



DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

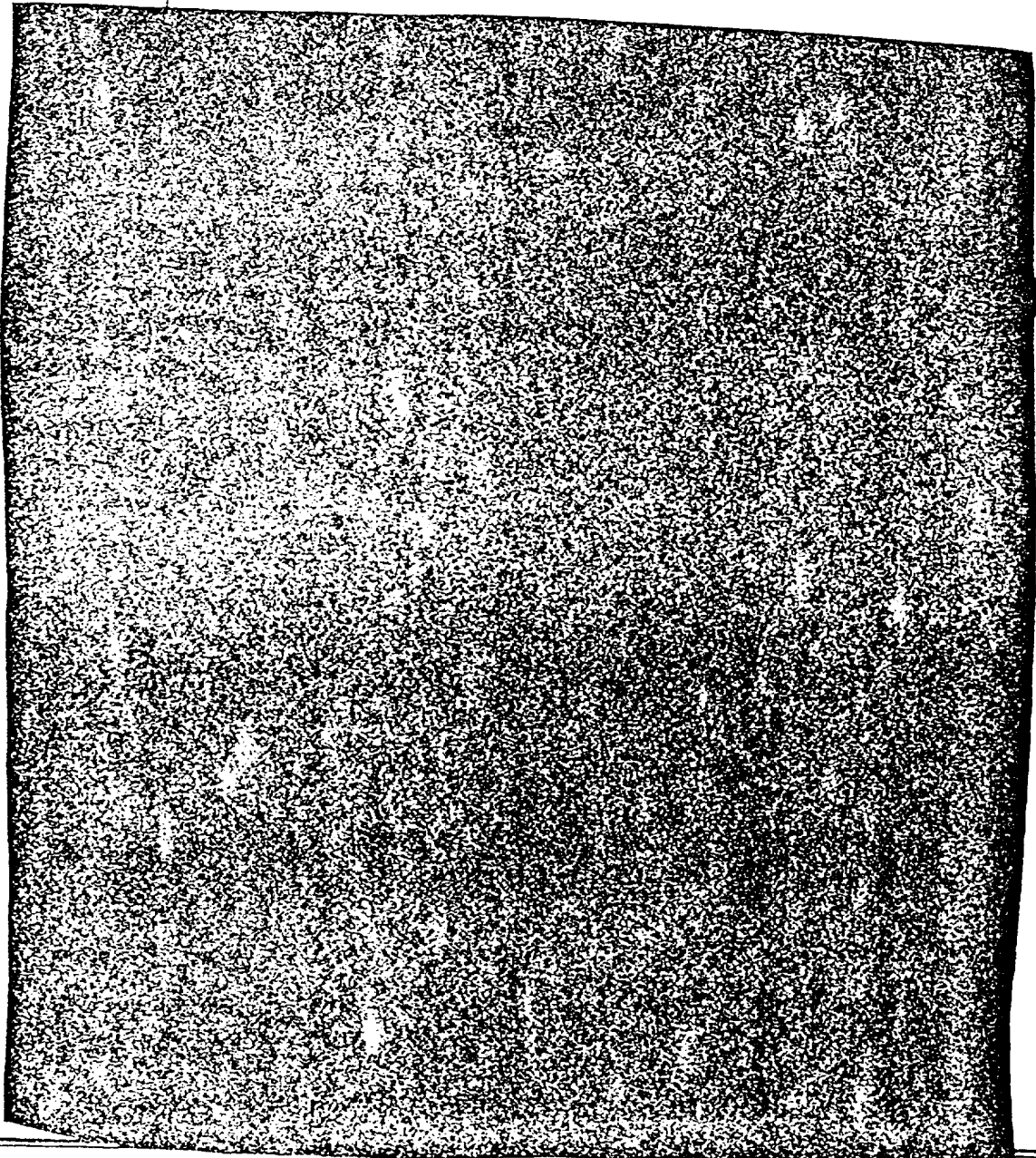
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SPOT COMMENTARY

~~[REDACTED]~~

14 February 1991
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IRAQ-KUWAIT: SITUATION REPORT #570



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Political Developments

Soviet and European Diplomatic Efforts

Soviet Foreign Ministry spokesman Churkin yesterday expressed cautious optimism over the visit today of Iranian Foreign Minister Velayati to Moscow for talks on the Gulf crisis, [REDACTED]. He also stated that Wednesday's bombing of an Iraqi bunker heightened Soviet concern that the continuation of the war would have tragic consequences. During a meeting with Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Al-Sabah Thursday, Gorbachev stressed Kuwait must be liberated but also expressed concern over the growing number of civilian casualties, according to TASS. Meanwhile, a delegation of European Community foreign ministers accepted a Soviet invitation to visit Moscow Saturday for Gulf war talks, according to press reports. [REDACTED]

Comment: Moscow may use the visits prior to Iraqi Foreign Minister Aziz's arrival Sunday to probe for support for a temporary or limited cease-fire in exchange for some Iraqi concessions on a withdrawal. Soviet leaders could point to any progress in the latest peace initiatives to offset US criticism that they are straying too far from the coalition. Even if the effort fails, the Soviets probably will gain more prestige in the Middle East for trying to solve the conflict. Moscow's comments on the Baghdad bunker incident furthers Soviet efforts to cast itself as sensitive to Muslim sentiments in the region. [REDACTED]

The EC delegation probably wants to learn from Moscow whether the Primakov visit uncovered any sign that Saddam would consider a withdrawal from Kuwait without linkage to the Palestinian problem. Although the West Europeans are looking for opportunities to end the hostilities, they almost certainly would reject any call from Moscow for a temporary ceasefire without firm evidence that Iraq has begun to pull out of Kuwait. At a meeting next week, EC foreign ministers will discuss Europe's role in bringing about postwar security arrangements and economic reconstruction in the Middle east. [REDACTED]

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Pages: 3 + 4

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