

CONFIDENTIAL

FM FCO

TO IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON

TELNO 2237

OF 310925Z DECEMBER 90

INFO IMMEDIATE MOSCOW, PEKING, EC POSTS, BAGHDAD

FROM PRIVATE SECRETARY

SECRETARY OF STATE'S CONVERSATION WITH BAKER: 30 DECEMBER
SUMMARY

1. BAKER SEES NO OBJECTION TO SUGGESTION THAT PRESIDENCY, FLANKED BY UK AND FRANCE, MIGHT CALL IN IRAQI AMBASSADOR IN RELEVANT CAPITALS, BUT IS NOT ATTRACTED TO THE POSSIBILITY OF THE TWELVE INVITING TARIQ AZIZ TO EUROPE. BELIEVES THAT THIS WOULD BE DIVISIVE. BAKER SEES ADVANTAGE IN MEETING OF PERMANENT FIVE BETWEEN 3 AND 12 JANUARY - BUT SOVIET POSITION IMPORTANT. SECRETARY OF STATE TO SOUND OUT EUROPEAN COLLEAGUES ON POSSIBLE EC INITIATIVES.

DETAIL

2. THE SECRETARY OF STATE TELEPHONED BAKER ON 30 DECEMBER TO DISCUSS POSSIBLE EC AND US CONTACTS WITH THE IRAQIS.

3. BAKER HAD SEEN THE SECRETARY OF STATE'S MESSAGE (OUR TELNO 2233, NOT TO ALL). HE SAID THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO REAL DEVELOPMENTS OVER THE CHRISTMAS PERIOD ALTHOUGH THERE HAD BEEN SOME INDIRECT OVERTURES FROM THE IRAQIS ABOUT THE DATES FOR US/IRAQI MEETINGS. HE HAD A HUNCH THAT THE IRAQIS MIGHT COME UP WITH A NEW PROPOSAL ON DATES AROUND 2/3 JANUARY. BUT HE THOUGHT THAT PRESIDENT BUSH WOULD BE RELUCTANT TO MOVE FROM THE US POSITION. BUT MUCH DEPENDED ON WHAT THE IRAQIS MIGHT PROPOSE.

4. BAKER SAID THAT HE SAW NO OBJECTION TO THE IDEA FLOATED IN THE SECRETARY OF STATE'S MESSAGE THAT, IN ORDER TO HEAD OFF INDIVIDUAL INITIATIVES WE SHOULD PROPOSE A JOINT EC APPROACH - SUCH AS THE PRESIDENCY, FLANKED BY THE UK AND FRANCE (AS PERMANENT MEMBERS) SUMMONING THE IRAQI AMBASSADOR IN THE RELEVANT COUNTRIES. BUT BAKER SAID THAT THE IRAQIS NEEDED TO HEAR A MESSAGE THAT, IN ORDER TO BE CONVINCING, COULD ONLY COME FROM THE AMERICANS - THAT THEY WOULD HAVE QUOTE A FREE RIDE UNQUOTE IF THEY COMPLIED WITH THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS. BAKER WAS NOT ATTRACTED TO THE POSSIBILITY OF THE TWELVE INVITING TARIQ AZIZ TO VISIT EUROPE FOR TALKS - THIS WOULD BE EXPLOITED BY THE IRAQIS.

5. BAKER SAID THAT HE HAD HEARD TWICE FROM GENSCHER IN THE LAST 5 DAYS ABOUT THE DATES FOR A US/IRAQ MEETING. THE IRAQI AMBASSADOR IN BONN HAD BEEN PUSHING THE LINE THAT EACH PRESIDENT

SHOULD NOMINATE THE DATE FOR SEEING THE OTHER'S FOREIGN MINISTER. BAKER HAD EXPLAINED TO GENSCHER THAT THIS WAS A STANDARD AND UNACCEPTABLE IRAQI POSITION.

6. BAKER RAISED THE POSSIBILITY OF A MEETING OF THE PERMANENT FIVE. HE THOUGHT THAT THERE WAS A GREAT DEAL TO BE SAID FOR IT AT SOME POINT BETWEEN 3 AND 12 JANUARY. THIS MIGHT TAKE THE FORM OF A STRAIGHTFORWARD MEETING BY FOREIGN MINISTERS, OR THE PERMANENT FIVE COULD INVITE TARIQ AZIZ TO MEET THEM. BAKER ASKED AND THE SECRETARY OF STATE CONFIRMED THAT WE WOULD STILL BE WILLING TO HOST SUCH A MEETING. BAKER SAID THAT A MEETING OF THE PERMANENT FIVE WOULD TURN ON THE SOVIET POSITION. THE SECRETARY OF STATE COMMENTED THAT HE THOUGHT THE SOVIET POSITION WOULD REMAIN CONFUSED FOR SOME TIME AND THAT HE DID NOT THINK THAT THE SOVIET UNION WOULD WANT TO CROSS THE US OVER THE GULF. BUT THE RUSSIANS MIGHT USE THE GULF CRISIS AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO CLAMP DOWN AT HOME. A MEETING OF THE PERMANENT FIVE WOULD BE UNDESIRABLE IF THE RUSSIANS WERE GOING TO SHILLY-SHALLY.

7. BAKER SAID THAT HE HAD HAD TWO MESSAGES RECENTLY FROM THE RUSSIANS. THE FIRST HAD SAID THAT THERE WOULD BE NO CHANGE OF THEIR POLICY IN THE GULF, WHILE THE SECOND HAD BEEN A REPORT OF THE RECENT VISIT OF THE SOVIET DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER TO BAGHDAD, AND HAD BEEN LARGELY ABOUT THE EVACUATION OF SOVIET CITIZENS. BOTH MESSAGES HAD COME FROM THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT RATHER THAN FROM SHEVARDNADZE. THEY HAD SHOWN, AT LEAST, A WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE. BAKER WAS RELUCTANT TO TRY TO ENGAGE SHEVARDNADZE ON THE POSITION WHICH THE RUSSIANS WOULD TAKE AT A MEETING OF THE PERMANENT FIVE SINCE HE MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO SPEAK WITH THE FULL AUTHORITY OF THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT. HE WONDERED, THOUGH, WHETHER HE SHOULD GET PRESIDENT BUSH TO SEND A MESSAGE TO GORBACHEV ASKING FOR AN ASSURANCE THAT THE SOVIET UNION WOULD PLAY A PROPER PART IN SUCH A MEETING. HE WOULD THINK ABOUT THIS. THE SECRETARY OF STATE AGREED THAT WE, TOO, WOULD THINK FURTHER ABOUT A POSSIBLE PERMANENT FIVE MEETING.

8. ON THE EC FRONT, THE SECRETARY OF STATE SAID HE WOULD SPEAK INITIALLY TO GENSCHER AND POOS. THE TROUBLE WITH THE PERMANENT FIVE APPROACH WAS THAT ALTHOUGH IT WOULD SATISFY THE FRENCH, IT WOULD NOT SATISFY OTHERS, SUCH AS THE ITALIANS AND SPANISH WHO WANTED SOMETHING WITH AN EC LABEL. IT WOULD BE DAMAGING IF ONE OR MORE OF THE 12 HEADED OFF IN THE WRONG DIRECTION AND THE SECRETARY OF STATE WANTED TO PREVENT THAT. IT WAS AGREED THAT WE WOULD TRY TO SEE WHAT INITIATIVES MIGHT BE COOKING WITHIN THE COMMUNITY. BAKER ASKED THAT IF WE HEARD OF AN INITIATIVE IN GESTATION WHICH WE THOUGHT MIGHT BE DIVISIVE, WE SHOULD LET THE US KNOW QUICKLY - PRESIDENT BUSH WAS ON GOOD TERMS WITH MOST

COMMUNITY LEADERS AND COULD TRY TO HEAD OFF AN UNHELPFUL INITIATIVE IF THE US KNEW OF IT IN TIME.

9. FINALLY, BAKER COMMENTED THAT CONGRESS WOULD NEED A GOOD DEAL OF HANDLING. HE THOUGHT THAT THEY WOULD NEED SOME SORT OF DIPLOMATIC ACTION BETWEEN NOW AND THE USE OF FORCE, ALTHOUGH HE REPEATED THAT THE PRESIDENT WAS NOT INCLINED TO MOVE FROM THE US POSITION ON THE DATES OF A MEETING WITH IRAQ.

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