THE FUTURE.

5. MR HEATH SAID THAT IN THEIR DISCUSSION ON A SOLUTION TO THE GULF

CRISIS, SADDAM HAD DISPLACED VERY DETAILED KNOWLEDGE OF THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION. HE RECOGNISED THAT MR HEATH HELD NO POLITICAL OFFICE AND REPRESENTED NOONE BUT HIMSELF. SADDAM HAD EXPLAINED HIS POSITION ON THE GULF CRISIS AND HAD CLEARLY INDICATED THAT HE RECOGNISED THE DANGERS OF WAR AND THE DISASTROUS EFFECT THAT THIS MIGHT HAVE ON THE REGION AND ON THE WORLD ECONOMY. HOWEVER, HE GAVE NO INDICATION THAT HE WAS CONSIDERING ANY WITHDRAWAL FROM KUWAIT. SADDAM HAD INDICATED NO CHANGES IN HIS POSITION BUT HAD PLACED CONSIDERABLE EMPHASIS ON THE NEED FOR DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITY. HE HAD EXPRESSED HIS DESIRE FOR A STABLE ORDER IN THE REGION AS A WHOLE. HE WAS PREPARED TO DISCUSS WITH ARAB STATES WHAT THIS ORDER SHOULD BE AND HAD RECOGNISED THE DIFFICULTIES INVOLVED IN BRINGING ABOUT A SOLUTION TO THE ARAB/ ISRAEL DISPUTE. SADDAM HAD NOT SPECIFICALLY LINKED THIS WITH THE CRISIS IN THE GULF.

6. FOR HIS PART, MR HEATH SAID THAT HAD EMPHASISED THE NEED FOR A PEACEFUL SOLUTION, A POSITION ALSO ADOPTED BY THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL. HE HAD ALSO STRESSED THE NEED FOR COMPLIANCE WITH UNSCR 660. IN ANSWER TO A QUESTION, MR HEATH ADMITTED HE HAD NOT DISCUSSED THE ISSUE OF HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN KUWAIT WITH SADDAM, BUT SAID THAT HE HAD DONE SO THE PREVIOUS EVENING DURING HIS MEETING WITH TARIQ AZIZ. IN CONCLUSION, MR HEATH SAID THAT HE HOPED NOW THAT HE HAD ACHIEVED EVERYTHING HE HAD SET OUT TO DO DURING HIS VISIT: HE DID NOT ENVISAGE A FURTHER MEETING WITH SADDAM.

WALKER

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