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DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

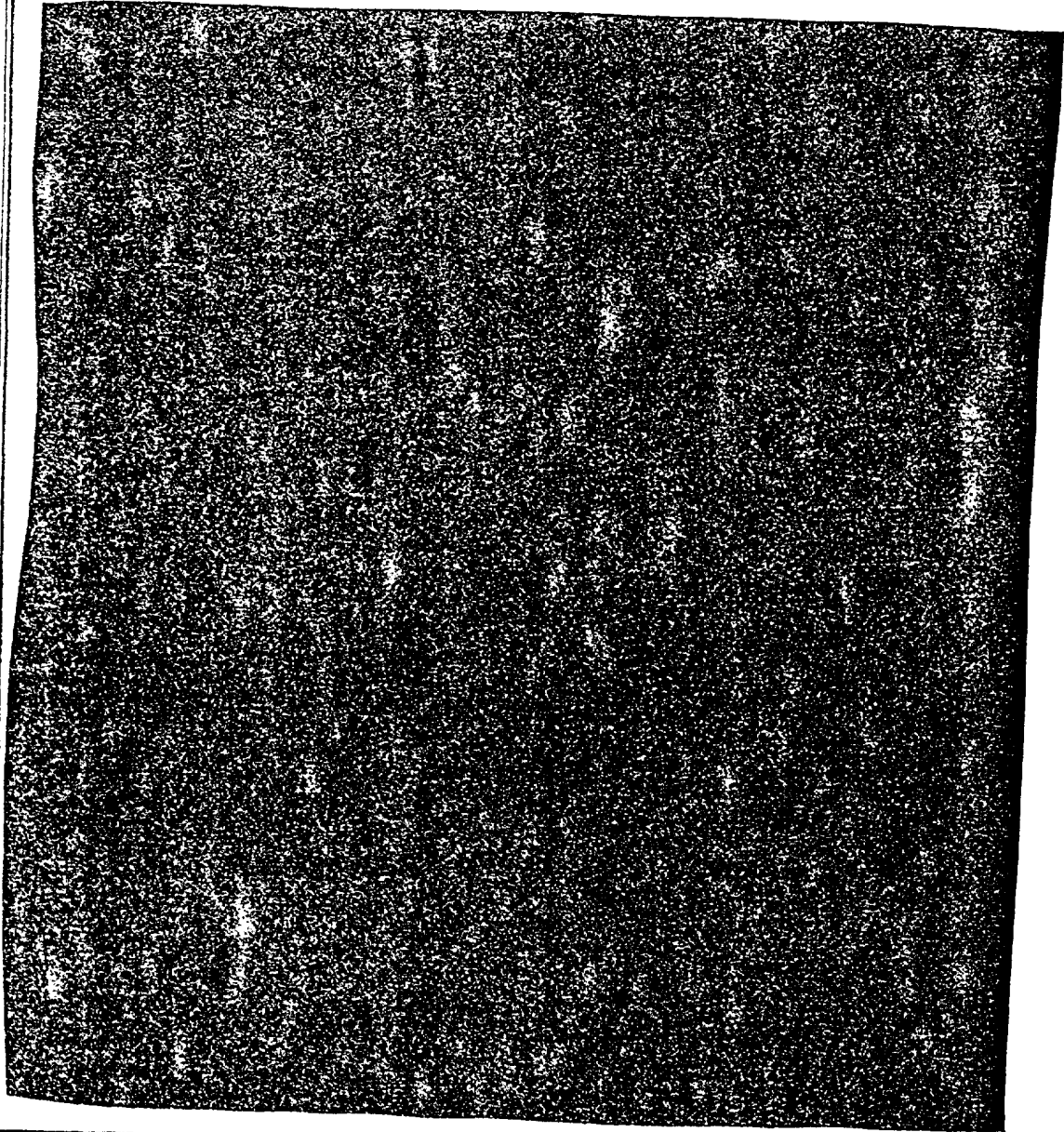
SPOT COMMENTARY

564

12 February 1991

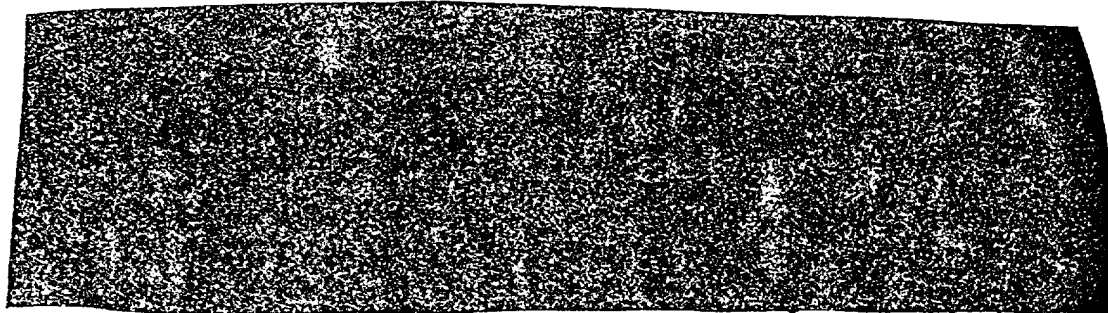
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IRAQ-KUWAIT: SITUATION REPORT #564



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Approved for Release
Date . OCT 4 1997



Political Developments

Saddam Responds to Soviet Initiative

Iraqi radio yesterday broadcast Saddam Husayn's response to a message from Soviet President Gorbachev, delivered by Yevgeniy Primakov. The main points of Saddam's statement follow what have been his standard line throughout the crisis:

- A just and honorable solution to all of the region's problems--especially one that protects Iraqi and Palestinian rights--can only be reached through dialogue.
- The US, in an attempt to dominate the entire region, is intentionally bombing Iraqi civilians and economic, cultural, and religious centers.
- The US is using UN resolutions as a cover to devastate Iraq, and the Soviets have a legal, political and moral responsibility to stop US aggression.
- Iraq is prepared to cooperate with the USSR to find an equitable solution "to the region's central issues, including the situation in the Gulf."
- Iraq is prepared to make great sacrifices to beat back the allied aggression.

Comment: Saddam's public response creates an illusion of flexibility, but does not offer any specific proposals or show a significant shift away from his previous position. The statement does not mention Kuwait or hint at any Iraqi willingness to withdraw. Baghdad almost certainly hopes to exploit Moscow's widely publicized position that the coalition

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air campaign is exceeding the scope of the UN resolutions to split the coalition and generate international pressure to halt the bombing. [REDACTED]

French Views on Use of Unconventional Weapons

French President Mitterrand apparently is having second thoughts about his statement in a 7 February interview that France--and by implication the coalition--would not employ chemical or nuclear weapons in response to Iraqi use of unconventional weapons. [REDACTED]

Comment: Mitterrand made clear in the interview that he could speak only for France, but undoubtedly realizes that his statement may conflict with the position of other coalition partners. Although French military leaders almost certainly prefer to keep Saddam guessing about coalition planning and capabilities, Defense Minister Joxe said last week that France's nuclear capability existed only to defend French territory and that France did not possess chemical weapons, according to press reports. [REDACTED]

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Exemptions: (b)(1) (b)(3)