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SIC 19M/A2P

FROM AMBASSADOR IN JEDDA.

IRAQ/KUWAIT: PRIMAKOV TOUR: DISCUSSION WITH PRINCE SAUD.

SUMMARY

1. I SAW PRINCE SAUD FOR OVER AN HOUR IN JEDDA TODAY. HE GAVE A FULL RUN DOWN ON PRIMAKOV'S VISIT AND ON SUBSEQUENT SAUDI ACTION TO REGULARISE STAND WITH EGYPTIAN AND SYRIAN PARTNERS ON 31 OCTOBER. SAUDIS HAD FOUND PRIMAKOV'S PROPOSALS VERY UNHELPFUL. KING FAHD HAD TOLD HIM SO AND HAD HANDLED HIM QUITE ROUGHLY TO TRY TO GET IT ACROSS THAT SAUDI ARABIA WOULD HAVE NO TRUCK WITH PACKAGE DEALS AND THAT AN ARAB SOLUTION WAS NO LONGER A STARTER. SAUDI INTEREST IN NEXT STEPS AT THE UNSC.

DETAIL

2. PRIMAKOV HAD TOLD THEM HE HAD FOUND A MUCH MORE REALISTIC SADDAM ON HIS SECOND VISIT. SANCTIONS WERE STARTING TO BITE AND SADDAM WAS STARTING TO FACE THE LIKELIHOOD OF MILITARY ACTION. FOR THE SOVIET UNION IT WAS VERY IMPORTANT TO AVOID A MILITARY OUTCOME. THE CONSEQUENCES FOR THE REGION WOULD BE CATASTROPHIC. IN THE LAST RESORT THE SOVIET UNION WOULD NOT STAND AGAINST A MILITARY SOLUTION. BUT FIRST IT WAS NECESSARY TO SEE IF A WAY OUT, CONSISTENT WITH SCR'S COULD NOT BE FOUND: THIS POINTED TO AN ARAB SOLUTION. (SAUD COMMENTED THAT PRIMAKOV TENDED TO DRAMATISE THE WAR OPTION MORE HEAVILY IN PUBLIC THAN IN PRIVATE). ACCORDINGLY PRIMAKOV HAD BEEN ENCOURAGED TO BE TOLD BY ASSAD IN DAMASCUS LAST WEEK THAT ASSAD WOULD GO ALONG WITH A FRESH ARAB SUMMIT. PRIMAKOV HAD CLAIMED IN JEDDA THAT ASSAD HAD SPOKEN OF A STAGED SERIES OF UNDERTAKINGS TO IRAQ, AND THAT WHEN THESE HAD BEEN PUT TO SADDAM IN BAGHDAD, HE HAD SHOWN INTEREST, AND ASKED FOR CERTAIN GUARANTEES OF NON AGGRESSION AS PART OF A PACKAGE DEAL.

3. PRIMARKOV HAD THEN PUT TO THE SAUDIS, WITH HE CLAIMED SYRIAN

AND EGYPTIAN AS WELL AS IRAQI SUPPORT, A PROPOSAL FOR A SPECIAL ARAB SUMMIT AT WHICH PROPOSALS WOULD BE AGREED INVOLVING SEQUENTIAL ELEMENTS IN A POLITICAL SOLUTION ON WHICH ASSURANCES WOULD BE GIVEN AT THE OUTSET:-

- A) TOTAL IRAQI WITHDRAWAL FROM KUWAIT AND RESTORATION OF THE LEGITIMATE GOVERNMENT.
- B) SUBSEQUENT WITHDRAWAL BY PREVIOUSLY AGREED STAGES OF M.N.F.
- C) LIFTING OF SANCTIONS
- D) A START TO IRAQI-KUWAITI NEGOTIATIONS ON DISPUTES
- E) A PUBLIC COMMITMENT BY PERMANENT FIVE TO AN EARLY SETTLEMENT OF MIDDLE EAST ISSUES (I.E. PALESTINE)
- F) DISCUSSION OF REGIONAL SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS.

4. THE KING'S REACTION HAD BEEN SHARP, AND INCLUDED THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

- A) THE ARAB COMMUNITY HAD ALREADY TRIED IN ITS 10 AUGUST SUMMIT TO FIND AN ARAB SOLUTION AND HAD FAILED. FOUR POINTS WERE ON THE TABLE AND IRAQ HAD REJECTED THEM. IF AN ARAB SOLUTION WAS POSSIBLE IT WOULD ALREADY HAVE HAPPENED. IT WAS DANGEROUS TO REOPEN THE ARAB DEBATE. THIS WOULD HEIGHTEN THE DIVISIONS, AND CUT ACROSS THE INTERNATIONAL CONSENSUS AND THE UNSC ACTIVITY. IT WOULD ALSO GIVE HEART TO SADDAM THAT HE COULD GET AWAY WITH SOMETHING.
- B) IF AS PRIMAKOV CLAIMED, PRESSURES WERE NOW STARTING TO TELL ON SADDAM THEN WHY ON EARTH RELAX THEM THROUGH TALK OF A FACE-SAVING DEVICE? HE WAS BEING INCONSISTENT.
- C) SADDAM HAD NO RIGHT TO ASK FOR GUARANTEES FROM THE ALLIES. RATHER VICE VERSA SADDAM WAS THE THREAT AND NO ONE ELSE. ALSO HIS NBC WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION CAPABILITY HAD TO BE DEALT WITH.
- D) AS SAUDI ARABIA SAW IT, IT WAS FOR THE PERMANENT FIVE TO LEAD OVER A SOLUTION (KING FAHD MADE THIS POINT TO YOU IN SEPTEMBER). IT WAS AN INTERNATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY, NOT JUST AN ARAB ONE.
- E) WERE PRIMAKOV'S PROPOSALS CLEARLY ENDORSED BY SADDAM? HAD THEY ORIGINATED IN SYRIA? OR HAD HE CONCOCTED THEM? UNDER PRESSURE PRIMAKOV HAD CONCEDED THAT HE HAD PUT THE PACKAGE TOGETHER HIMSELF, BASED ON HIS UNDERSTANDING OF ASSAD'S AND SADDAM'S SUGGESTIONS.
- F) WHY THEN HAD GORBACHEV GONE PUBLIC AS HE HAD IN PARIS, AND TAKEN SAUDI ARABIA'S NAME IN VAIN WHEN PRIMAKOV HAD NOT YET REACHED JEDDA?. PRIMAKOV HAD ADMITTED TO TELEPHONING GORBACHEV IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT FROM BAHADAD TO TELL HIM OF THE PACKAGE HE HAD PUT TOGETHER. HE HAD REACTED PREMATURELY. IT WAS SADDAM WHO HAD SUGGESTED SAUDI ARABIA IN A MEDIATING ROLE AS THE QUOTE ONLY

COUNTRY HE TRUSTED UNQUOTE. THIS THE KING DISMISSED AS A PLOY TO SOW DISSENSION.

5. KING FAHD HAD LEFT PRIMAKOV WITH NO REASON TO BELIEVE HIS IDEAS WOULD RUN AND HAD REPRIMANDED HIM FOR BRINGING WHAT WERE NO MORE THAN IMPRESSIONS DRESSED UP AS A PACKAGE. SAUDI ARABIA WOULD HAVE NO PART OF IT. SAUD SAID HE HAD FINALLY PRESSED PRIMAKOV AGAIN ON WHETHER THE RUSSIANS WOULD, IF PRESSURE FAILED, GO ALONG WITH MILITARY ACTION. PRIMAKOV HAD CONFIRMED THIS WAS SO. HAVING THUS DISMISSED PRIMAKOV, THE SAUDIS HAD QUICKLY SOUGHT TO CHECK WITH SYRIANS AND EGYPTIANS JUST WHAT THEY HAD SAID TO PRIMAKOV. HENCE YESTERDAY'S GATHERING IN JEDDA. ABDUL MAGUID HAD CLAIMED TOTAL SOLIDARITY WITH SAUDI REACTION. SHARA'A HAD CLAIMED PRIMAKOV HAD DISTORTED ASSAD'S POINT ABOUT A SUMMIT. ASSAD HAD OFFERED THE IDEA WITHOUT ANY LINKAGE TO A PACKAGE, BUT AS A FRESH FORM OF MORAL PRESSURE ON SADDAM. THERE WAS ABSOLUTELY NO SYRIAN INTEREST IN A DEAL. INDEED SYRIAN REINFORCEMENTS WERE NOW EN ROUTE TO SAUDI ARABIA. KING FAHD HAD WARNED SHARA'A THAT EVEN SUCH HINTS, IN THE HANDS OF THE RUSSIANS WHO SEEMED SO DESPERATE TO AVOID A CONFLICT, GAVE SADDAM AND OTHERS THE IMPRESSION THAT THE POSITION WAS NEGOTIABLE. SAUD INSISTED TO ME THERE HAD BEEN NO SIGN OF SYRIAN HESITATION YESTERDAY OVER THE POSSIBILITY OF A CONFLICT. THE SAUDIS HAD THEREFORE AGREED WITH A JOINT APPROACH TO THE RUSSIANS SPELLING OUT THEIR REJECTION OF PRIMAKOV'S PACKAGE. THIS WOULD NOW GO AHEAD, MAKING THE POINT THAT SUCH BROKING ONLY IMPEDED PROSPECTS FOR A PEACEFUL OUTCOME.

6. WE AGREED WE SHOULD ALL MAXIMISE OUR EFFORTS TO STIFFEN THE SOVIETS. I EXPLAINED WE WERE DOING OUR BIT. ASKED HOW TO ACCOUNT FOR THE SOVIET ANXIETY OVER A CONFLICT AND THEIR FAILURE TO SEE IT IN THE MORE CONTAINABLE PERSPECTIVE WHICH SAUD CLAIMED WE AND THE SAUDIS SHARED, I POINTED TO SOVIET REFLEXES, TO THEIR SENSITIVITY OVER HOSTAGES AND TO BLANKS STILL ON THEIR SCREEN IN ASSESSING MIDDLE EAST ISSUES. TO THIS SAUD ADDED THAT THE RUSSIANS FEARED A WAR WOULD SAP WESTERN ECONOMIC RESOURCES WHICH MIGHT OTHERWISE BE AVAILABLE TO HELP THE SOVIET UNION. I NOTED PRIMAKOV'S ASSURANCE THAT AT THE END OF THE DAY MILITARY ACTION MIGHT HAVE TO BE CONTEMPLATED. SAUD SAID HE HAD WARNED PRIMAKOV THAT THE WINDOW FOR WAITING FOR SANCTIONS TO WORK WAS SHORTENING. PRIMAKOV HAD CLAIMED THAT SANCTIONS WOULD TAKE 6 MONTHS AT LEAST TO SHOW EFFECT, AND EVEN THEN THEY WERE UNLIKELY TO CHANGE IRAQ'S GOVERNMENT.

7. SAUD ASKED TO KEEP IN TOUCH OVER HOW WE SAW NEXT STEPS AT THE

U.N. I WENT OVER ELEMENTS IN SCR 674. HE APPROVED OF KEEPING UP THE PRESSURE WITH FURTHER UNSC ACTION. I STRESSED THE EMPHASIS LAID IN SCR 674 ON TREATMENT OF HOSTAGES, AND ASKED, IN A LEADING QUESTION, IF SAUDI ARABIA STILL HAD CITIZENS IN THAT CATEGORY. SAUD SAID HE BELIEVED SO. IF WE WERE TO MAKE A KEY ISSUE OF HOSTAGES AT SOME STAGE WITH IRAQ, SAUDI ARABIA COULD TAKE HER PLACE ALONGSIDE. HE SAW THE RELEVANCE OF ARTICLE 51 HERE.

COMMENT

8. FROM SAUD'S DESCRIPTION, PRIMAKOV'S IDEAS WERE RUN RAGGED AND PLAINLY REJECTED HERE. THE KING HAS ALSO MOVED QUICKLY TO PREVENT EROSION OF THE MAIN ARAB FRONT. BUT SAUD EVIDENTLY SUSPECTS THE RUSSIANS WILL NOT GIVE UP EASILY, EVEN IF THEY DO ACCEPT THAT A MILITARY OUTCOME MAY HAVE TO BE. THE SAUDIS NOW SEE PRIMAKOV AS DECEITFUL. WE CAN I BELIEVE TAKE SATISFACTION FROM THE ROBUST REACTION OF KING FAHD.

9. IT IS IMPORTANT WE KEEP UP OUR MINISTERIAL CONTACT WITH THE KING OVER THE COMING WEEKS, FOR THE PURPOSE OF MUTUAL ASSURANCE. MR TOM KING'S VISIT WILL BE TIMELY. I ASKED SAUD IF HE WOULD ALSO BE ABLE TO SEE THE DEFENCE SECRETARY IN JEDDA. HE WELCOMED THE OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS THE OUTLOOK AND OUR MUTUAL OBJECTIVES. I HOPE MR KING WILL BE CONTENT, (HE SAW SAUD ON HIS VISIT TO RIYADH LAST MARCH). COULD I ALSO HAVE A BRIEF TO FOLLOW UP WITH SAUD OUR CURRENT THINKING ON LINES OF FUTURE UNSC ACTION, DESIGNED TO KEEP UP THE PRESSURE AND DISCOURAGE ATTRITION.

10. SEE SEPARATE TELEGRAM (FROM RIYADH) ON SAUD'S COMMENTS ON UK/SYRIAN RELATIONS.

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