

2/19 2nd letter

Dear Mikhail:

I have now had more time to reflect on your letter reporting on the talks with Iraqi Foreign Minister Aziz, and I want to share my views with you.

My initial reaction noted several basic problems with your proposal. First, it sets the stage for negotiating the timing and modalities of a withdrawal, a negotiation contrary to the clear demand of UNSC Resolution 660 for immediate withdrawal. I said that anything longer than ninety-six hours would not meet the test of immediacy. Second, your proposal does not insist upon Iraqi compliance with all the relevant UNSC resolutions, as demanded in Resolution 678. And, third, there is no mention of the exchange of POWs or release of third country nationals held against their will.

Mikhail, I do appreciate your efforts, but I worry that incompleteness and ambiguities in ^{the} your proposal may give heart to Saddam Hussein that he can somehow escape the consequences of his actions and obtain an unclear outcome, which he can exploit politically. Accordingly, I want to convey to you amplification of my earlier points. Specifically:

-- There can be no ceasefire before a massive Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait begins ~~and~~ no cessation of overall hostilities until that withdrawal is completed. That withdrawal must be completed within ninety-six hours. Any other arrangements would risk the lives of coalition forces. We will

not attack retreating Iraqi troops, but any Iraqi breach of the conditions would bring instant ^{& thus resumption} ~~resumption of hostilities.~~

-- The exchange of prisoners of war must be completed within twenty-four hours of the initiation of the withdrawal.

-- All Iraqi SCUD missile attacks must cease simultaneously with the beginning of the withdrawal.

-- Finally, the Iraqis must understand that any use of chemical, biological or nuclear weapons would bring not only a devastating coalition response, but would ensure war crimes prosecutions once the war is over.

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Any Iraqi response must fully accept the conditions I have described if it is to be satisfactory to the United States and our coalition partners. Should the Iraqis accept the conditions I have described, the coalition would be prepared to talk directly with them regarding their implementation. Until all of these conditions are accepted, allied military operations will continue as planned.

The joint efforts of many nations, including the Soviet Union, have brought us to the threshold of a historic rebuff to an aggressor. We must not allow that aggressor now to salvage political gain or the basis of future aggression through negotiation or divisive tactics.