

IRAN/IRAQ

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TELEGRAM NUMBER 275 OF 28 SEPTEMBER

INFO FLASH MODUK (FOR COSSEC DIA AND DNOT), CINCFLEET, WASHINGTON,
UKHIS NEW YORK, BAGHDAD, ABU DHABI, 2877-3,
INFO IMMEDIATE KUWAIT, BAHRAIN, DOHA, JEDDA, AMMAN, DAMASCUS,
PARIS.

YOUR TELNO 370 OF 28 SEPTEMBER: IRAQ/IRAN

1. I WAS ABLE TO SEE QAIS ZAWAWI THIS EVENING SHORTLY BEFORE
HE LEFT TO SEE THE SULTAN IN SALALAH. HE WILL BE RETURNING TO
MUSCAT TOMORROW EVENING (29TH).

2. I THANKED ZAWAWI FOR SEEING ME AT SHORT NOTICE AND FOR HIS
FRANKNESS WITH US THROUGHOUT THIS CRISIS. I SAID THAT THE
BRITISH GOVERNMENT HAD A NATURAL INTEREST IN THESE MATTERS NOT

BRITISH GOVERNMENT HAD A NATURAL INTEREST IN THESE MATTERS NOT ONLY BECAUSE OF OUR CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH OMAN BUT ALSO BECAUSE OF THE PRESENCE OF LOAN SERVICE PERSONNEL AND THAT IT WAS NATURAL THAT WE SHOULD WISH TO BE CLEAR ABOUT ANY MILITARY OPERATIONS. QAIS SHOWED NO DISPOSITION TO RAISE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT THE ROLE OF LSP AND I LEFT THE MATTER THERE. FROM OUR CONVERSATION YESTERDAY-(MY TELNO 268) I WOULD JUDGE THAT THE OMANIS ARE CONFIDENT THAT LSP WOULD PARTICIPATE IN ANY DEFENSIVE OPERATION WITHIN OMANI TERRITORY.

3. I WENT ON TO SAY THAT IT WAS GOOD THAT WE COULD, AS OLD FRIENDS, SPEAK FRANKLY. MY GOVERNMENT'S VIEW REMAINED THAT OMAN MIGHT BE BITING OFF MORE THAN IT COULD CHEW AND IT WAS FOR THIS REASON THAT WE WERE URGING RESTRAINT AND FURTHER CONSIDERATION. I STRESSED THAT WE HAD NO AXE TO GRIND ABOUT IRAQI ACTIONS IN GENERAL BUT THAT OUR SOLE CONCERN WAS OMAN'S WELL-BEING.

4. I THEN HANDED OVER A PIECE OF PAPER CONTAINING THE POINTS IN PARA 1 OF TUR. IN THE BRIEF CONVERSATION WHICH FOLLOWED I HAD THE IMPRESSION THAT QAIS HIMSELF HAD SERIOUS WORRIES ABOUT THE OPERATION. I SAID THAT, SPEAKING PERSONALLY, IT SEEMED TO ME THAT THE IRANIANS STILL HAD A SURPRISING AMOUNT OF FIRE-POWER LEFT AND THAT IT MIGHT BE PRUDENT TO WAIT AND SEE HOW LONG THIS STRENGTH WOULD LAST. QAIS SEEMED TO AGREE ABOUT THE IRANIAN STRENGTH AND COMMENTED THAT THE LATTER STILL APPEARED TO BE HOLDING OUT IN AHWAZ. IN RESPONSE TO POINT B IN PARA 1 OF TUR HE ARGUED RATHER WEAKLY THAT IT WAS STILL POSSIBLE THAT THE IRANIANS MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO ESTABLISH THE POINT OF DEPARTURE OF THE HELICOPTERS. I SAID THAT I WOULD BE SURPRISED IF THEY HAD NOT ALREADY PUT TWO AND TWO TOGETHER. (IN THIS CONNECTION MY US COLLEAGUE HAS TOLD ZAWAMI OF A US REPORT FROM LONDON TO THE EFFECT THAT THE BRITISH PRESS - MONDAY'S FINANCIAL TIMES - WILL BE REPORTING THE MOVEMENT OF IRAQI AIRCRAFT TO OMAN OR THE UAE).

5. FINALLY I SAID THAT IF HIS MAJESTY REQUIRED ANY FURTHER INFORMATION OR WISHED HIMSELF TO PASS ANY MESSAGES TO LONDON I WOULD OF COURSE BE AVAILABLE.

6. I AM MAINTAINING CLOSE CONTACT WITH MY US COLLEAGUE. HE MADE PARALLEL REPRESENTATIONS TO ZAWAMI ON 28 SEPTEMBER AND HANDED OVER A MESSAGE URGING RESTRAINT FROM THE US SECRETARY OF STATE. BUCK SHARES MY VIEW THAT THE OMANIS ARE BEING EXTREMELY NAIVE IN FALLING IN WITH IRAQI PLANS WITH NO SERIOUS ATTEMPT TO ASSESS THE STRENGTH OF LIKELY IRANIAN REACTION.

ATTEMPT TO ASSESS THE STRENGTH OF LIKELY IRANIAN REACTION.

7. BUCK ALSO SHARES MY IMPRESSION THAT ZAWAWI AND OTHERS ARE ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT THE OPERATION BUT HAVE LITTLE PROSPECT OF PREVAILING ON QABOOS. THERE IS SOME SUGGESTION THAT THE US MAY CONSIDER SENDING OUT A SENIOR OFFICIAL TO SEEK TO DISSUADE THE OMANIS. BUT TIME IS SHORT. FROM A REMARK DROPPED BY ZAWAWI TO BUCK IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT THE ORIGINAL TIMING FOR THE OPERATION MAY HAVE BEEN TOMORROW MORNING (29 SEPTEMBER). ZAWAWI'S DEPARTURE FOR SALALAH WILL WE HOPE RESULT IN SOME DELAY, BUT THE OMANIS ARE PLAYING THIS CLOSE TO THE CHEST.

8. I HAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT MY US COLLEAGUE HAS BEEN FAIRLY TOUGH IN HIS REPRESENTATIONS TO ZAWAWI AND I DO NOT THEREFORE BELIEVE THAT WE ARE GETTING IN FRONT OF THE AMERICANS (Q RA 3 OF TUR).

TUNNELL
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