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FM RIYADH
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INFO IMMEDIATE MIDDLE EAST POSTS, WASHINGTON, MOSCOW, PARIS
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INFO IMMEDIATE JHQ HIGH WYCOMBE, CABINET OFFICE

SIC AAA/I9M
IRAQ/KUWAIT

SUMMARY

1. QUAYLE FINDS KING FAHD FIRM, INCLUDING ON NEED TO DEAL WITH IRAQ'S NON-CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS. PRESS PLAY UP HOST NATION SUPPORT ASPECT, THOUGH US EMBASSY CLAIM THERE IS NOTHING TO IT. BUSH TELEPHONES THE KING. NO DECISION YET ON BAKER VISIT HERE, BUT US EMBASSY THINK IT MAY BE JUST AFTER THAT OF THE PRIME MINISTER.

DETAIL

2. YOU WILL HAVE SEEN AGENCY REPORTS OF VICE PRESIDENT QUAYLE'S FIRM STATEMENTS WHILE HE WAS HERE OVER THE NEW YEAR, TO VISIT US TROOPS. WHILE HERE HE SAW THE KING, AND THE PRESS HAVE PLAYED UP REPORTS THAT THE SAUDIS AGREED TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR THE US MILITARY PRESENCE.

2. WE ASKED THE US DCM, DUNFORD, ON 2 JANUARY, ABOUT THE QUAYLE VISIT. HE SAID QUAYLE HAD FOUND THE KING AS DETERMINED AS EVER THAT SADDAM MUST EITHER WITHDRAW, OR BE FORCIBLY EJECTED. ONE WAY OR ANOTHER KUWAIT MUST BE RESTORED TO THE STATUS QUO ANTE AND IRAQ'S ARSENAL OF WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION ELIMINATED. THE KING EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THE IRAQI PEOPLE WOULD GET RID OF SADDAM. DUNFORD SAID THAT QUAYLE HAD FORCEFULLY UNDERLINED BUSH'S DETERMINATION TO SEE THINGS THROUGH. SADDAM WAS MAKING A MAJOR MISTAKE IF HE JUDGED THAT THE US WAS UNPREPARED TO USE FORCE. QUAYLE PLAYED DOWN THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CONGRESSIONAL DOUBTS. QUAYLE ALSO SAID THAT IF SADDAM WITHDREW PEACEFULLY, LEAVING IRAQ'S CHEMICAL AND BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS UNAFFECTED, SOME FORM OF SANCTIONS WOULD HAVE TO BE MAINTAINED. THE KING AGREED.

ACCORDING TO DUNFORD THERE WAS ONLY INSUBSTANTIAL DISCUSSION OF POST-CRISIS SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS.

3. WE ASKED DUNFORD ABOUT HOST NATION SUPPORT. HE SAID QUAYLE HAD SAID THAT THE ADMINISTRATION APPRECIATED THE CONTRIBUTION SAUDI ARABIA WAS MAKING. WITH THE GROWING US EFFORT, HOWEVER, AN EVEN GREATER SAUDI CONTRIBUTION WOULD BE NEEDED. THE KING MADE NO REPLY. DUNFORD SAID THIS BRIEF EXCHANGE HAD BEEN EXAGGERATED BY QUAYLE'S PRESS SPOKESMAN, AND THE NEWSPAPERS HAD CARRIED STORIES OF AN INCREASED SAUDI CONTRIBUTION.

4. SEPARATELY BUSH TELPHONED THE KING ON 1 JANUARY. THE CALL HAS BEEN LINKED IN THE NEWSPAPERS HERE WITH REPORTS THAT BAKER PLANS TO MAKE ANOTHER VISIT TO EUROPE AND THE MIDDLE EAST, POSSIBLY INCLUDING BAGHDAD. THE SAUDIS SUBSEQUENTLY ISSUED AN OFFICIAL STATEMENT REAFFIRMING THE KINGDOM'S DEMANDS THAT IRAQ WITHDRAW FROM ALL KUWAITI TERRITORY, THAT THE AMIR AND HIS GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE RESTORED AND THAT IRAQI TROOP CONCENTRATIONS ON IRAQ'S BORDERS SHOULD DISPERSE. SADDAM HUSSEIN COULD STILL END THE CRISIS IF HE MET THESE DEMANDS (COMMENT: THIS REITERATION OF THE SAUDI POSITION COULD BE TIMED TO COINCIDE WITH REVIVED TALK IF US/IRAQI DIALOGUE: ALTERNATIVELY IT COULD HAVE BEEN AIMED AT THE SYRIAN/EGYPTIAN/LIBYAN MEETING IN CAIRO THE FOLLOWING DAY, WHICH HAS RECEIVED LITTLE PUBLICITY HERE).

5. DUNFORD SAID (AND ROYAL PROTOCOL CONFIRM) THAT NO DECISION HAS YET BEEN REACHED ON THE VISIT HERE BY BAKER, THOUGH OTHER CONTACTS IN THE US EMBASSY SUGGEST THE AMERICANS MAY BE HOPING FOR A VISIT IMMEDIATELY AFTER THAT OF THE PRIME MINISTER.

COMMENT

6. WASHINGTON MAY CARE TO ENQUIRE FURTHER ON HOST NATION SUPPORT. THE AMERICANS HAVE SIGNED AN AGREEMENT ON IN-COUNTRY SUPPORT, AND THE SAUDIS WILL BE EMBARRASSED IF THE US PRESSES FOR SEPARATE HELP IN EXCESS OF THAT, THOUGH WITH THE INFLUX OF ADDITIONAL TROOPS IN-COUNTRY THEIR COSTS WILL CLEARLY INCREASE ANWAY. THE VICE MINISTER OF FINANCE QUOTED IN MY TELNO 017, WHO EXPRESSED CONCERN ON US PRESSURE ABOUT HOST NATION SUPPORT, MAY HAVE BEEN REACTING TO PRESS COMMENT.

MUNRO

COMMS NOTE: MODSH FOR MODUK, HQBFME, JHQ HIGH WYCOMBE

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