

IRAN/IRAQ

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TO IMMEDIATE F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 4126 OF 28 SEPTEMBER

X FOLLOWING FROM PRIVATE SECRETARY FOR ACLAND X

1. PLEASE ENSURE THAT THE FOLLOWING CONSIDERATIONS, WHICH REFLECT THE SECRETARY OF STATE'S VIEWS, ARE AVAILABLE TO PARTICIPANTS AT TOMORROW'S MEETING AT CHEQUERS.

2 IT IS CLEAR THAT THE IRAQIS ARE NOW GETTING MORE ACTIVE SUPPORT FROM THE ARABS (NOTABLY SAUDIS AND JORDANIANS) IN THEIR STRUGGLE WITH IRAN. THE POSSIBLE IRAQI ATTACK ON BANDAR ABAS SHOULD BE SEEN IN THIS CONTEXT, AS SHOULD OUR OWN REACTION TO THIS PROSPECT.

3. OUR IMPRESSION IS THAT THE AMERICANS HAVE BEEN SLOW TO REACT TO EVENTS, BUT APPEAR TO BE DOING SO NOW. THEY HAVE SENT STRONG MESSAGES TO KING HUSSEIN AND THE SAUDIS. (THE SAUDIS INCIDENTALLY HAVE APPARENTLY PUT OUT FEELERS TO THE AMERICANS ASKING FOR HELP WITH AIR DEFENCE IF -AS THEY SEEM TO EXPECT - THEY ARE AT SOME STAGE ATTACKED BY IRAN).

APPARENTLY PUT OUT FEELERS TO THE AMERICANS ASKING FOR HELP WITH AIR DEFENCE IF - AS THEY SEEM TO EXPECT - THEY ARE AT SOME STAGE ATTACKED BY IRAN).

4. WE KNOW THAT THE IRAQIS ARE ALREADY MOVING EQUIPMENT INTO OMAN. FROM THIS AND ZAWAWI'S ATTITUDE IT SEEMS PROBABLE THAT THE OMANIS HAVE ALREADY PROMISED THE IRAQIS THAT THEY WILL COOPERATE, AND WOULD FIND IT HARD TO RETRACT.

5. JUDGING BY THE MILITARY ASSESSMENTS WE HAVE SEEN HERE, HOWEVER, THE OMANIS WOULD BE RUNNING SERIOUS RISKS OF WHICH THEY HAVE NOT TAKEN FULL ACCOUNT. THERE WOULD BE ADVANTAGE IN DRAWING THESE TO THEIR ATTENTION. IT NOW SEEMS PROBABLE THAT THE AMERICANS WILL BE MAKING A STRONGER PITCH THAN HITHERTO TO CONVEY THEIR OWN SERIOUS MISGIVINGS. THERE THEREFORE SEEMS A CHANCE THAT OUR ACTION AND THEIRS MAY GIVE THE OMANIS CAUSE FOR SECOND THOUGHTS. THE SECRETARY OF STATE RECOMMENDS THAT THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRS IN MUSCAT MAKE A FURTHER APPROACH TO ZAWAWI. HE COULD MAKE IT CLEAR THAT H M G HAVE AN OBVIOUS INTEREST IN THE MILITARY CONTEXT IN WHICH BRITISH L.S.P. WILL OPERATE, AND HAND OVER A PIECE OF PAPER MAKING THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

- A. ACCORDING TO OUR INTELLIGENCE, THE IRANIAN AIRFORCE, THOUGH POTENTIALLY SHORT OF AVIATION FUEL, ARE STILL CAPABLE OF MOUNTING SIGNIFICANT ATTACKS FROM A NUMBER OF AIRFIELDS NOT PREVIOUSLY ACTIVE IN THE FIGHTING WITH IRAQ, AND WITHIN RANGE OF MUSCAT SEMICLN.
- B. IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT THE IRANIANS WILL HAVE DETECTED IRAQI AIR MOVES TOWARDS OMAN, AND MIGHT SOON TAKE OBVIOUS EVASIVE MEASURES E.G. BY DISPERSING THEIR SHIPS FROM BANDAR ABAS. ANY NAVAL FORCE SURVIVING AN INITIAL ATTACK WOULD FIND OMAN AN EASIER TARGET THAN IRAQ SEMICLN.
- C. FROM WHAT WE KNOW OF THE U.S.-OMANI ACCESS AGREEMENT THERE IS NO GUARANTEE THAT THE AMERICANS WOULD FEEL COMMITTED TO COMING TO OMAN'S DEFENCE AGAINST RETALIATORY ATTACK FROM IRAN, PARTICULARLY GIVEN THE PROBLEM OF THE HOSTAGES.

6. IN CONVEYING THIS PIECE OF PAPER, MR TUNNELL SHOULD HOWEVER AVOID ANY SUGGESTION THAT WE MIGHT PREVENT OUR LOAN SERVICE PERSONNEL FROM TAKING PART IN THE DEFENCE OF OMANI TERRITORY, FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS:

- A. WE WOULD LOSE ALL CREDIBILITY WITH THE OMANIS IF OUR LOAN SERVICE PERSONNEL STAND BY WHILE THEY GET A BLOODY NOSE SEMICLN

WE WOULD LOVE TO SEE
PERSONNEL STAND BY WHILE THEY GET A BLOODY NOSE SEMICLN

WE WOULD TURN THE ARABS AS A WHOLE AGAINST US SEMICLN

C. CONVERSELY, WE SHOULD GAIN CREDIT IN ARAB OPINION IF OUR LOAN SERVICE PERSONNEL WERE KNOWN TO HAVE PLAYED THEIR PART IN DEFENCE OF OMANI TERRITORY.

7. LORD CARRINGTON THINKS THAT OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES SHOULD BE TO DISCOURAGE THE OMANIS AS UNATTRIBUTABLY AS POSSIBLE SEMICLN TO MINIMISE THE RISK OF RETALIATION BY IRAQ OR OTHER ARAB COUNTRIES WHO MIGHT THINK THAT WE ARE FRUSTRATING A BLOW AGAINST IRAN SEMICLN AND TO AVOID GETTING TOO FAR IN FRONT OF THE AMERICANS.

HENDERSON

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