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① what are the terms of the 1971 Anglo-Iranian def. agreement?

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cc: PS Lord Bridges
PS/LPS Mr I C Moberly
PS/Mr Hunt Mr P H Moberly
PS/PVS Mr Gillmore,
Mr Bullard Defence Dept.
Sir J Graham Mr Heap, ESSD
Sir A Acland Mr Fall, EESD

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NOT FOR ENTRY

You may like to glance through this record of Monday's discussion in Paris. It does not give any great impression of urgency & the French are still keeping their distance. There

will be another meeting in three weeks time. s/s

Print 8/x

Mr R Wade-Gery,
Cabinet Office
Personal to HM Ambrs. at
Washington
Paris
Bonn
UKDEL NATO

QUADRIPARTITE MEETING OF POLITICAL DIRECTORS,
PARIS, 6 OCTOBER

IRAQ/IRAN

General Assessment

1. There was a long and generally very satisfactory discussion. Everyone agreed with Mr Vest's prognosis of a "prolonged, low-intensity struggle", i.e. stalemate caused by Iraq's inability to advance much further and Iran's to eject the Iraqi invaders. A widening of the conflict was not thought likely in the immediate future, although a rash move by either side, especially perhaps Iran, could not be ruled out. The Americans thought that Iran's naval and air activity could probably continue for some time and that the "psychological fervour" of the revolution could well carry Iran through the difficult period ahead, even if, for example, kerosene for cooking ceased to be available. Iraq, on the other hand, was better placed to obtain supplies, for instance from Jordan.
2. It was generally felt that the Arabs did not want either Iraq or Iran to emerge from the war as clear victor and thus as top dog in the area. This was also agreed to be the Western interest.
3. During this discussion, the French displayed a strong tendency to see through Iraqi eyes. They thought, for instance, that Iraq had got Khuzestan. They played down the danger of escalation and only after some discussion subscribed to the point (recorded above) that rash acts were possible. They did, however, say that the Iraqi Government, despite its apparent strength, could collapse suddenly if there was a major external shock.
4. The French were disposed to stress the limited nature of Iraq's political objectives. But Mr Bullard pointed out that they were significant in relation to the history of the area. I think everyone accepted Mr Bullard's view that a settlement which was humiliating to Iran, and which was brought about when Iran is unusually weak, would be a recipe for more trouble in the future. The French thought that the inclusion in Iraq's objectives of the return of the Islands to Arab rule had been designed to gain Arab support; this point was possibly less central in Iraqi minds than the other objectives.

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Soviet attitude

5. On the Soviet attitude, I think everyone agreed with our view that the Russians were being even-handed because they were uncertain about what would happen and about where Soviet interests would lie. They were keeping all their options open. These included military moves; a diplomatic initiative on the lines of Tashkent; or a move to make gains if Iran broke up. The Americans added that another Soviet aim was probably to use the crisis to spread the impression that the Americans would not stand by their friends in the region; hence the Soviet propaganda about non-interference. The French mentioned the possibility that the Russians in due course might seek a division of influence with the Americans in the general area of the Near East (this fits with the general French tendency to see the area from the Gulf to Afghanistan as a single chess board; another French remark was that Iraq, with its likely new influence, might want to make friends with Afghanistan).

6. We were given an account of an "oral statement" made by the Soviet Ambassador in Washington to Mr Muskie on 4 October. Dobrynin said that it was important that the US and the Soviet Union should have a precise and clear view of each other's positions about Iran/Iraq. The Soviet position remained that neither large powers nor small should interfere. The Soviet Union would adhere to this principle on the understanding that the United States and others also did so. There would be all sorts of consequences if anyone interfered militarily. Dobrynin asked some questions, but evidently not in a hectoring way, about the AWACS in Saudi Arabia.

7. The French said that, if the Russians went for a peaceful settlement between Iran and Iraq, this would show that the invasion of Afghanistan had not been part of a major offensive towards warm waters. More convincingly, M. Robin said that, while the movements of Western ships to the general area of the crisis and the provision of AWACS to Saudi Arabia were good moves, the West should bear in mind that the Russians could see our purpose as being to take advantage of the Iran/Iraq situation to tighten a Western grip on the area.

Diplomatic action

8. It was generally agreed that there was little that the Western countries could immediately do to promote a settlement. It was better to encourage Islamic mediation than non-aligned. We should keep on talking to Iraq's lesser neighbours, if only to counter-balance wilder influences. A return to the Security Council was not desirable now but might be necessary in due course. The elements of a settlement were not yet visible.

/ Arms sales

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Arms sales

9. On Western arms sales to the belligerents, Mr Bullard said that the United Kingdom had received no request. Because of sanctions, we would not supply arms to Iran. If Iraq sought British arms, we would probably decline, citing the Security Council Resolution. Did the other three have the same policy? The American and German replies were unequivocally that arms would not be supplied. M. Robin mentioned that France would not supply arms to Iran but did not reply specifically on Iraq.

Naval contingencies

10. Mr Vest explained the "preliminary concept" for coordinated naval activity in the Gulf which was put to us by the US Embassy in two communications during the weekend. He stressed that the various naval contingents would remain under national command. The purpose would be to deter interference with shipping, i.e. avoid the use of force. Mr Bartholomew was coordinating this in the State Department and would be glad to answer any questions from Ambassadors there. Mr Vest also explained the US reasons for wanting to approach Gulf States about this matter without delay. Mr Bullard gave preliminary comments in accordance with FCO telegram No 392 to Paris. The French agreed that it was premature to approach the Gulf States. The Germans displayed some nervousness about action which might look like "imperialism" or smack too much of superpower interference. Messrs Vest and Blackwill indicated that they too agreed personally with Mr Bullard; they said that there was, however, a strong head of steam in Washington behind the idea of talking immediately to the Gulf States about naval matters. They therefore suggested that the British idea of describing our concern to the Gulf States, in the hope that they would themselves suggest contingency discussions, should be advocated by the British, French and German Ambassadors in Washington. (Instructions are in hand.)

11. In the French view, the preparatory measures had been taken by moving ships to the area. This also provided an element of deterrence. Naval talks were the place to consider what action to take if shipping was harrassed or the Straits were blocked. France preferred to talk bilaterally to the US Navy, while the British did the same, although trilateral talks were not ruled out at some stage. (M. Robin later said that he had made this point on instructions, although in his own view trilateral talks would make practical sense.) Mr Bullard made clear our preference for trilateral talks. The Americans said that they would accept bilateral or trilateral ones. They should anyway be under close political direction. The Germans are being kept informed about American thinking on naval matters. The Americans have also put their ideas for substantive discussion to New Zealand and for information to Italy and Australia.

/12. Although

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12. Although this was not explicitly agreed, I think the result of this discussion is that the naval talks should now look at the US "preliminary concept" in terms of military feasibility, and report back to Political Directors.
13. Messrs Vest and Blackwill said "Yes" in unison to Mr Bullard's question whether there was a US decision to take, if the Straits were closed for whatever reason, whatever action might be necessary to reopen the Gulf. The impression given by this exchange was, however, that the US Government was working on the firm assumption that the necessary action would be taken rather than that an explicit decision to this effect had been reached.
14. The Germans suggested that thought should be given to "political orchestration" before any naval action in the Straits. Prior approaches might be made to a number of countries, in the hope inter alia of eliciting non-aligned statements in favour of the principle of freedom of navigation. Moves in the UN might be for consideration. It was agreed that this aspect should be discussed at the next Quadripartite meeting of Political Directors on 27 October.

Oil

15. There was little discussion of oil supplies or marine insurance. The French mentioned interestingly that the Iraqi Government had said that it would ensure that France did not run short of oil. The implication seemed to be that Iraq would persuade its friends to help France if necessary. The Americans summarised an intelligence assessment of the damage to oil facilities in Iran and Iraq. It was due to be conveyed in full to HMG through other channels on 6 October. They said that military damage had been to storage areas and pipelines, not processing plant. It would probably be possible, in technical terms, to restore the export capacity of Iran and Iraq quite quickly after hostilities ended.

Some lesser points

16. a) The Americans assessed the Iraqi Army to be within 10 kilometres of the Northern pipeline from Deziul and in a position to cut it when they wanted (this may not accord with the views of MOD as of the weekend).
- b) The French, while being sure that Iraq would not accept the internationalisation of the Shatt, wondered whether any international arrangements about navigation might be for consideration.
- c) The Americans mentioned the low level surveillance system which today's press reports as being installed in Saudi Arabia to complement AWACS.

/ d) Mr Vest

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- d) Mr Vest asked whether the Anglo-UAE Defence Agreement of 1971 might be relevant to the present situation. Mr Bullard deflected the question.
- e) The Germans suggested that we should study the legal status of the Straits of Hormuz, in case we needed legal arguments to defend any naval action there in due course. Others agreed and this will no doubt come up at the next meeting on 27 October.
- f) The Americans said that they would turn down any proposal by the Soviet Union that it should join in efforts to prevent the blocking of the Gulf. They would argue that the US had a far greater interest than the Soviet Union and that a superpower condominium was undesirable. The French agreed.
- g) The French did not mention their earlier idea of trying to bargain with the Arabs about the fate of the Gulf islands.

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7 October 1980

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