

DWF

G 132/29

LFH 223/29

CO FCO (DESKBY 291500Z)

IRAN/IRAQ

ADVANCE COPIES

22

PS

PS/SIR I GILMOUR

PS/MR HURD

PS/PUS

SIR E YOUDE

SIR J GRAHAM

MR J C MOBERLY

MR BRAITHWAITE

HD/MED

HD/MENAD

HD/UND

HD/CONS D

CONSULAR EMERGENCY UNIT

HD/ES & SD

HD/MAED

HD/DEF D

PUSD (2)

NEWS D

~~RESIDENT CLERK~~

NO 10 DOWNING STREET

CABINET OFFICE DIO

See it ALLAND

SECRET UK COMMS ONLY

SIC

GR 350

SECRET UK COMMS ONLY

FM MUSCAT 291350Z SEPT 80

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELNO 276 OF 29 SEPTEMBER 80

AND TO IMMEDIATE MODUK, WASHINGTON UKNMIS NEW YORK BAGHDAD JEDDA
BAHRAIN KUWAIT ABU DHABI DUBAI DOHA

IMMEDIATE

IRAN/IRAQ

YOU WILL NOW HAVE SEEN FROM A MESSAGE ON OTHER CHANNELS (NOT
TO ALL) THAT THE IMMEDIATE DANGER OF AN IRAQI OPERATION MOUNTED
FROM OMAN MAY NOW BE SUBSIDING AS A RESULT OF A DECISION BY THE
IRAQIS THEMSELVES THAT THE LOGISTICS WERE TOO UNCERTAIN. UNTIL
THE IRAQI AIR FORCE UNITS CURRENTLY HERE ARE REMOVED, WE CANNOT
BE CERTAIN THAT THEY WILL NOT THINK AGAIN AND WE SHALL REPORT

BE CERTAIN THAT THEY WILL NOT THINK AGAIN AND WE SHALL REPORT ANY AIR MOVEMENTS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

2. IF THE ABOVE PROVES CORRECT, IT LOOKS AS THOUGH A VERY SATISFACTORY WAY OUT OF THE IMPASSE MAY HAVE BEEN FOUND: THE OMANIS WILL BE ABLE TO CLAIM TO HAVE DEMONSTRATED THEIR ARAB CREDENTIALS TO THE FULL BY OFFERING THE IRAQIS THE ASSISTANCE REQUESTED ONLY TO HAVE THE LATTER DECLINE THEIR HELP AT THE LAST MOMENT. THEY MIGHT ALSO IF THEY WISH CLAIM TO HAVE STOOD UP TO BE COUNTED IN THE FACE OF WESTERN ADVICE TO THE CONTRARY. IN ADDITION THE IRANIANS MAY BELIEVE THAT THEIR WARNINGS ABOUT ARAB GULF STATES ASSISTING THE IRAQIS HAVE HAD SOME EFFECT.

3. MY U.S. COLLEAGUE TELLS ME THAT THE AMERICANS WILL NOT NOW BE DELIVERING PRESIDENT CARTER'S MESSAGE TO QABOOS AND THAT THEY WILL TRY TO AVOID RUBBING OMANI NOSES IN THE DIRT. IT WOULD BE PLEASING TO THINK THAT QABOOS HAD LISTENED TO OUR ADVICE BUT THIS MAY NOT HAVE BEEN A DECISIVE FACTOR.

IT MAY HOWEVER BE RELEVANT THAT WE HAVE HEARD THAT THE SULTAN HAS BEEN MOST DISPLEASED BY SUGGESTIONS THAT THE OMANI AIR DEFENCES MIGHT NOT HAVE BEEN UP TO MARK AGAINST THE DEGREE OF RETALIATION ENVISAGED SEMI COLON SO THERE IS REASON TO BELIEVE THAT OUR MESSAGE (AND POSSIBLY WARNINGS BY HIS AIR FORCE COMMANDER) HAVE BEEN HEHEDED.

4. WE SHALL OF COURSE CONTINUE TO WATCH DEVELOPMENTS CLOSELY. FOR THE FUTURE I BELIEVE THAT THE OMANI HANDLING OF THIS POTENTIALLY GRAVE CRISIS (WHICH HAS TO A LARGE EXTENT REINFORCED MISGIVINGS OVER THEIR "SHOOT FROM THE HIP" APPROACH TO PREVIOUS PROBLEMS, E.G. THE INITIATIVE ON PROTECTION OF THE STRAITS OF HORMUZ LAST YEAR) INDICATES A NEED FOR REASSESSMENT OF OUR HANDLING OF THIS REGIME. THE OTHER GULF STATES WHATEVER OUR MISGIVINGS ABOUT THEIR POLICIES IN GENERAL APPEAR FROM HERE TO BE HANDLING THIS PARTICULAR CRISIS IN A MUCH MORE REALISTIC MANNER.

TUNNEL

BT

IMMEDIATE

NNNN