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DECAPTIONED

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TO U/S KIMMITT FROM AMBASSADOR ARMACOST

E. O. 12356: DECL: OADR  
TAGS: PREL JA IQ  
SUBJECT: GOJ CONTRIBUTIONS AND GULF CRISIS

1. (S - ENTIRE TEXT).
2. AT HIS REQUEST I MET DEPUTY CHIEF CABINET SECRETARY OSHIMA ON JANUARY 15 TO DISCUSS THE GULF CRISIS. TATSUO ARIMA, CABINET COUNCILLOR, ACCOMPANIED HIM. HE ASKED FOR MY ASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION IN THE GULF, AND USG EXPECTATIONS OF THE GOJ IN THE EVENT WAR OCCURRED.
3. I TOLD OSHIMA THAT WHILE LAST MINUTE DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS COULD CONCEIVABLY CHANGE THE SITUATION, PROSPECTS FOR AVOIDING A WAR IN THE GULF WERE RAPIDLY DIMINISHING. ON THE BASIS OF SECRETARY BAKER'S MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER AZIZ AND SECRETARY-GENERAL PEREZ DE CUELLAR'S SUBSEQUENT TRIP TO BAGHDAD, THERE SEEMED LITTLE REASON TO EXPECT ANY DIPLOMATIC FLEXIBILITY FROM THE IRAQIS. CONSEQUENTLY, IT IS IMPORTANT TO BE PREPARED FOR THE WORST.
4. OSHIMA INTERJECTED TO EXPRESS GREAT RESPECT FOR PRESIDENT BUSH'S LEADERSHIP IN CONFRONTING THE GULF CRISIS, AND LAMENTED

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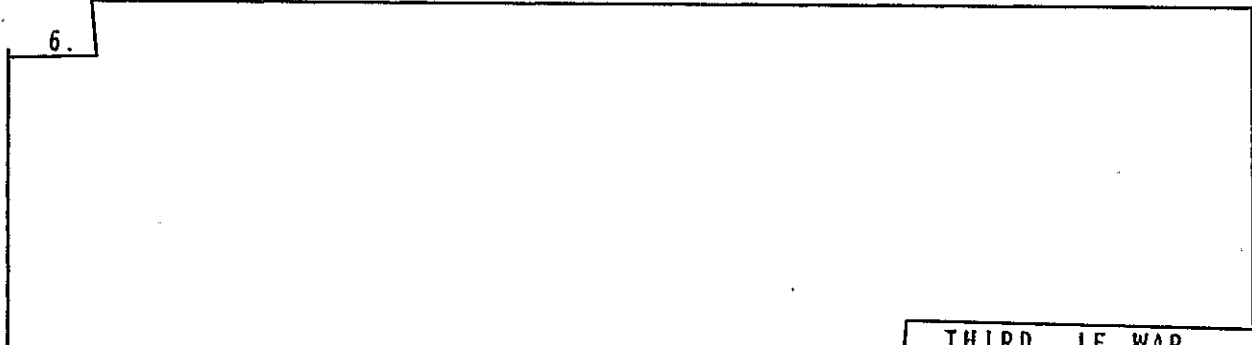
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THE FAILURE OF THE GOJ TO SECURE PASSAGE LAST FALL OF THE UN  
COOPERATION BILL. HE ADDED THAT DUE TO PROBLEMS IN THE UPPER  
HOUSE, IT SEEMED UNLIKELY THAT A REVISED BILL COULD PASS SOON,  
AND WAS UNLIKELY EVEN TO BE SUBMITTED UNTIL AFTER THE LOCAL  
ELECTIONS IN APRIL.

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5. I OBSERVED THAT OUR HOPES JAPAN MIGHT SOMEHOW SHARE THE  
RISKS AS WELL AS THE COSTS OF THE COLLECTIVE ENTERPRISE IN THE  
GULF APPEARED ACADEMIC. ONE WAY OR THE OTHER THE GULF CRISIS  
SEEMED LIKELY TO BE OVER BEFORE THE GOJ GOT AROUND TO PASSING A  
UN COOPERATION BILL.

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THIRD, IF WAR  
COMES, THERE WILL BE HUGE REFUGEE PROBLEMS, AND AN OBVIOUS NEED  
FOR LEADERSHIP IN COPING WITH THEM. THIS SEEMS A NATURAL TASK  
FOR JAPAN TO TACKLE. THE NEW UNHCR IS A JAPANESE; JAPAN HAS  
JUST ANNOUNCED A SIGNIFICANT NEW FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION TO COPE  
WITH REFUGEE PROBLEMS IN THE MIDDLE EAST. WHAT REMAINS IS TO  
SUPPLY A POLITICAL LEAD ALONG WITH LOGISTIC AND OTHER FORMS OF  
SUPPORT IN THE FACE OF A CRISIS.

7. OSHIMA ZEROED RIGHT IN ON THE ISSUE OF FURTHER FINANCIAL  
CONTRIBUTIONS, NOTING THAT DIET BUDGETARY PROCEDURES WOULD MAKE  
DIFFICULT ANY DISCUSSION OF A CONCRETE SUPPLEMENTAL FIGURE  
PRIOR TO THE PASSAGE IN THE LOWER HOUSE OF THE FISCAL 1991  
BUDGET BILL -- WHICH HE INDICATED WOULD COME IN LATE FEBRUARY  
AT THE EARLIEST; MORE LIKELY EARLY MARCH. I TOLD HIM THAT WE  
UNDERSTAND JAPAN'S BUDGETARY PROCEDURES, AND UNDER  
CIRCUMSTANCES OF A CONTINUED IMPASSE IN THE GULF WOULD SEEK TO  
HANDLE ANY REQUESTS IN A MANNER WHICH DID NOT COMPLICATE THE

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POLITICAL MANAGEMENT OF THEIR BUDGET.

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8. OSHIMA WELCOMED THE SUGGESTION THAT JAPAN MIGHT TAKE ON A LEADERSHIP ROLE IN COPING WITH REFUGEE PROBLEMS. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THIS WAS AN AREA IN WHICH A SIGNIFICANT ROLE MIGHT BE CARVED OUT, BUT OFFERED NO PARTICULARS ON WHAT THE GOJ WAS PREPARED TO DO.

9. OSHIMA CAME BACK TO THE UN COOPERATION BILL, REGRETTING THAT IT HAD NOT BEEN PASSED, BUT ASKING THAT I SEEK WASHINGTON'S UNDERSTANDING OF WHY A REVISED BILL WOULD TAKE THEM TIME TO FORMULATE. I NOTED THAT THE POLITICAL DILEMMAS WE FACED DWARFED ANYTHING JAPAN CONFRONTED. WE WERE STARING WAR IN THE FACE, WITH OUR LEGISLATURE IN THE HANDS OF THE OPPOSITON, PUBLIC OPINION DIVIDED, AND AUTHORIZATION TO UTILIZE FORCE SUPPORTED BY A THIN MAJORITY IN CONGRESS. WITHIN A FEW DAYS WE COULD BE TAKING CASUALTIES. HENCE, THE GOJ SHOULD REGARD ITS POLITICAL PROBLEMS WITH A SENSE OF PROPORTION.

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IF IT COMES TO WAR, I URGED JAPAN TO DO PROMPTLY WHAT IT CAN TO HELP IN A PRACTICAL WAY, MANAGE THE POLITICS WITH RESOLUTION, AND ANNOUNCE ITS DECISIONS FORTHRIGHTLY WITHOUT WAITING FOR FOREIGN PRESSURE.

10. OSHIMA ASKED HOW QUICKLY WE WOULD HAVE A CLEAR IDEA OF OUR

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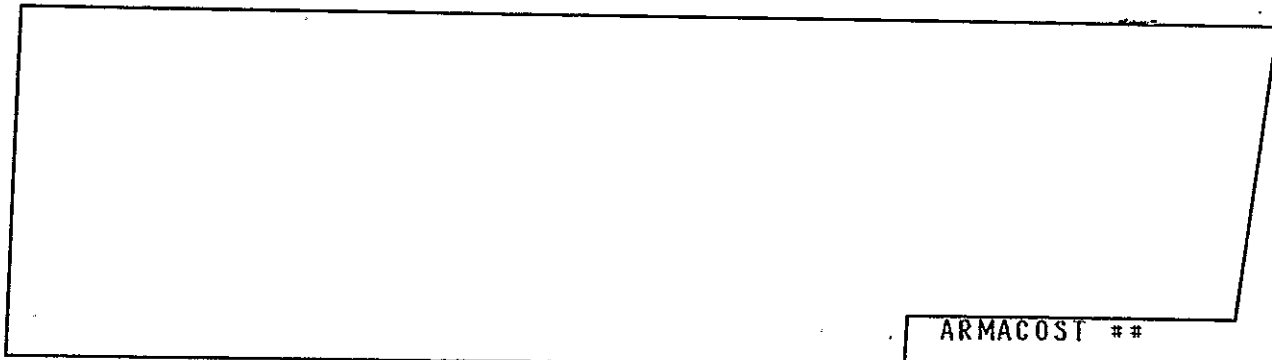
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ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS. I SAID I DID NOT KNOW, BUT  
PRESUMED WE WOULD HAVE CLEAR ESTIMATES RATHER QUICKLY. I ADDED  
THAT SECRETARY BAKER HAD EXHIBITED SENSITIVITY TO GOJ BUDGET  
PROCEDURES BY ASKING MINISTER NAKAYAMA TO COME UP WITH  
SOMETHING AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE AFTER JANUARY 25.

11. OSHIMA SAID HE HAD TO GO OFF TO AN IMPORTANT MEETING AT  
WHICH THESE ISSUES WOULD BE FURTHER DISCUSSED. HE INDICATED HE  
MIGHT BE BACK IN TOUCH, AND SEEMED TO WELCOME THE FRANK EXCHANGE.



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