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PS/No.10 DOWNING ST (2)
 CABINET OFFICE D I O

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PP BAGHDAD
 PP TEHRAN
 PP MOSCOW

IMMEDIATE

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FM WASHINGTON 201935Z FEB 84
 TO IMMEDIATE F C O
 TELEGRAM NUMBER 588 OF 20 FEBRUARY
 INFO PRIORITY BAGHDAD, TEHRAN, MOSCOW, UKMIS NEW YORK.

YOUR TEL 337 : IRAN/IRAQ.

1. WE WENT OVER THE GROUND WITH PLACKE (DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY, STATE DEPARTMENT) OUTLING THE IMPRESSION GIVEN BY THE UK MEDIA AND THE POSSIBLE THRUST OF QUESTIONS TO THE PM.
2. THE AMERICAN VIEW OF DEVELOPMENTS ON THE GROUND AND THEIR IMMEDIATE INTENTIONS ARE COVERED IN OUR TEL 586. AS REGARDS THE

AND THE POSSIBLE THREAT OF QUESTIONS TO THE PM.

~~2. THE AMERICAN VIEW OF DEVELOPMENTS ON THE GROUND AND THEIR IMMEDIATE INTENTIONS ARE COVERED IN OUR TEL 596.~~ AS REGARDS THE SOVIET UNION, PLACKE SAID THAT THE ADMINISTRATION REGARDED IT AS NEITHER FEASIBLE NOR DESIRABLE TO SEEK NEXT TWO WORDS UNDERLINED IN ADVANCE AN UNDERSTANDING ABOUT MILITARY ACTIVITY IN THE GULF. THE SOVIET NAVAL PRESENCE IN THE GULF WAS FAR SMALLER THAN THE AMERICAN. THE US HAD NO DESIRE TO PROVIDE AN OPENING FOR THE RUSSIANS TO INCREASE THEIR NAVAL PRESENCE NOR THEIR DIPLOMATIC POSITION GENERALLY. THEY WERE NOT ACTIVELY TRYING TO EXCLUDE THE RUSSIANS BUT WERE CERTAINLY NOT ANXIOUS TO ENCOURAGE THEM PARTICULARLY WHEN IT WAS SO UNLIKELY THAT THEY WOULD GET ANYTHING USEFUL IN RETURN.

3. IF THE THREAT OF ESCALATION WERE TO BECOME REAL THE US WOULD, AS A FIRST STEP, CONSULT WITH ALLIES AND WITH THE STATES IN THE AREA. THEY WOULD ALSO CONSIDER ACTION IN THE UN WHICH WOULD AUTOMATICALLY BRING IN THE SOVIET UNION. WHETHER IT WOULD BE DESIRABLE ALSO TO INITIATE BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION WAS SOMETHING TO BE JUDGED AT THE TIME.

4. MORE GENERALLY, THE AMERICANS HAVE HAD OCCASIONAL DISCUSSIONS OF THE MIDDLE EAST WITH THE RUSSIANS. THEY HAVE FOUND THEIR PERCEPTIONS OF THE GULF WAR BROADLY SIMILAR. BOTH AGREE THAT IT WOULD BE DESIRABLE TO BRING IT TO AN END WITHOUT EITHER SIDE PREVAILING. US INTERVENTION WOULD BE A QUITE DIFFERENT MATTER OF WHICH THE RUSSIANS COULD BE EXPECTED TO BE SHARPLY CRITICAL.

5. AS REGARDS THE LINE SUGGESTED IN PARA 3 OF TELEGRAM UNDER REFERENCE, PLACKE IS UNAWARE THAT WE HAVE EVER SUGGESTED TO THE US THAT THEY SHOULD COME TO AN UNDERSTANDING WITH THE SOVIET UNION NEXT TWO WORDS UNDERLINED IN ADVANCE ABOUT POSSIBLE MILITARY ACTIVITY IN THE GULF.

6. IN THE LIGHT OF THE POSITION OUTLINED ABOVE, IT WOULD BE PREFERABLE NOT TO MAKE A PUBLIC SUGGESTION IN QUITE THESE TERMS WITHOUT FULLER DISCUSSION WITH THE AMERICANS FOR WHICH THERE WILL BE AN OPPORTUNITY DURING LEAHY'S VISIT ON 22 FEBRUARY. COULD WE NOT SAY THAT WE BELIEVE THAT EARLY CONTACTS BETWEEN THE US ITS ALLIES AND OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES INCLUDING THE SOVIET UNION WOULD BE ESSENTIAL IF THERE WAS TO BE SERIOUS ESCALATION IN THE GULF: THE US ARE AWARE OF OUR VIEWS ON THIS POINT.

7. FCO PLEASE PASS TO NO.10 AND CABINET OFFICE.

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