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FROM PRIVATE SECRETARY

ARAB/ISRAEL AND THE GULF: SECRETARY OF STATE'S CONVERSATION WITH
JIM BAKER

SUMMARY

1. BAKER SOLICITS OUR HELP IN REMOVING REFERENCE TO AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE FROM UN RESOLUTION ON ARAB/ISRAEL. US WILL OTHERWISE VETO BECAUSE OF LINKAGE WITH INVASION OF KUWAIT. US INTENTIONS ON KUWAITI EMBASSY.

DETAIL

2. BAKER TELEPHONED THE SECRETARY OF STATE THIS EVENING PRIMARILY TO DISCUSS THE ARAB/ISRAEL RESOLUTION AT THE UN. HE SAID THAT WE NEEDED TO AVOID IF POSSIBLE THE PERCEPTION OF LINKAGE BETWEEN THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM AND IRAQ'S INVASION OF KUWAIT. THIS PERCEPTION WOULD BE HEIGHTENED BY THE IRAQI ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE RELEASE OF HOSTAGES AND PRESS REPORTS THAT THE US WAS PREPARED TO AGREE TO A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE. THE PRESS WERE ALREADY LINKING THESE TWO STORIES. ACCORDINGLY, THE US COULD NOT AGREE TO A RESOLUTION CONTAINING LANGUAGE ON AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE. THIS WOULD BE THE WORST POSSIBLE TIME TO DO SO. BAKER WAS, THEREFORE, APPEALING FOR OUR HELP. HE HOPED THAT WE WOULD BE ABLE TO SEND A SIGNAL THAT WE WOULD BE PREPARED TO VETO ALONG WITH THE US.

3. THE SECRETARY OF STATE SAID THAT THE DIFFICULTY WAS THAT WE WERE ON RECORD AGAIN AND AGAIN AS BEING IN FAVOUR OF AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE. HE HAD SAID SO YESTERDAY IN THE HOUSE. THERE WAS NOTHING IN THE PRESENT DRAFT TEXT WHICH WE COULD OBJECT TO. WOULD IT HELP IF WE ASKED YOU TO WORK FOR POSTPONEMENT? BAKER SAID THAT HIS PROBLEM WENT FURTHER THAN THIS. NEVERTHELESS THE US WAS TRYING HARD TO AVOID HAVING TO VETO A RESOLUTION AND WAS WORKING WITH THE NON-ALIGNED TO AGREE A TEXT WHICH THE US COULD ACCEPT - EVEN IF ISRAEL COULD NOT. WE MUST AIM FOR A TEXT WHICH DID NOT REFER TO AN INTERNATIONAL

CONFERENCE. THAT WAS THE KEY US PROBLEM. THEY COULD NEGOTIATE ON THE OTHER ISSUES. IT WOULD BE EXTRAORDINARILY BAD FROM THE GULF ANGLE TO AGREE FOR THE FIRST TIME TO INCLUDE SUPPORT FOR AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE IN A UN RESOLUTION. THAT WOULD BE LINKAGE. IF NECESSARY, THE US WOULD VETO. BUT IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT WE SHOULD BE IN THIS TOGETHER. IT WAS TRUE THAT THE US POSITION WAS THAT AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE MIGHT BE USEFUL AT THE APPROPRIATE TIME. BUT THIS WAS NOT THE APPROPRIATE TIME. EVEN PRINCE BANDAR WAS PRESSING THE US TO VETO, ARGUING THAT A RESOLUTION NOW SUPPORTING AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE WOULD BE A VICTORY FOR SADDAM HUSSAIN.

4. THE SECRETARY OF STATE SAID THAT IN THE LIGHT OF THIS HE WOULD ASK YOU TO WORK FOR THREE POSSIBLE OUTCOMES: A TEXT WITHOUT REFERENCE TO AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE: POSTPONEMENT: OR IF NECESSARY ABSTENTION ON THE TEXT - IN THE LATTER CASE, PERHAPS THE US COULD TOO.

5. BAKER SAID THAT ONE IDEA WAS A PRESIDENTIAL STATEMENT REPEATING WHAT BAKER HAD SAID IN TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE YESTERDAY (WASHINGTON TELNO 2966). BAKER THOUGHT THAT THIS SHOULD MEET BOTH SIDES' DIFFICULTIES. THE SECRETARY OF STATE SAID THAT WE COULD CERTAINLY SUPPORT SUCH A PROPOSAL. WE COULD NOT VETO SOMETHING WHICH WE HAD ALWAYS SUPPORTED. LINKAGE IN ANY CASE DID NOT READ SO STRONGLY ON THIS SIDE OF THE ATLANTIC. BAKER ASKED THAT YOU SHOULD HAVE INSTRUCTIONS TO BE TOUGH. THE SECRETARY OF STATE AGREED. KUWAIT EMBASSY

6. BAKER ALSO SAID THAT HE WANTED TO GIVE US A HEADS UP ON THE FUTURE OF THE US EMBASSY IN KUWAIT. AT PRESENT THE ADVICE TO AMERICAN CITIZENS TRAPPED THERE WAS TO KEEP THEIR HEADS DOWN FOR NOW. THE US WOULD NOT CLOSE ITS EMBASSY AS LONG AS IT HAD CITIZENS IN KUWAIT WITH WHOM TO COMMUNICATE. BUT AFTER THAT THEY WOULD PROBABLY WANT TO EVACUATE THEIR EMBASSY STAFF ALTHOUGH WITHOUT FORMALLY CLOSING THE EMBASSY. THE SECRETARY OF STATE SAID THAT THIS SOUNDED SENSIBLE.

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