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TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELNO 512

OF 302055Z MARCH 87

INFO PRIORITY WASHINGTON, UKDEL NATO, BAGHDAD, BRS TEHRAN

INFO PRIORITY UKMIS NEW YORK, PARIS, BONN

FROM PRIVATE SECRETARY

SECRETARY OF STATE'S TALKS WITH SHEVARDNADZE, 30 MARCH: IRAN/  
IRAQ

## SUMMARY

1. THOUGHTFUL DISCUSSION, WITH MUCH COMMON GROUND. SOVIET UNION READY TO EXCHANGE INFORMATION ON SITUATION IN STRAITS OF HORMUZ SEMICOLON OPPOSED TO COVERT ARMS SUPPLIES, BUT WORRIED ABOUT CONSEQUENCES OF ENDING ARMS SUPPLIES TO IRAQ. SOVIET UNION READY TO CONTINUE SECURITY COUNCIL DISCUSSIONS.

## DETAIL

2. REFERRING TO DISCUSSIONS HITHERTO IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL, THE SECRETARY OF STATE SAID THAT WE ALL FELT IT WAS DIFFICULT TO ENGAGE IRAN'S FULL ATTENTION TO EFFORTS TO END THE CONFLICT. IRAQ FOR HER PART TENDED TO LOOK ONLY FOR AN ANSWER WHICH WOULD SOLVE EVERYTHING AT ONCE. IT WAS DIFFICULT TO SEE HOW MANDATORY SANCTIONS COULD BE EFFECTIVE, YET IT WAS IMPORTANT TO CURTAIL THE ARMS SUPPLY. BRITAIN HAD NOT SUPPLIED SIGNIFICANT ARMS TO EITHER SIDE.

3. THE SITUATION AROUND THE STRAITS OF HORMUZ WAS PARTICULARLY DWORRYING, AND WAS AGGRAVATED BY THE ARRIVAL OF SILKWORN MISSILES MANUFACTURED IN CHINA. IT WAS ONLY FAIR TO SAY THAT THE CHINESE FOREIGN MINISTER HAD DENIED WHEN HE SAW HIM ON FRIDAY THAT CHINA HAD SUPPLIED THESE MISSILES. THERE WAS HOWEVER NO DOUBT THAT THEY WERE THERE, NOR WERE THERE THEY THE ONLY WEAPONS WHICH COULD BE USED AGAINST SHIPPING.

4. THIS WAS WHY NAVAL ASSETS FROM THE UK/US/FRG AND THE SOVIET UNION WERE IN THE AREA. WE ALL HAD AN INTEREST IN AVOIDING CONFLICT BETWEEN IRAN AND THESE POWERS. HE HOPED THAT WE COULD KEEP EACH OTHER CLOSELY INFORMED IN ORDER TO COOPERATE IN DISCOURAGING ANY OFFENSIVE BEHAVIOUR ABZH IRAN IN THE AREA. SHEVARDNADZE SAID THAT THE SOVIET UNION WAS ALSO CONCERNED, BUT SAW LITTLE REAL PROSPECT OF SETTLING THE CONFLICT IN THE NEAR FUTURE. THEY HAD LONG BEEN IN CONTACT WITH THE IRAQIS AND HAD LATELY SEEN VELAYATI.

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THIS MEETING HAD LEFT THEM WITH A VERY PESSIMISTIC VIEW. IRAQ WAS IN PRINCIPLE PREPARED TO END THE WAR, BUT THE IRANIAN LEADERSHIP WAS IN AN AGGRESSIVE MOOD, APPARENTLY BELIEVING THAT IT COULD RAISE THE IRANIAN POPULATION TO FIGHT ON TO FINAL VICTORY.

5. HE AGREED THAT WE SHOULD EXCHANGE INFORMATION ON THE SITUATION IN THE STRAITS OF HORMUZ, BUT WE SHOULD ALSO COOPERATE ON THE QUESTION OF ENDING THE WHOLE SENSELESS WAR. HE SUGGESTED LOOKING AGAIN AT POSSIBILITIES IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL. IT WAS NO GOOD HAVING JUST ANOTHER RESOLUTION ON ENDING THE WAR. SOMETHING MORE TANGIBLE WAS NEEDED. PERHAPS VISITS BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL MIGHT LEAD SOMEWHERE.

6. THE IRAQIS NOW SAID THAT THEY WERE READY TO ACCEPT THE PRESENCE OF UN TROOPS, ALTHOUGH EXPERIENCE IN THE LEBANON SUGGESTED THAT THEY MIGHT NOT BE VERY EFFECTIVE. NEVERTHELESS THE IDEA SHOULD NOT BE ALTOGETHER DISCARDED. NOR SHOULD THE IDEA OF SANCTIONS, WHETHER GLOBAL OR MORE LIMITED, BE DISREGARDED. WE COULD NOT AFFORD TO REMAIN IDLE. HE AGREED THAT WE SHOULD REMAIN IN CLOSE TOUCH BOTH IN NEW YORK AND BETWEEN FOREIGN MINISTRIES.

7. IT WAS NO SECRET THAT THE SOVIET UNION HAD SUPPLIED ARMS TO IRAQ. THEY HAD STOPPED THE FLOW OF ARMS WHEN IRAQ ATTACKED IRAN, AND INDEED HAD TRIED TO DISSUADE IRAQ BEFORE THE EVENT. BUT TO STOP THE FLOW OF ARMS TO IRAQ NOW WOULD HAVE UNPREDICTABLE CONSEQUENCES, AND IT MIGHT WELL BE THAT WE TOO WOULD NOT WANT THIS TO HAPPEN. THE SECRETARY OF STATE SAID THAT ALTHOUGH WE WANTED TO END THE WAR, IT WAS VERY DIFFICULT TO FIND A WAY OF DOING THAT ON TERMS ACCEPTABLE TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD. IT WAS ASKIN TO TRYING TO ARRANGE A DRAW IN A FOOTBALL MATCH.

8. SHEVARDNADZE SAID THAW THERE SHOULD BE NO COVERT ARMS SUPPLIES. CERTAIN COUNTRIES HAD LEARNED THEIR LESSON. THE SAME APPLIED TO THE CHINESE SYSTEMS WHICH WE HAD MENTIONED. THE SOVIET UNION WAS ALSO PRESSING THIS POINT ON OTHER COUNTRIES. BOTH SIDES WERE RECEIVING SUCH SUPPLIES AT PRESENT.

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9. THE SECURITY COUNCIL SEEMED THE ONLY POSSIBLE FORUM FOR PROGRESS: IF THERE WAS A REAL CHANCE OF GETTING ANYWHERE HE WOULD NOT DISCARD THE IDEA OF A SPECIAL SESSION WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTERS OF PERMANENT MEMBERS PRESENT. THE SECRETARY OF STATE SAID THAT HE WOULD NOT EXCLUDE THIS, THOUGH PROCEDURAL CHANGES OF THAT SORT ALONE WOULD NOT NECESSARILY BRING AN ANSWER, AND COULD IF HANDLED WRONGLY DEVALUE SUCH A GATHERING. THAT CARD COULD ONLY BE PLAYED ONCE. SHEVARDNADZE SAID THAT HE AGREED: ANY SUCH MEETING WOULD NEED THOROUGH PREPARATION, AND SHOULD ONLY BE HELD IF THERE WERE A REAL CHANCE OF PROGRESS. HE ADDED THAT NEVERTHELESS THIS WAS WHAT THE IRAQIS WERE PRESSING FOR.

CARTLEDGE

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IFAN/IRAQ

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TELNO 521

OF 310015Z MARCH 87

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FROM PRIVATE SECRETARY

SECRETARY OF STATE'S TALKS WITH SHEVARDNADZE, 30 MARCH:  
MIDDLE EAST

## SUMMARY

1. SHEVARDNADZE PRESSES NEED FOR ACTION, BUT ACCEPTS THAT OVERHASTY CONVENING OF INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OR PREPARATORY CONFERENCE COULD BE DANGEROUS. MORE BILATERAL WORK NEEDED. SECRETARY OF STATE SUGGESTS NUDGING PROCESS FORWARD SEMI COLON STRESSES IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING PLO/HUSSEIN LINK. SHEVARDNADZE UNABLE TO RESPOND ON UNIFIL ARREARS.

## DETAIL

2. SHEVARDNADZE ASKED ABOUT THE BRITISH POSITION ON AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE, ADDING THAT HIS IMPRESSION WAS THAT IT HAD NOT CHANGED. THE SECRETARY OF STATE SAID THAT THE EC HAD MOVED TO THE EXTENT OF ISSUING A DECLARATION RECOGNISING THAT SUCH A CONFERENCE UNDER UN AUSPICES COULD BE USEFUL. HOWEVER THE UTMOST CAUTION WAS NEEDED IN ORDER TO AVOID STARTING A PROCEDURE WHICH WOULD SEND THE HESITANT PARTIES TO THE CONFLICT SCURRYING BACK TO THEIR BURROWS. IT WAS EASIER TO SAY WHAT MIGHT GO WRONG THAN TO SAY WHAT MIGHT GO RIGHT. EVEN PERES, WHO WAS MORE INCLINED TO HELP, COULD DO NOTHING WITHOUT SOME HELP FROM THE SOVIET UNION ON DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS AND JEWISH EMIGRATION.
3. ON THE ARAB SIDE THERE REMAINED A FRAGILE COOPERATION BETWEEN KING HUSSEIN AND THE PLO WHICH HAD EXISTED A YEAR AGO, AND STILL JUST SURVIVED. THE PLO WERE TRYING TO RECONSTRUCT THEIR OWN UNITY, AND THERE WAS TO BE A MEETING OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL NEXT MONTH. IT WAS ESSENTIAL TO SEE THAT THE SEARCH FOR PLO UNITY DID NOT BREAK THE FRAGILE BRIDGE BETWEEN THE PLO AND HUSSEIN.
4. THERE WAS ALSO THE QUESTION OF SYRIAN PARTICIPATION, ABOUT WHICH THE RUSSIANS WOULD KNOW MORE THAN WE WOULD. IT WAS VERY HARD TO SEE HOW TO CARRY THE PRESENT SITUATION FORWARD, BUT FAILURE TO DO SO WOULD LEAD TO INCREASING FRUSTRATION AND IN TURN TO STRIFE, CONFRONTATION AND MORE TERRORISM. IF WE ORGANISED A FORMAL CONFERENCE OR A PREPARATORY CONFERENCE AND FAILED, WE WOULD BE WORSE OFF. WE NEEDED TO NUDGE THINGS FORWARD AND TO AVOID PRECIPITATE ACTION.

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5. SHEVARDNADZE SAID THAT SEPARATE NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE VARIOUS PARTIES HAD NOT LED TO RESULTS BUT HAD RATHER COMPLICATED THE PROBLEM. THE IRAN/IRAQ WAR WAS ANOTHER FACTOR LOOMING ON THE HORIZON: AN IRANIAN VICTORY COULD HAVE PROFOUND EFFECTS. WE DID NOT HAVE INFINITE TIME. ALMOST ALL NATIONS SUPPORTED THE IDEA OF AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE, AND HE HAD CONSIDERED THE EC DECLARATION.

6. THE CONFERENCE WAS ONLY A MEANS OF FINDING A SETTLEMENT AND NOT AN END IN ITSELF. IT NEEDED TO BE PREPARED, BUT HE WAS NOT SURE HOW. SOMEONE HAD TO COME UP WITH AN INITIATIVE SINCE ISRAEL AND SYRIA WOULD NOT SEMI COLON THUS THE IDEA OF A PREPARATORY CONFERENCE: THE SECURITY COUNCIL PERMANENT MEMBERS WERE THE OBVIOUS PEOPLE TO MANAGE THIS, THOUGH IF ANOTHER OPTION COULD BE FOUND THE SOVIET UNION WAS READY TO CONSIDER IT. HE RECOGNISED THAT IT WOULD BE DANGEROUS TO ACCELERATE THE PACE ARTIFICIALLY. MORE WORK WAS EVIDENTLY NEEDED BEFORE IT WAS POSSIBLE TO CONVENE EVEN A PREPARATORY CONFERENCE. MORE DIALOGUE WAS NEEDED BOTH ON A MULTILATERAL AND A BILATERAL BASIS, WHICH WOULD OF COURSE HAVE TO INCLUDE ISRAEL AS WELL AS OTHERS. IN THE COURSE OF THIS CONTACTS BETWEEN THE SOVIET UNION AND ISRAEL COULD TAKE PLACE. WE SHOULD DISCUSS OUR RESPECTIVE ROLES IN THIS, GIVEN OUR RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL AND SOVIET UNION'S WITH SYRIA AND OTHER ARAB STATES.

7. IN FURTHER DISCUSSION THE SECRETARY OF STATE SAID THAT OUR APPROACHES WERE NOT THAT DISSIMILAR: LEAPING TOWARDS A PREPARATORY CONFERENCE WOULD RISK IMMEDIATE FAILURE, BUT PRESSURE FROM THE SOVIET UNION ON HER FRIENDS COULD HELP TO CARRY FORWARD THE PROCESS. HE SUGGESTED SHEVARDNADZE SHOULD DISCUSS THIS WITH SHULTZ. SHEVARDNADZE SAID THAT HE WOULD DO SO, BUT CONTINUED TO MAINTAIN THAT THE UK ALSO HAD INFLUENCE WITH ISRAEL.

8. SUMMING UP, SHEVARDNADZE SAID THAT WE SEEMED TO AGREE GENERALLY ON A CAUTIOUS APPROACH: HE COULD ACCEPT THAT MORE WORK WAS NEEDED BEFORE A PREPARATORY CONFERENCE COULD TAKE PLACE, BUT THAT WORK HAD TO GET STARTED. WE SHOULD TALK TO THE US. THE FRENCH WERE LIKELY TO GO ALONG WITH SUCH AN APPROACH, AND THE CHINESE WOULD NOT OPPOSE IT. PRESSURE NEEDED TO BE PUT ON BOTH SIDES.

LEBANON AND UNIFIL

9. THE SECRETARY OF STATE SAID THERE WAS A SERIOUS HUMANITARIAN PROBLEM IN THE PALESTINIAN CAMPS. WE HAD TRIED TO ENCOURAGE THE PARTIES TO ALLOW ACCESS TO THE CAMPS. IT WOULD HELP IF THE SOVIET UNION COULD ENCOURAGE SYRIA IN THE SAME DIRECTION. (SHEVARDNADZE DID NOT RESPOND.) 2

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10. WE DID NOT REGARD UNIFIL AS THE BEST EXAMPLE OF CONCERTED UN ACTION, BUT IT HAD NEVERTHELESS BEEN A FORCE FOR STABILITY, AND WE WERE GLAD THAT THE SOVIET UNION NOW SUPPORTED IT. ITS FINANCIAL PROBLEMS WOULD BE MUCH EASER IF THE SOVIET UNION PAID ITS ARREARS OF CONTRIBUTIONS. SHEVARDNADZE SAID THAT THE SOVIET DECISION ON UNIFIL HAD BEEN A VERY HARD ONE TO TAKE. AS TO HOW IT MIGHT BE CARRIED FURTHER, HE WAS NOT AT THIS STAGE IN A POSITION TO SAY. THE SUBJECT COULD BECOME EVEN MORE COMPLEX IF UN TROOPS WERE TO GO TO IRAQ, OR CENTRAL AMERICA OR OTHER AREAS. THE SECRETARY OF STATE SAID THAT WAS NOT A ROAD DOWN WHICH HE WOULD WISH TO FOLLOW.

CARTLEDGE

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