

CONFIDENTIAL

FM BAGHDAD

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELNO 886

OF 201028Z AUGUST 90

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SIC I9M

MY TELNO 882: SADDAM'S PEACE INITIATIVE

## SUMMARY

1. SADDAM'S LATEST PEACE PROPOSALS CONTAIN LITTLE TO COMMEND THEM. WE SHOULD NOT HOWEVER BE TOTALLY DISMISSIVE OF THEM IN ANY PUBLIC STATEMENT, IN ORDER TO AVOID PROVOKING SADDAM UNNECESSARILY

## DETAIL

2. IN AN OPEN LETTER TO THE FAMILIES OF FOREIGNERS 'WHOM THE IRAQI PEOPLE HAVE DECIDED TO HOST UNTIL THE END OF THE CRISIS' IN IRAQ, WHICH WAS READ OUT ON IRAQI TELEVISION ON THE EVENING OF 19 AUGUST, SADDAM HUSSEIN PROPOSED (IN SUMMARY) THAT THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL SHOULD PLEDGE TO GUARANTEE PEACE AND SECURITY IN THE REGION IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES IN HIS 12 AUGUST INITIATIVE (MY TELNO 754), AND THAT US AND WESTERN FORCES SHOULD WITHDRAW FROM SAUDI ARABIA. AS SOON AS THIS WAS ACHIEVED THE FOREIGNERS WOULD BE ALLOWED TO LEAVE IRAQ FOR THE DESTINATION OF THEIR CHOICE.

3. SHOULD ANY PART OF THE PROPOSAL BE DIFFICULT TO IMPLEMENT FOR ANY REASON, IRAQ WOULD ACCEPT A WRITTEN COMMITMENT FROM THE US TO WITHDRAW ITS AND ITS ALLIES FORCES FROM ARAB TERRITORY IN ACCORDANCE WITH A TIMETABLE NOT TO EXCEED THE LENGTH OF TIME IT HAD TAKEN THESE FORCES TO DEPLY IN THE REGION.

4. SADDAM SAID THAT PRESIDENT BUSH SHOULD DECLARE THAT HE WOULD NOT USE FORCE AGAINST IRAQ AND THAT HE RESPECTED INTERNATIONAL LAW. ALL PARTIES SHOULD END THE BLOCKADE OF IRAQ IMMEDIATELY AND CONDUCT RELATIONS WITH IT ON THE BASIS OF MUTUAL RESPECT. THE QUESTION OF KUWAIT SHOULD BE LEFT FOR THE

ARABS TO DEAL WITH, LIKE THE SYRIA/LEBANON AND WESTERN SAHARA PROBLEMS(SIC)

5. SADDAM SAID HE WAS AWARE OF THE FOREIGNERS' DISTRESS AT NOT BEING ALLOWED TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY. ALL THE EVENTS IN THE REGION, INCLUDING THE BAN ON FOREIGNERS TRAVELLING, RAN COUNTER TO THE WISHES OF THE IRAQI PEOPLE AND WERE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF OTHER PARTIES, NOTABLY THE US AND BRITISH GOVERNMENTS.

6. SADDAM BLAMED THE US AND ITS ALLIES FOR NOT INTERVENING TO HALT THE GULF WAR AND ACCUSED THEM, SINCE THE CEASEFIRE, OF WAGING ECONOMIC WAR AGAINST IRAQ. HE REITERATED HIS STANDARD ARGUMENT THAT KUWAIT HAD ALWAYS BEEN A PART OF IRAQ, SAYING THAT THE IRAQI PEOPLE WANTED NOTHING MORE THAN TO REUNITE DIVIDED FAMILIES. WHY DID PRESIDENT BUSH AND MRS THATCHER WANT TO STARVE THE PEOPLE OF IRAQ TO DEATH, HE ASKED.

7. SADDAM REITERATED THAT THE FOREIGN FORCES WERE IN THE REGION NOT TO DEFEND SAUDI ARABIA BUT TO WAGE WAR ON IRAQ. AS A CONSEQUENCE THE IRAQI NATIONAL ASSEMBLY HAD SOUGHT TO AVOID A CATASTROPHE BY BANNING FOREIGNERS' TRAVEL. THIS COULD OPEN A DOOR TO A DIALOGUE AND A PEACEFUL SOLUTION.

#### COMMENT

8. DESPITE NIZAR HAMDOON'S PLEAS THAT WE SHVULD EXPLORE THIS INITIATIVE SERIOUSLY, I SEE LITTLE TO RECOMMEND IT. ALTHOUGH SADDAM INDICATES THAT THE PROPOSALS CONTAINED IN HIS 12 AUGUST INITIATIVE ARE STILL ON THE TABLE (PARA 2 ABOVE), HE MAKES NO EXPLICIT REFERENCE TO AN IRAQI WITHDRAWAL FROM KUWAIT, AND THE EXAMPLES OF REGIONAL DISPUTES BEING TACKLED BY THE ARABS ARE HARDLY LIKELY TO ENCOURAGE OPTIMISM THAT KUWAIT WOULD FARE BETTER IF DEALT WITH SOLELY BY THE ARABS.

9. SADDAM CLEARLY BELIEVES THAT HE CAN USE FOREIGN HOSTAGES AS A LEVER TO BREAK FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS' RESOLVE ON SANCTIONS, WHILE IGNORING THE FACT THAT DETAINING FOREIGN NATIONALS IS NOT ONLY AGAINST INTERNATIONAL LAW BUT ALSO A PRIME CAUSE OF THE INCREASE IN TENSION.

10. THAT SAID, NIZAR HAMDOON MAY HAVE BEEN INDICATING THAT SADDAM IS INTERESTED IN SOME FORM OF NEGOTIATION AND THAT THIS 'INITIATIVE' REPRESENTS A FIRST STEP ON THAT ROAD.

ALTHOUGH THE INITIATIVE IS CLEARLY TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE AS IT STANDS, WE SHOULD PERHAPS NOT DISMISS IT OUT OF HAND, BUT SO AS TO DENY SADDAM THE OPPORTUNITY TO ACCUSE US OF INTRANSIGENCE. WE ALSO DO NOT WANT TO GIVE HIM ANY EXCUSE TO TAKE YET MORE DRASTIC ACTION WHEN IT APPEARS THAT TIME, AT LEAST FOR THE MOMENT, IS AGAINST HIM.

WALKER

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