

CONFIDENTIAL  
FM WASHINGTON  
TO IMMEDIATE FCO  
TELNO 2656  
OF 010430Z NOVEMBER 90  
AND TO IMMEDIATE ROME  
INFO PRIORITY UKMIS NEW YORK, RIYADH, BAGHDAD, TEL AVIV  
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**ADVANCE COPY**

MY TELNO 2617: IRAQ/KUWAIT  
SUMMARY

1. NO DECISIONS YET ON POSSIBLE ADDITIONAL TROOP DEPLOYMENTS TO THE GULF. ANY DECISION WILL HAVE TO BALANCE A NUMBER OF DIFFICULT FACTORS. MEANWHILE THE ADMINISTRATION'S TOUGH RHETORIC CONTINUES.

## DETAIL

2. SINCE CHENEY'S TV INTERVIEW ON 25 OCTOBER (MY TUR), SPECULATION HAS MOUNTED THAT THE ADMINISTRATION HAVE DECIDED TO SEND UP TO 100,000 ADDITIONAL TROOPS TO THE GULF. OUR CONTACTS IN THE PENTAGON TELL US THAT GENERAL POWELL (CHAIRMAN, JOINT CHIEFS) HAS MADE A RECOMMENDATION FOR AN INCREASE OF UP TO 150,000, FOLLOWING THE FORMER'S RETURN FROM A VISIT TO THE GULF LAST WEEK. THE LOGIC REMAINS THAT - WITH THE STRENGTHENING OF THE IRAQI DEFENSIVE POSITIONS IN KUWAIT AND GROWING SCEPTICISM ABOUT THE WISDOM OF RELYING SOLELY ON AIR POWER TO REDUCE THEM - THE INITIAL DEPLOYMENT OF US GROUND FORCES IS INADEQUATE TO GUARANTEE A SUCCESSFUL LIBERATION OF KUWAIT.

3. DESPITE THIS SPECULATION, THE ADMINISTRATION HAVE MADE NO ANNOUNCEMENTS, ALTHOUGH THE WHITE HOUSE SPOKESMAN SAID ON 30 OCTOBER THAT FORCE LEVELS WERE IN QUOTE STEADILY INCREASING MODE UNQUOTE. (THERE MAY NOW BE AS MANY AS 250,000 ALREADY IN THEATRE). IT MAY BE THAT BY DELAYING FORMAL CONFIRMATION (OR DENIAL) OF THE SPECULATION, THE ADMINISTRATION ARE HOPING TO INCREASE THE PSYCHOLOGICAL PRESSURE ON SADDAM TO WITHDRAW. MORE LIKELY, THE PRESIDENT HAS SIMPLY NOT YET MADE UP HIS MIND ALTHOUGH HE DISCUSSED THE MATTER WITH HIS SENIOR ADVISERS ON 30 OCT.

4. IN REACHING ANY DECISION, THE PRESIDENT WILL HAVE TO BALANCE A NUMBER OF KEY FACTORS. THESE INCLUDE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR:  
(A) THE TIMING OF ANY MILITARY ACTION: CURRENT TROOP DEPLOYMENT SHOULD NOW BE VIRTUALLY COMPLETE, GIVING THE PRESIDENT A THEORETICAL, IF RISKY, MILITARY OPTION SOON. IF THE ADMINISTRATION CONFIRMS THAT AN ADDITIONAL 100,000 OR MORE

- TROOPS WILL BE DEPLOYED, THE TIME NEEDED TO MOVE THEM TO THE GULF WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY PUT BACK POSSIBLE MILITARY ACTION (IN THE ABSENCE OF PROVOCATION) UNTIL AT LEAST MID JANUARY:
- (B) SUSTAINABILITY: IF THE AMERICANS DECIDE THAT THEY NEED A TOTAL FORCE LEVEL OF OVER 300,000 TROOPS, THEY WILL HAVE TO IMPLEMENT SIGNIFICANT DIVERSIONS FROM GERMANY, AS WELL AS CALL UP ADDITIONAL RESERVISTS IN THE US (TO PROVIDE THE NECESSARY COMBAT SUPPORT). GIVEN THE MASSIVE LOGISTIC DIFFICULTIES IN SUSTAINING EVEN THE EXISTING TROOP LEVELS, ADDITIONAL DEPLOYMENTS WOULD INCREASE PRESSURE ON THE PRESIDENT TO TAKE MILITARY ACTION, AS SOON AS THE ADDITIONAL TROOPS WERE IN PLACE:
  - (C) NON-MILITARY OPTIONS: SINCE THERE HAS BEEN NO SUGGESTION THAT EXISTING US FORCES ARE INADEQUATE TO DEFEND SAUDI ARABIA OR DETER IRAQI AGGRESSION, THE DESPATCH OF ADDITIONAL FORCES WILL BE SEEN AS CLEAR EVIDENCE OF PREPARATION FOR OFFENSIVE ACTION. TOGETHER WITH (B) ABOVE, THE EFFECT WILL BE TO NARROW SIGNIFICANTLY THE PRESIDENT'S OPTIONS. THE PRESSURE ON HIM TO ACT WILL BE MORE DIFFICULT TO RESIST ONCE THE ADDITIONAL TROOPS ARE IN PLACE.
  - (D) PUBLIC OPINION: PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR THE PRESIDENT'S GULF POLICIES HAS ALREADY SLIPPED ( MY TUR) AND MAY DO SO FURTHER IF MORE TROOPS ARE DEPLOYED OR A FURTHER CALL-UP OF THE RESERVE IMPLEMENTED. PUBLIC OPINION IN THE PERIOD LEADING UP TO FULL DEPLOYMENT WILL REQUIRE CAREFUL MANAGEMENT AND MUCH ATTENTION.
  - (E) CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT: CONGRESS HAS MADE CLEAR THAT IT HAS NOT GIVEN THE ADMINISTRATION A BLANK CHEQUE. ITS CONCERN ABOUT POLICY SURFACED AGAIN AT A MEETING BETWEEN CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS AND THE PRESIDENT ON 30 OCTOBER. A MAJOR NEW DEPLOYMENT WILL ADD TO THE STRAIN:
  - (F) THE INTERNATIONAL COALITION: A DECISION TO DEPLOY MORE TROOPS WILL BE WIDELY SEEN AS A FURTHER STEP TOWARDS WAR. THE ADMINISTRATION ARE ALREADY CONCERNED ABOUT THEIR ABILITY TO HOLD THE ALLIED COALITION TOGETHER, IN THE FACE OF CONSTANT PRESSURE FOR A NEGOTIATED SOLUTION (THE LATEST EXAMPLES BEING PRIMAKOV'S SECOND VISIT TO THE REGION AND KING HUSSEIN'S RENEWED ACTIVITIES). IF MORE TROOPS ARE SENT THE ADMINISTRATION WILL HAVE TO EXPECT FURTHER PROBLEMS, PERHAPS WITH THE SOVIET UNION AND FRANCE IN PARTICULAR.
5. WE HAVE BEEN THROUGH HOT AND COLD PERIODS BEFORE. THE

ADMINISTRATION HAS A DIFFICULT TACTICAL HAND TO PLAY IN NOT ALARMING DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL OPINION UNDULY ON THE ONE HAND, WHILE RATCHETTING UP THE PRESSURE ON SADDAM HUSSEIN ON THE OTHER. THE PRESIDENT HAS HAD THE ADDITIONAL PROBLEM RECENTLY OF REFOCUSING ATTENTION ON IRAQ/KUWAIT AFTER IT HAD BEEN DIVERTED BY THE BUDGET DEBATE. THE NUMBERS OF ADDITIONAL TROOPS BEING SUGGESTED MAY NOT IN PRACTICE PROVE AS LARGE AS THEY SEEM IN THE NEWSPAPERS, GIVEN THE EFFECT OF ROULEMENT. BUT THE FACT THAT THE PRESIDENT AND BAKER HAVE TOUGHENED THEIR RHETORIC IN THE LAST FEW DAYS HAS HELPED TO HEIGHTEN EXPECTATIONS THAT THE ADMINISTRATION WILL TAKE FURTHER ACTION, IF ONLY IN THE SENSE THAT IF THEY DO NOT, THAT WILL BE WIDELY SEEN AS EVIDENCE THAT THE MILITARY OPINION MAY NOT AFTER ALL NOW BE PRACTICABLE. CONCERN ABOUT THE TREATMENT OF US HOSTAGES HAS ALSO RETURNED TO CENTRE STAGE, FOLLOWING A SPEECH BY THE PRESIDENT ON 31 OCTOBER. THIS HAS ALWAYS BEEN A WILD CARD, THE EMOTIONAL EFFECT OF WHICH ON AMERICAN INTENTIONS COULD PROVE POWERFUL.

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