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YOUR TELNO 868: AD HOC MEETING OF MILITARY STAFF COMMITTEE (MSC): 29
OCTOBER

SUMMARY

1. CONSULTATIONS OF MILITARY STAFF COMMITTEE (MSC) MEMBERS. LENGTHY SOVIET STATEMENT, CALLING AGAIN FOR REACTIVATION OF MSC AND STUDY OF MEANS OF AVOIDING ACCIDENTIAL HOSTILITIES IN THE GULF. EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION ON DEPLOYMENTS AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EMBARGO. SHARED ASSESSMENT THAT SANCTIONS ARE SLOWLY BEGINNING TO TAKE EFFECT.

DETAIL

2. MEMBERS OF THE MSC DULY MET FOR CONSULTATIONS FOR NEARLY TWO HOURS ON THE AFTERNOON OF 29 OCTOBER. OPENING THE MEETING, BLANC (FRANCE) REFERRED TO THE CO-OPERATION AND SOLIDARITY OF THE FIVE IN FACING THE GULF CRISIS. THE NEW SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION ADOPTED EARLIER IN THE DAY DEMANDED THAT IRAQ COMPLY OR FACE ADDITIONAL MEASURES TAKEN IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CHARTER. THE PRESENT MEETING, WHICH TOOK PLACE BY FORTUNATE COINCIDENCE ON THE SAME DAY, CLEARLY SIGNALLED THE DETERMINATION OF THE FIVE TO WORK TOGETHER UNTIL IRAQ BACKED DOWN.

3. ADMIRAL COATANEA (FRENCH DIRECTOR OF THE JOINT STAFF) THEN PROPOSED THAT DISCUSSION SHOULD COVER THREE ITEMS:

- (A) THE SITUATION IN THE GULF AND THE DEPLOYMENT OF FORCES THERE.
- (B) THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NAVAL AND AIR EMBARGO:
- (C) THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EMBARGO AND ITS CONSEQUENCES FOR IRAQ'S CAPABILITIES.

VORONTSOV (SOVIET UNION) SAID HIS MILITARY REPRESENTATIVE WOULD PREFER TO BEGIN WITH A MORE GENERAL STATEMENT.

SOVIET STATEMENT

4. COLONEL-GENERAL OMELICHEV (FIRST DEPUTY CHIEF OF THE SOVIET GENERAL STAFF) SAID HE WISHED TO UNDERLINE THE SPECIAL QUALITY OF THE MEETING. THE FACT THAT IT TOOK PLACE AT SUCH A HIGH LEVEL DEMONSTRATED THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE SITUATION AND A SHARED DETERMINATION TO REACH A SETTLEMENT. THE MEETING SHOULD BE A POWERFUL SIGNAL TO SADDAM HUSSEIN THAT HE MUST OBSERVE IN FULL THE SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS ON KUWAIT. THE GULF CRISIS HAD EXTENDED BEYOND ITS REGIONAL BOUNDARIES, AND DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY AFFECTED THE INTERESTS OF THE WHOLE WORLD. DESPITE THE FACT THAT THE IRAQ ECONOMY HAD BEGUN TO FEEL THE EFFECT OF SANCTIONS, SADDAM HUSSEIN WAS ADOPTING A WAIT-AND-SEE POLICY, WHILE AVOIDING GIVING ANY PRETEXT FOR THE LAUNCHING OF MILITARY OPERATIONS. HE WAS HOPING FOR AN INCREASE IN PRO-ISLAMIC SENTIMENTS. IRAQ'S INTRANSIGENCE INCREASED THE RISK OF AN ARMED CLASH. IRAQI ATTEMPTS TO BREAK THE BLOCKADE WITH THE HELP OF IRAN HAD NOT YET BROUGHT RESULTS.

5. OMELICHEV SAID THAT IN THE SOVIET VIEW THE SITUATION IN THE GULF WAS AN EXPLOSIVE ONE CARRYING THE RISK OF MILITARY CONFLICT. THE POSSIBILITY COULD NOT BE EXCLUDED THAT IRAQ WOULD DELIVER A PRE-EMPTIVE STRIKE, USING MISSILES OR CHEMICAL WEAPONS, AGAINST OIL INSTALLATIONS, THE FORCES IN THE AREA OR EVEN ISRAEL. AN OUTBREAK OF HOSTILITIES MIGHT RESULT FROM IRAQI PROVOCATION, OR MIGHT EVEN BE ACCIDENTAL. AGGRESSION HAD BEEN LOCALISED AND THE FORCES IN THE REGION WERE NOW SUFFICIENT FOR EFFECTIVE DEFENCE. BUT THE MILITARY BUILD-UP AND THE INCREASE IN TENSION COULD LEAD TO FULL-SCALE CONFLICT. IN ORDER TO AVOID THIS A GROUP OF MILITARY EXPERTS SHOULD BE SET UP UNDER THE MSC TO CONSIDER HOW TO AVERT ANY SUCH INCIDENT. FROM THE BEGINNING THE SOVIET UNION HAD LAID THE EMPHASIS ON COLLECTIVE EFFORTS TO SOLVE THE CRISIS BY NON-MILITARY MEANS. MILITARY AND TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION WITH IRAQ HAD BEEN SUSPENDED, MILITARY EQUIPMENT BEING DELIVERED TO IRAQ HAD BEEN RETURNED TO THE SOVIET UNION, AND SOVIET SPECIALISTS WERE RETURNING HOME AS THEIR CONTRACTS CAME TO AN END.

6. OMELICHEV SAID THAT IN PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES ACTIVATION OF THE MSC COULD INCREASE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EFFORTS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AGAINST IRAQ. THIS HAD LONG BEEN A SOVIET WISH. THE MSC HAD NEVER EVEN CONSIDERED THE GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF PLACING ARMED FORCES AT THE DISPOSAL OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL. BUT RECENT EVENTS HAD MADE CLEAR THAT WITHOUT RECOURSE TO THE MSC THE COUNCIL COULD NOT CARRY OUT THE FUNCTIONS ENVISAGED BY THE CHARTER. THE MSC SHOULD NOW CONSIDER MECHANISMS TO CO-ORDINATE EFFECTIVE

MEASURES AGAINST IRAQ: HOW TO PREVENT THE USE OF FORCE OR RESORT TO CONFLICT IN THE GULF: AND THE CONSEQUENCES OF DIFFERENT OPTIONS OPEN TO THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY. IF THE CRISIS DID LEAD TO LARGE-SCALE MILITARY ACTION THE WHOLE WORLD WOULD BE AFFECTED. THE WAR WOULD BE A LONG ONE. EVEN CONVENTIONAL WAR WOULD LEAD TO NUMEROUS LOSSES AND CREATE ECONOMIC PRESSURES: IT WAS UNLIKELY TO RECEIVE THE SUPPORT OF THE PUBLIC. THEREFORE ALL PEACEFUL MEANS SHOULD BE SOUGHT TO RESOLVE THE CRISIS WITHOUT USE OF ARMED FORCE. THE USE OF FORCE SHOULD ONLY BE THE VERY LAST RESORT.

SITUATION IN THE GULF

7. AFTER THIS STATEMENT, WHICH DID NOT GIVE RISE TO COMMENT, DISCUSSION TURNED TO THE SITUATION IN THE GULF AND THE DEPLOYMENT OF FORCES. AT THE REQUEST OF THE CHAIRMAN, MAJOR GENERAL BECKETT (UNITED KINGDOM) GAVE DETAILS OF OUR LAND AND AIR DISPOSITIONS, AS OUTLINED IN PARA 3 OF TUR. LIEUTENANT-GENERAL CARNS (DIRECTOR OF THE U S JOINT STAFF) RECALLED THAT U S FORCES WERE IN THE REGION TO DETER FUTURE IRAQI AGGRESSION, TO DEFEND SAUDI ARABIA AND TO ENFORCE UN RESOLUTIONS. HE ESTIMATED THAT IRAQ NOW HAD MORE THAN 400,000 TROOPS, 3,500 TANKS AND 2,500 ARMoured VEHICLES IN KUWAIT. IT WAS SEEKING TO ELIMINATE KUWAIT'S SENSE OF IDENTITY. THE UNITED STATES WAS HEARTENED BY THE SUPPORT IT HAD RECEIVED FROM THE UNITED NATIONS AND FROM MANY COUNTRIES CONTRIBUTING FORCES OR SUPPORT.

8. COATANEA SAID THAT ALTHOUGH IRAQI FORCES WERE IN A DEFENSIVE POSTURE, THEY COULD ADOPT AN OFFENSIVE ATTITUDE VERY QUICKLY. THE CALM IN THE REGION WAS PRECARIOUS. IRAQ HAD NO OBJECTIVE INTERESTS IN UNLEASHING HOSTILITIES WHICH WOULD LEAD TO THE DESTRUCTION OF ITS ARMED FORCES OR ITS DEFENCE POTENTIAL BUT IF HE WAS THREATENED BY POPULAR UNREST, OR IN THE HOPE OF BRINGING ABOUT ARAB SOLIDARITY, SADDAM HUSSEIN MIGHT ATTACK THE ALLIED TROOPS. COATANEA THEN DESCRIBED FRENCH DEPLOYMENTS IN THE REGION.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EMBARGO

9. ASKED TO SPEAK FIRST, BECKETT SPOKE ON THE LINES OF PARAS 4 TO 7 OF TUR. CARNS AND COATANEA THEN GAVE THEIR OWN STATISTICS RELATING TO NAVAL ENFORCEMENT. (THESE WILL ALREADY BE AVAILABLE TO YOU). COATANEA ADDED THAT FRANCE SHARED OUR CONCERNS ON UNUSUAL AIR ACTIVITY, IN PARTICULAR FLIGHTS FROM SUDAN TO JORDAN.

EFFECTS OF THE EMBARGO

10. BECKETT SPOKE AS IN PARA 8 OF TUR (BUT DRAWING ATTENTION TO THE REPORTED REVERSAL OF THE IMPOSITION OF PETROL RATIONING). CARNS

SAID HE AGREED THAT SANCTIONS WERE NOT YET HAVING A CLEAR EFFECT. SIGNS OF STRAIN IN IRAQ WERE ONLY GRADUALLY APPEARING. BUT SANCTIONS ALSO HAD THEIR PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECT. IRAQ SHOULD NOT FEEL THAT THE PRESSURES UPON IT WERE STATIC. ALTHOUGH OMELICHEV HAD SAID SUFFICIENT FORCES WERE IN THE AREA FOR DEFENSIVE PURPOSES, IT WOULD KEEP UP THE PSYCHOLOGICAL PRESSURE IF ADDITIONAL COUNTRIES SENT TROOPS. FOR EXAMPLE, SYRIA WAS READY TO DEPLOY ITS FORCES AND SAUDI ARABIA HAD OFFERED TO PAY FOR THE AIRLIFT. IT WOULD BE VERY HELPFUL IF THE SOVIET UNION COULD ASSIST SYRIA IN THIS WAY. AND SINCE SYRIA USED SOVIET EQUIPMENT, PERHAPS THE RUSSIANS COULD PROVIDE LOGISTICAL AND SPARES SUPPORT.

11. OMELICHEV SAID THAT THE SOVIET NAVAL PRESENCE IN THE REGION WAS VERY LIMITED AND THEREFORE COULD NOT PLAY A LARGE PART IN SURVEILLANCE. IT HAD THE LIMITED TASK OF SAFEGUARDING THE NAVIGATION OF SOVIET VESSELS. BUT HE AGREED THAT SANCTIONS WERE BEGINNING TO BRING RESULTS EVEN THOUGH THE FINAL OUTCOME WAS UNCLEAR. ON THE U S SUGGESTION OF ASSISTANCE TO SYRIA, IT WAS UP TO SYRIA TO DECIDE HOW HER TROOPS SHOULD BE TRANSPORTED. SINCE THE SOVIET POSITION WAS NOT TO SEND ANY MILITARY CONTINGENT TO THE AREA THE PROPOSAL WAS 'A BIT AHEAD OF TIME'. IT WAS UP TO SYRIA TO DISPOSE OF THE MILITARY SPARES WHICH WERE DELIVERED FROM THE SOVIET UNION.

12. COATANEA SAID HE SHARED THE GENERAL ANALYSIS ON THE EFFECT OF THE EMBARGO. THE MOST VULNERABLE PART OF THE IRAQI ARMED SERVICES WAS THE AIR FORCE, IN PARTICULAR THE NAVIGATION AND WEAPON SYSTEMS OF THE MOST MODERN AIRCRAFT. MECHANISED AND ARMED ELEMENTS OF THE IRAQI FORCES WERE LESS AFFECTED, AS WERE AIR DEFENCE OR MISSILE SYSTEMS. IRAQ WOULD THUS RETAIN CONSIDERABLE POTENTIAL EVEN IF ITS AIRPOWER WAS DIMINISHED. WHERE THE EFFECTS ON INDUSTRY WAS CONCERNED, THE EMBARGO WAS HAVING A CLEAR IMPACT ON THE OIL SECTOR AND CERTAIN SHORTAGES (EG OF TYRES AND BEARINGS) COULD SOON APPEAR. THERE WAS UNLIKELY TO BE ANY REAL FOOD SHORTAGES BEFORE EARLY 1991. BUT THE PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS SHOULD NOT BE UNDER-ESTIMATED. PRICE RISES AND THE UNEQUAL DISTRIBUTION OF COMMODITIES COULD CAUSE POPULAR DISCONTENT. THERE MIGHT BE A GROWING REALISATION THAT IRAQ'S DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL AND ITS PLACE IN THE REGION WERE BEING UNDERMINED. THE EMBARGO STRATEGY WAS THUS BEGINNING TO HAVE EFFECT. BUT IT WAS INEVITABLY A LONG-TERM ONE WHICH NEEDED PATIENCE.

13. AT THE END OF THE DISCUSSION DU (CHINA) ASKED TO MAKE A GENERAL STATEMENT. HE SAID THAT ALTHOUGH CHINA HAD NO FORCES IN THE GULF IT WAS MUCH CONCERNED BY THE EVOLUTION OF THE POLITICAL AND

MILITARY SITUATION THERE. THE MAJOR QUESTION WAS HOW TO DEFUSE THE CRISIS IN A JUST AND PEACEFUL MANNER. THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT STOOD FOR THE SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES BY PEACEFUL MEANS. THERE SHOULD BE A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF THE GULF CRISIS ON THE BASIS OF SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS. CHINA WAS AGAINST THE USE OF FORCE. CHINA SUPPORTED THE GOOD OFFICES OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL AND THE EFFORTS OF THE ARAB AND GULF STATES TO REACH A SETTLEMENT. SO LONG AS THERE WAS STILL A RAY OF HOPE, EFFORTS TO SEEK A PEACEFUL SOLUTION SHOULD NOT SLACKEN. PERMANENT MEMBERS OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL SHARED A SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND SHOULD CO-OPERATE MORE CLOSELY TO BRING ABOUT A PEACEFUL RESOLUTION OF THE CRISIS.

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