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MY TELNO 2617: IRAQ/KUWAIT: STATEMENTS BY THE PRESIDENT AND  
BAKER  
SUMMARY

1. BUSH AND BAKER TAKE UNCOMPROMISING PUBLIC LINE ON THE NEED FOR IRAQI WITHDRAWAL. PRESS INTERPRET REMARKS AS EMPHASISING THE MILITARY OPTION. SEEN ALSO AS PREPARING PUBLIC OPINION FOR DECISIONS ON POSSIBLE MAJOR INCREASES IN US GROUND FORCES IN THE GULF.

DETAIL

2. PRESIDENT BUSH AND SECRETARY BAKER BOTH ADDRESSED THE GULF CRISIS IN PUBLIC REMARKS MADE IN CALIFORNIA YESTERDAY (29 OCTOBER).

3. THE PRESIDENT SAID AT A PRESS CONFERENCE THAT HE WAS AS DETERMINED AS EVER THAT IRAQI AGGRESSION SHOULD NOT STAND. HE THOUGHT THAT ECONOMIC SANCTIONS, COUPLED WITH WORLDWIDE SOLIDARITY, SHOULD CONVINCE SADDAM HUSSEIN TO WITHDRAW FROM KUWAIT, BUT THERE COULD BE NO PRE-CONDITIONS. HE DISMISSED ANY SUGGESTION THAT THE PRIMAKOV MISSION MIGHT COME UP WITH AN ACCEPTABLE SOLUTION. HE DESCRIBED THE SIEGE OF FOREIGN EMBASSIES IN KUWAIT AS UNCONSCIONABLE AND INHUMANE. ASKED WHETHER HE WOULD USE FORCE WITHOUT CONSULTING CONGRESS, THE PRESIDENT SAID THAT HISTORY WAS REplete WITH EXAMPLES OF THE PRESIDENT HAVING TO TAKE ACTION. QUOTE I'VE DONE THIS IN THE PAST AND CERTAINLY WOULD HAVE NO HESITANCY AT ALL UNQUOTE.

4. SECRETARY BAKER, ADDRESSING THE WORLD AFFAIRS COUNCIL IN LOS ANGELES, SIMILARLY GAVE PROMINENCE TO THE MILITARY OPTION. HE SAID THAT US MILITARY OBJECTIVES WERE TO DETER AN IRAQI ATTACK IN SAUDI ARABIA, TO PROTECT AMERICAN LIVES, AND TO ENSURE THE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF UNSC RESOLUTIONS. BUT MILITARY FORCES WERE ALSO THERE TO PROVIDE AN EFFECTIVE AND DECISIVE MILITARY RESPONSE SHOULD THE SITUATION WARRANT IT. QUOTE SADDAM HUSSEIN MUST REALISE THAT THERE IS A LIMIT TO THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY'S PATIENCE. HE MUST ALSO REALISE THAT SHOULD HE USE CHEMICAL OR BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS, THERE WILL BE THE MOST SEVERE



CONSEQUENCES UNQUOTE. BAKER WENT ON TO SAY THAT, WHILE THE US WOULD STRONGLY PREFER A PEACEFUL SOLUTION, ALL OPTIONS WERE BEING CONSIDERED. QUOTE WE WILL NOT RULE OUT A POSSIBLE USE OF FORCE IF IRAQ CONTINUES TO OCCUPY KUWAIT UNQUOTE.

5. A TOUGHENING OF RHETORIC WAS ALSO EVIDENT IN BAKER'S REMARKS ABOUT IRAQI BEHAVIOUR IN KUWAIT, QUOTE A STORY OF BARBARISM IN ITS MOST CRUDE AND EVIL FORM: THE RAPE OF KUWAIT UNQUOTE, TOGETHER WITH HORROR STORIES ABOUT TREATMENT OF CIVILIANS AND USE OF US CITIZENS AS HUMAN SHIELDS WHICH WAS QUOTE SIMPLY UNCONSCIONABLE UNQUOTE.

COMMENT

6. ALTHOUGH THE REMARKS MAY IN PART BE ATTRIBUTABLE TO DOMESTIC ELECTORAL CONSIDERATIONS AND AN ATTEMPT TO REFOCUS PUBLIC ATTENTION AWAY FROM THE BUDGET DEBACLE, COMMENTATORS HAVE ALSO INTERPRETED THIS AS A PREPARATION FOR DECISIONS ON INCREASED US FORCE LEVELS IN THE GULF. NO ANNOUNCEMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE (AND WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE WHITE HOUSE IS STILL CONSIDERING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM GENERAL POWELL AFTER HIS RECENT VISIT TO THE GULF) BUT THE PRESS ARE NOW TAKING IT FOR GRANTED THAT UP TO 100,000 EXTRA TROOPS WILL BE DISPATCHED. INDEED, CHENEY HAS NOW GONE ON RECORD AS SAYING THAT QUOTE THERE IS NO UPPER LIMIT UNQUOTE.

7. IF FORCE AUGMENTATION IS AGREED TO A SIGNIFICANT CALL UP OF ADDITIONAL RESERVISTS WILL ALSO BE REQUIRED SINCE THESE WOULD PROVIDE THE BULK OF THE COMBAT SUPPORT FOR THE EXTRA DIVISIONS - A FURTHER REASON WHY THE PRESIDENT AND BAKER WOULD WISH TO PREPARE PUBLIC OPINION CAREFULLY.

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