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LETTER DATED 16 JULY 1998 FROM THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I.
OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF KUWAIT TO THE UNITED NATIONS
ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a letter dated 15 July 1998 addressed to you by His Excellency Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kuwait.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Ali Sulaiman R. AL-SAEID
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

Annex

Letter dated 15 July 1998 from the First Deputy Prime Minister
and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kuwait addressed to the
Secretary-General

I refer to the letter dated 1 July 1998 addressed to you by Mr. Mohammed Said Al-Sahhaf, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iraq (S/1998/612, annex), in which he alleges that the relevant Kuwaiti authorities have proceeded to sell five Iraqi oil tankers as scrap for 16.5 million United States dollars.

I should like in this connection to place before you the following facts:

1. Iraq used the five tankers mentioned in the letter from its Minister for Foreign Affairs for the theft of large quantities of Kuwaiti oil during its occupation of the State of Kuwait.
2. Iraq moored the tankers in Kuwaiti territorial waters for the purpose of deliberately releasing oil into the sea in order to cause destruction and pollute the marine environment.
3. The condition of the tankers, located as they are in Kuwaiti territorial waters, is such that four of them are unserviceable and that one could be repaired but only at exorbitant cost.

Because of the possible jeopardy to the tankers arising out of the fact that the constant corrosion of their hulls might cause them to founder, as of 30 June 1997 the Kuwaiti authorities concerned had spent some 18.4 million dollars on their maintenance and surveillance.

In closing, I should like to state that Iraq would be better advised to comply with the relevant Security Council resolutions, by cooperating with the United Nations for the release of the Kuwaiti and third-country prisoners and the return of the Kuwaiti property it seized in a calculated and systematic manner during the occupation, rather than to accuse the State of Kuwait of engaging in illegal acts with regard to these tankers.

(Signed) Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber AL-SABAH
First Deputy Prime Minister
Minister for Foreign Affairs
