

FAX

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CC:

REMARKS: ☒ Urgent ☒ For your review ☐ Reply ASAP ☐ Please Comment

9-13-96

Phil -
Should we send
to 710 McAfee?

Yes ☒
No ☐

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News Release

National Council
of the Churches of Christ
in the USA

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FOR YOUR URGENT ATTENTION

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NCC9/13/96

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

A STATEMENT OF CONCERN

In the face of present tensions between the United States and Iraq and the continuing possibility of U.S. air strikes, we as leaders in the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. presently meeting in Geneva as participants in the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches strongly urge the U.S. government to pursue a course of military restraint and multilateral diplomacy. We believe U.S. actions always should be taken in the context of longstanding commitments to the family of nations, the International Rule of Law and the well-being of all peoples.

We have no sympathy for the policies of the present government of Iraq. Its aggressiveness cannot be ignored. We have worked for finding a formula to allow humanitarian aid to address the enormous hardships of the Iraqi people. The oil for food and medicine agreement must not be lost. Again, President Hussein has risked his own people, and our government's responses to his actions must not make us complicit in such human suffering.

The commitments of the United States in this and other settings have regularly been informed by international counsel, broadly recognized standards for the uses of military power and the intent and spirit of U.N. Security Council resolutions. We urge continued observance of these commitments.

There is little doubt of the U.S. capacity to strike or of the will to do so. However, those who exploit the need for reprisal or play upon a sad but popular thirst for U.S. military action must also be challenged. Even as we urge our President to pursue a policy of restraint and international accountability, which we believe to be the moral course, we reject any urging to trust only in muscle and might.

Further we must once again speak on behalf of the hapless victims of the hostility of nations. We voice our insistence that U.S. actions as well as the actions of other nations be informed by the consequences for all who may be caught in the potential violence and for their families, involving in this instance Kurds, Iraqis, American military personnel and other potential victims. As people of faith, we offer our sympathies, support and prayers.

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U.S. CHURCH LEADERS ON IRAQ
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We urge all governments, including our own, to pursue a course of discernment, diplomacy and cooperation that will both protect human life and embody the responsible uses of power. We believe this is the moral course.

Bishop Melvin Talbert
United Methodist Church
President, National Council of Churches

Joan Brown Campbell
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
General Secretary, National Council of Churches

Bishop Vinton Anderson
African Methodist Episcopal Church

Kathryn Bannister
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