

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 ACDA-05 OMB-01 TRSE-00 SAJ-01 ERDA-05 FEA-01

NRC-05 MC-02 AGR-05 AID-05 EB-07 COME-00 SAM-01 IO-10

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P R 151836Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3123

INFO USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 23731

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, FR, IZ

SUBJECT: SADDAM HUSSEIN VISIT TO FRANCE

SUMMARY:THE QUAI VIEWS SADDAM'S VISIT AS AN IMPORTANT
STAGE IN IRAQ'S OPENING TO THE WEST. FRENCH EFFORTS TO
IMPRESS THE VP SEEM TO HAVE CREATED AN EXCELLENT
ATMOSPHERE BUT NO SPECTACULAR AGREEMENT WAS SIGNED.
THE TWO SIDES' POSITIONS ON THE MIDDLE EAST COINCIDED
ONLY PARTIALLY. AGREEMENTS FOR COOPERATION IN NUCLEAR
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ENERGY AND COMPUTERS WERE MADE AND FRENCH PARTICIPATION

IN INDUSTRIAL AND AGRICULTURAL PROJECTS DISCUSSED. NO DETAILS ON OIL AND MILITARY TALKS ARE YET AVAILABLE. FRENCH EFFORTS TO CULTIVATE IRAQ MAY BE HELPFUL IN KEEPING IRAQ'S WINDOW TO THE WEST OPEN. END SUMMARY

1. DURING A DISCUSSION OF IRAQI VP SADDAM HUSSEIN'S SEPTEMBER 5 - 11 OFFICIAL VISIT WITH EMBOFF SEPTEMBER 12, QUAI DIRECTOR FOR THE ME AND NORTH AFRICA CERLES (FORMER AMBASSADOR IN BAGHDAD WHO ACCOMPANIED SADDAM THROUGHOUT) STRESSED THE POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE VISIT, NOT SIMPLY FOR FRANCO-IRAQI BILATERAL RELATIONS, BUT AS AN IMPORTANT NEW STAGE IN IRAQ'S OPENING TO THE WEST. CERLES NOTED THAT THE IRAQI LEADERSHIP IS VERY WELL AWARE OF THE STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE WHICH ITS GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION, OIL RESOURCES, AGRICULTURAL POTENTIAL AND ADEQUATE POPULATION GIVE THE COUNTRY. MORE PRAGMATIC THAN ITS PREDECESSOR, THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT, ACCORDING TO CERLES, HAS DECIDED TO UTILIZE FULLY ITS ASSETS TO CAPITALIZE UPON ITS STRATEGIC POSITION IN THE EAST-WEST STRUGGLE. IRAQ DOES NOT INTEND GREATLY TO WEAKEN ITS TIES WITH THE SOVIETS, HE CONTINUED, BUT DOES WISH TO STRENGTHEN RELATIONS WITH THE OCCIDENT. THE PATTERN OF TWO STEPS FORWARD, ONE BACKWARD, WILL DOUBTLESS CONTINUE, HE SAID, DESCRIBING SADDAM'S VISIT TO FRANCE AS A SIGNIFICANT FORWARD MOVEMENT.

2. REVERTING TO ONE OF HIS FAVORITE THEMES, CERLES ALSO STRESSED THE GREAT EFFORT THE FRENCH MADE TO APPEAL TO THE IRAQI LONGING (SHARED WITH OTHER THIRD WORLD NATIONS) FOR RECOGNITION. THE CONTENT OF WHAT WESTERNERS SAY AND DO IS USUALLY LESS IMPORTANT TO SENSITIVE IRAQIS THAN THE MANNER, HE ASSERTED. HENCE THE FRENCH ARRANGED FOR SADDAM TO SPEND MANY HOURS IN THE BOSOM OF PM CHIRAC'S FAMILY, DEMONSTRATING THEREBY THE GENUINE REGARD AND FRIENDSHIP FOR SADDAM WHICH DEVELOPED DURING THE PM'S DECEMBER VISIT TO IRAQ. THIS GESTURE TO IRAQ'S PRIDE WAS AT LEAST AS IMPORTANT IN PRODUCING THE "FRIENDLY, WARM AND RELAXED ATMOSPHERE" OF THE VISIT AS THE FULL RED-CARPET TREATMENT THE FRENCH ACCORDED THE IRAQI GUEST, CERLES INSISTED.

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3. IN ADDITION TO PASSING THE WEEKEND WITH CHIRAC VISITING VARIOUS MILITARY, INDUSTRIAL AND TOURISTIC ATTRACTIONS IN SOUTHERN FRANCE (INCLUDING A STAY AT BAUMANIERE, ONE OF FRANCE'S MOST RENOWNED AND SPECTACULARLY BEAUTIFUL RESTAURANTS), SADDAM HELD A TETE-A-TETE WITH GISCARD AND MEETINGS WITH THE MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, INDUSTRY AND RESEARCH, AND COMMERCE

IN PARIS. ON POLITICAL MATTERS, THE TWO SIDES AGREED TO DISAGREE ABOUT SOME ASPECTS OF THE MIDDLE EAST, AS REFLECTED IN THE COMMUNIQUE'S LANGUAGE WHICH, ACCORDING TO CERLES, REQUIRED CONSIDERABLE NEGOTIATION FROM WHICH THE FRENCH EMERGED QUITE SATISFIED. "CONCERNING THE MIDDLE EAST, THE TWO PARTIES REAFFIRMED THEIR TRADITIONAL AND WELL-KNOWN POSITIONS. THEY AGREED ON THE NECESSITY FOR THE EVACUATION OF OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES AND THE RECOGNITION OF THE NATIONAL RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE."

4. CERLES TOOK A CERTAIN SATISFACTION IN THE FOLLOWING EARLIER PARAGRAPHS OF THE COMMUNIQUE: "...THEY AGREED

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ACTION EUR-12

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INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 PARIS 23731

TO UNDERLINE THE EQUAL ATTACHMENT OF THE TWO GOVERNMENTS TO THE PRINCIPLES OF NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE, RESPECT FOR THE INDEPENDENCE OF OTHER STATES, AND NONINTERFERENCE AS WELL AS COOPERATION AMONG ALL PEACE-LOVING STATES. IN THIS RESPECT, THE VICE PRESIDENT AND THE PRIME MINISTER REAFFIRMED THE IMPORTANCE WHICH THEY ATTACH TO THE DIALOGUE UNDERTAKEN BETWEEN THE ARAB STATES AND THE EUROPEAN STATES THE OBJECT OF WHICH IS TO LEAD TO A CONFIDENTIAL

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RAPPROCHEMENT AND ENTENTE DICTATED BY THE COMPLIMENTARITY OF INTERESTS AND THEIR MUTUAL BALANCE AND WHICH WILL SERVE THE CAUSE OF WORLD PEACE. THE TWO PARTIES RECALLED THE NECESSITY FOR SETTLING INTERNATIONAL PROBLEMS BY PACIFIC MEANS IN CONFORMITY WITH THE UNITED NATIONS CHARTER, INTERNATIONAL LAW AND TREATIES." CERLES ASSERTED THAT THIS LANGUAGE MORE THAN MADE UP FOR THE LACK OF SPECIFIC MENTION OF FRANCE'S CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR THE EXISTENCE OF ALL STATES IN THE REGION.

5. IN HIS PRIVATE TALKS, SADDAM WAS "MODERATE", CERLES TO UNDERLINE THE EQUAL ATTACHMENT OF THE TWO GOVERNMENTS TO THE PRINCIPLES OF NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE, RESPECT FOR THE INDEPENDENCE OF OTHER STATES, AND NONINTERFERENCE AS WELL AS COOPERATION AMONG ALL PEACE-LOVING STATES. IN THIS RESPECT, THE VICE PRESIDENT AND THE PRIME MINISTER REAFFIRMED THE IMPORTANCE WHICH THEY ATTACH TO THE DIALOGUE UNDERTAKEN BETWEEN THE ARAB STATES AND THE EUROPEAN STATES THE OBJECT OF WHICH IS TO LEAD TO A RAPPROCHEMENT AND ENTENTE DICTATED BY THE COMPLIMENTARITY OF INTERESTS AND THEIR MUTUAL BALANCE AND WHICH WILL SERVE THE CAUSE OF WORLD PEACE. THE TWO PARTIES RECALLED THE NECESSITY FOR SETTLING INTERNATIONAL PROBLEMS BY PACIFIC MEANS IN CONFORMITY WITH THE UNITED NATIONS CHARTER, INTERNATIONAL LAW AND TREATIES." CERLES ASSERTED THAT THIS LANGUAGE MORE THAN MADE UP FOR THE LACK OF SPECIFIC MENTION OF FRANCE'S CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR THE EXISTENCE OF ALL STATES IN THE REGION.

5. IN HIS PRIVATE TALKS, SADDAM WAS "MODERATE", CERLES SAID, AND IN REPLYING TO FRENCH FAVORABLE COMMENT ABOUT THE AGREEMENT, DID NOT GO BEYOND HIS PUBLIC CHARACTERIZATION OF SINAI II AS "NOT WORTHY OF APPROVAL". HE

ALSO APPEARED TO HAVE WARMED UP CONSIDERABLY TO THE EURO-ARAB DIALOGUE, ABOUT WHICH IRAQ HAD INITIALLY BEEN AMONG THE LEAST ENTHUSIASTIC ARAB STATES. THE FRENCH ALSO PROCURED A FAVORABLE BOW IN THE DIRECTION OF GISCARD'S ENERGY CONFERENCE IN THE COMMUNIQUE.

6. THE TWO PARTIES INITIALED AN AGREEMENT FOR COOPERATION IN THE PEACEFUL USE OF NUCLEAR ENERGY ABOUT WHICH CONFIDENTIAL

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CERLES CLAIMED TO KNOW NO DETAILS. HE ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT FRANCE IS INSISTING ON THE USUAL BROAD SAFEGUARDS. THIS DRAFT AGREEMENT HAS BEEN SENT TO EURATOM AND WILL BE SIGNED WHEN APPROVED BY BRUSSELS. ON SEPARATE OCCASION, QUAI SCIENTIFIC AFFAIRS DIRECTOR DE NAZELLE SAID THAT ACCORD WAS MORE A COVER AGREEMENT; I.E., AN AGREEMENT TO AGREE. SPECIFICS SUCH AS DEVELOPING AN EXPERIMENTAL NUCLEAR CENTER, TRAINING PERSONNEL AND IN LONG TERM BUILDING A NUCLEAR POWER STATION, OF THE WESTINGHOUSE DESIGN, WOULD BE WORKED OUT IN FUTURE, STARTING WITH THE VISIT TO IRAQ BY MINISTER OF INDUSTRY AND RESEARCH D'ORNANO ON OCTOBER 10. (COMMENT; APPARENTLY THE IRAQIS HAVE BEEN DISSUADED FROM PURSUING THEIR INTEREST IN OBTAINING GAS GRAPHITE, NATURAL URANIUM REACTOR OF THE TYPE ABANDONED BY THE FRENCH IN 1969).

7. A TECHNICAL COOPERATION AGREEMENT IN THE COMPUTER FIELD, NOTABLY IN THE AREA OF "SOFTWARE" WAS ALSO SIGNED. FURTHER DISCUSSIONS ON THE EARLIER IRAQI DECISION TO ADOPT THE SECAM COLOR TELEVISION SYSTEM AND ON FRENCH PARTICIPATION IN THE IRAQI DEVELOPMENT PLAN WERE ALSO HELD. CERLES INDICATED THAT THE LOWER-THAN-EXPECTED LEVEL OF OIL REVENUE REQUIRED A DELAY IN MANY OF THE INDUSTRIAL AND AGRICULTURAL PROJECTS IN WHICH THE FRENCH ARE PARTICIPATING AND CONSEQUENT REPLANNING.

8. WHILE OIL WAS DISCUSSED, CERLES SAID, NO NEGOTIATIONS ABOUT QUANTITY, PRICE OR THE LIKE WERE UNDERTAKEN. HE WAS EQUALLY RETICENT ABOUT ANY BILATERAL TALKS ON MILITARY QUESTIONS, INDICATING ONLY THAT SADDAM HAD SPENT ABOUT THREE-QUARTERS OF AN HOUR LOOKING AT HELICOPTERS AND TRAINERS (EUROPEAN, NOT FRENCH) WHILE IN THE MIDI.

9. FINALLY, CERLES SAID SADDAM'S HEALTH APPEARED EXCELLENT, DESPITE SOME SEEMINGLY MINOR DIFFICULTY HE HAD WITH HIS BACK (DISCS?) ONE DAY. PRESS REPORTS TO THE CONTRARY WERE UNTRUE, CERLES MAINTAINED.

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10. COMMENT: IRAQ'S RICH POTENTIAL AMONG THE ARAB STATES HAS NOT ESCAPED THE FRENCH. THE QUAI BELIEVES THAT SADDAM IS THE KEY TO WESTERN ASSOCIATION WITH IRAQ'S DEVELOPMENT AND THAT WITH PROPER HANDLING, FRANCE CAN ACHIEVE PRIVILEGED PARTICIPATION IN THE PROCESS. THE QUAI SEEMS WILLING TO WORK HARD AND PATIENTLY TO THAT END AND IS CONVINCED THAT BY SO DOING, IT IS SERVING THE WEST'S, AS WELL AS ITS OWN, POLITICAL INTERESTS. HOWEVER UNSPECTACULAR THE INITIAL RESULTS OF SADDAM'S VISIT APPEAR TO BE, THE FRENCH EFFORT MAY, IN FACT, BE HELPFUL IN KEEPING IRAQ'S WINDOW TO THE WEST OPEN.

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