

ADVANCE COPY

CONFIDENTIAL
FM UKMIS NEW YORK
TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELNO 13

OF 040820Z JANUARY 91

INFO IMMEDIATE MOSCOW, WASHINGTON, PARIS, PEKING, MIDDLE EAST POSTS
INFO IMMEDIATE EC POSTS, MODUK, ACTOR, LUXEMBOURG

SIC
LUXEMBOURG FOR SECRETARY OF STATES PARTY:

YOUR TELNO 2 TO THE HAGUE: IRAQ/KUWAIT: GULF CRISIS

SUMMARY

1. RUSSIANS SEEK TO AVOID MEETING OF THE PERMANENT FIVE AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL DURING THE INTERREGNUM FOLLOWING SHEVARDNADZE'S RESIGNATION. SOVIET PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE PEDDLES THE IDEA OF A FURTHER SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION TO SEVER DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS AND TELECOMMUNICATION LINKS WITH IRAQ, I DISCOURAGE THIS. SEPARATELY SECRETARY-GENERAL GIVES MEDIA THE IMPRESSION SECURITY COUNCIL MIGHT PASS ANOTHER RESOLUTION BEFORE 15 JANUARY: THEN RETRACTS.

DETAIL

2. THE SOVIET PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TOLD ME ON 3 JANUARY THAT THERE HAD BEEN US/SOVIET CONSULTATIONS OVER THE PREVIOUS WEEKEND ABOUT THE DESIRABILITY OF HOLDING A MEETING OF THE PERMANENT FIVE AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL BEFORE 15 JANUARY. THE SOVIET SIDE HAD MADE IT CLEAR THAT IT WOULD BE INTENSELY EMBARRASSING FOR THEM IF THIS IDEA WAS LAUNCHED DURING THE INTERREGNUM AFTER SHEVARDNADZE'S RESIGNATION. VORONTSOV SAID THAT BAKER HAD REACTED SYMPATHETICALLY AND AGREED NOT TO PURSUE THE IDEA FOR THE MOMENT. VORONTSOV ALLEGED THAT BAKER HAD ALSO REACTED POSITIVIELY TO A SOVIET SUGGESTION THAT, IF IT WAS DESIRABLE TO DEMONSTRATE THAT THE PERMANENT FIVE WERE HOLDING FIRM TO THE APPROACH LAID DOWN IN SCR 678, THIS COULD ALWAYS BE ACHIEVED BY CALLING A MEETING OF THE PERMANENT FIVE AT AMBASSADORIAL LEVEL IN NEW YORK AND GIVING THIS ADEQUATE PUBLICITY.

3. VORONTSOV WAS UNCLEAR ABOUT HOW LONG THE INTERREGNUM MIGHT LAST BUT FOR WHAT IT IS WORTH, SAID HE THOUGHT A NEW FOREIGN MINISTER WOULD BE APPOINTED NEXT WEEK WHEN GORBACHEV WAS LIKELY TO BE NAMING A NEW GOVERNMENT: HE BELIEVED THE FOREIGN MINISTER WOULD BE DZASAHOV (? SPELLING), THE CURRENT CHAIRMAN OF THE FOREIGN AFFIARS COMMITTE

OF THE SUPREME SOVIET, A FORMER AMBASSADOR IN DAMASCUS AND A DAGESTANI MUSLIM WHO HAD LIVED FOR SOME YEARS IN CAIRO. THE PROBLEM WAS THE NEW CONSTITUTION PROVIDED FOR THE CONSENT OF THE SUPREME SOVIET TO BE OBTAINED OVER ANY SUCH APPOINTMENT: BUT NO-ONE HAD DEFINED HOW THAT CONSENT SHOULD BE OBTAINED AND THERE WERE NO PRECEDENTS.

4. VORONTSOV HAS IN FACT BEEN PEDDLING SOME IDEAS OF HIS OWN AROUND THE NEW YORK CIRCUIT. THESE WOULD INVOLVE A FURTHER SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION ADOPTED EITHER ON 15 JANUARY OR IN ADVANCE OF IT, TO BECOME OPERATIVE THAT DAY. THE RESOLUTION WOULD SEVER DIPLOMATIC REALTIONS AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS LINKS WITH IRAQ. SCR 678 AUTHORISING THE USE OF FORCE WOULD NOT BE AFFECTED ONE WAY OR THE OTHER. BUT THE NEW RESOLUTION WOULD SIGNAL TO SADDAM HUSSEIN THAT HIS LAST BRIDGES WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD WERE GOING DOWN.

5. THESE IDEAS LEAKED TO THE PRESS A DAY OR TWO AGO (VIA THE PAKISTANI AMBASSADOR) AND THIS PROVOKED A HEATED DENIAL FROM THE SOVIET MISSION THAT THEY HAD ANY SUCH SUGGESTIONS IN MIND. THEY WERE RUBBISHED BY THE U S MISSION HERE.

6. VORONTSOV TRIED THEM OUT ON ME ON 3 JANUARY, I SAID I THOUGHT AN OPERATION LIKE THIS WOULD SEND EXACTLY THE WRONG SIGNAL TO SADDAM HUSSEIN. HE WOULD SURELY CONCLUDE THAT HE HAD BEEN RIGHT ALL ALONG TO BELIEVE THAT THE ALLIANCE WOULD NOT IN THE FINAL RESORT BE PREPARED TO USE FORCE AGAINST HIM. IT WAS FAR BETTER TO LEAVE SCR 678 TO DO ITS WORK AND NOT TO CONFUSE THE MESSAGE.

7. IN A SEPARATE DEVELOPMENT, THE SECRETARY-GENERAL MADE SOME INADVERTENTLY MISLEADING REMARKS WHEN BEING PESTERED BY THE PRESS AT LUNCHTIME ON 3 JANUARY. HE SAID THAT SHOOTING WOULD NOT NECESSARILY START WHEN THE SECURITY COUNCIL DEADLINE EXPIRED ON 15 JANUARY. THE COUNCIL COULD DECIDE TO APPLY OTHER SANCTIONS OR TAKE OTHER MEASURES WHICH DID NOT AMOUNT TO MILITARY ACTION. HE ADDED THAT THE COUNCIL MIGHT MEET BEFORE 15 JANUARY TO SEE WHAT IT MIGHT DO IF THE IRAQIS DID NOT WITHDRAW ON THAT DATE. THESE REMARKS CAUSED SOME FLUTTERING IN THE DOVECOTES. THE SECRETARY-GENERAL LATER RETRACTED WHAT HE HAD SAID AND MADE IT CLEAR THAT HE DID NOT THINK THE SECURITY COUNCIL WOULD MEET TO PASS A RESOLUTION OR TAKE OTHER MEASURES ON IRAQ/KUWAIT BEFORE THE 15 JANUARY DEADLINE EXPIRED.

HANNAY

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