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FM FCO 090947Z OCT 80

TO PRIORITY AMMAN

TELEGRAM NUMBER 246 OF 9 OCTOBER

INFO ROUTINE DOHA DUBAI KUWAIT BAGHDAD BAHRAIN ABU DHABI MUSCAT
JEDDA ALGIERS DAMASCUS CAIRO STOCKHOLM WASHINGTON PARIS BONN OTTAWA
CANBERRA WELLINGTON NEW DELHI ISLAMABAD MOSCOW BRUSSELS DUBLIN
LUXEMBOURG THE HAGUE COPENHAGEN ROME ANKARA UKDEL NATO UKREP BRUSSELS
UKMIS NEW YORK.

YOUR TELNO 384: (NOT TO ALL): IRAN/IRAQ.

1. OUR POSTURE ON THIS DISPUTE DIFFERS SOMEWHAT FROM THAT OF THE AMERICANS. FOR EXAMPLE IN OUR APPRECIATION OF THE NEED TO INTERVENE, AND OUR ABILITY TO OBTAIN RESULTS. I TRIED TO EXPLAIN THE THINKING BEHIND OUR COMPARITIVE INACTIVITY IN MY BBC 4 INTERVIEW OF 2 OCTOBER.
2. THE FOLLOWING THOUGHTS MAY BE OF USE IN CONTACTS WITH THE KING. I AM REPEATING THEM TO A WIDE SELECTION OF POSTS FOR BACKGROUND.
(A) OUR UNIQUE VULNERABILITY TO IRAQI HOSTILITY (BECAUSE OF OUR HISTORICAL ROLE THROUGH THE MANDATE, OUR PAST POSITION IN THE GULF AND SUSPECTED SYMPATHY WITH U.S POLICY ON PALESTINE) INHIBITS US FROM PRESSING TOO SOON OR TOO MUCH IN ISOLATION OUR FUNDAMENTAL DISTASTE FOR THIS IRAQI ADVENTURE WHICH, THROUGH CYNICAL REPUDIATION OF AN INTERNATIONALLY BINDING LEGAL AGREEMENT ONLY 5 YEARS OLD, FOLLOWED BY THE OPPORTUNISTIC INVASION OF A NEIGHBOUR, HAS ERODED RESPECT FOR INTERNATIONAL LAW AND THE GENERALLY ACCEPTED SYSTEM FOR THE PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES. WE LACK THE POLITICAL STRENGTH, AND COMMERCIAL COMPETITIVENESS, TO RISK BEING ACCUSED BY THE ARABS AS A WHOLE OF WORKING AGAINST THIS NEW 'ARAB' CAUSE THAT THEY SEEM TEMPTED, OR COMPELLED, TO ESPOUSE - IN PUBLIC AT ANY RATE.
(B) WE HAVE DOUBTS ABOUT THE ACCEPTABILITY OF A FORWARD POLICY IN THE GULF (FCO TELNO 1598 TO WASHINGTON (NOT TO ALL)). WE BELIEVE IF THERE IS TO DEVELOP A SITUATION IN WHICH THE WEST, ESPECIALLY THE U.S., CAN PLAY A STRONG MILITARY PART IN THE AREA, WHICH WE AGREE IS DESIRABLE, IT MUST BE CULTIVATED OVER TIME AND PROBABLY CAN ONLY BE BROUGHT TO FRUITION IN THE WAKE OF REAL PROGRESS TOWARDS A SETTLEMENT OF THE ARAB-ISRAEL DISPUTE. TO FORCE IT ON TO UNWILLING GOVERNMENTS RISKS UNDERMINING THEM.
(C) WE DO NOT IN ANY CASE BELIEVE THAT THE TIME IS OPPORTUNE FOR ANY SIGNIFICANT INITIATIVE, WHETHER BY OURSELVES OR OTHERS, TO PROMOTE A SETTLEMENT. THERE ARE VIRTUES IN PATIENCE (BBC INTERVIEW OF 2 OCTOBER).

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3. IT FOLLOWS THAT, FOR THE TIME BEING, WE HAVE TO CONFINE OUR POLICY TO THE FOLLOWING:

(A) WORKING AGAINST THE EXTENSION OF THE CONFLICT (SEE THE SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION, THE DECLARATION OF THE NINE, AND APPROPRIATE REPRESENTATIONS IN THE GULF: MY TELNO 203 TO ABU DHABI). YOU MAY CERTAINLY THEREFORE POINT OUT TO THE KING THE DANGERS OF THE PRESENT WAR AND OF THE INVOLVEMENT IN IT OF OTHERS.

(B) ENCOURAGING ATTEMPTS AT MEDIATION BY THOSE IN A POSITION TO INFLUENCE THE PARTIES (EG THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE OR OTHER THIRD WORLD ELEMENTS, SUCH AS THE H. A. M, BUT SEE FCO TELNO 658 TO DELHI), EVEN THOUGH WE HAVE NO CONFIDENCE IN EARLY PROGRESS.

(C) WAITING FOR THE PARTIES TO REALISE THAT NO SETTLEMENT IS POSSIBLE IF EACH MAINTAINS ITS PRESENT ATTITUDE. SUCH REALISATION COULD COME AS A RESULT OF A CHANGE OF REGIME IN EITHER COUNTRY, OR LOSS OF INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT (MORE LIKELY IN THE CASE OF IRAQ, AS AND WHEN THE ARABS BECOME DISILLUSIONED WITH THIS ADVENTURE: WE MUST STAND READY TO ENCOURAGE, BUT NOT TO ANTICIPATE, SUCH DISILLUSIONMENT).

(D) REFRAINING FROM ANY SPECIFICALLY BRITISH INITIATIVES WHICH COULD SERVE TO STIR THINGS UP AND DAMAGE OUR OWN INTERESTS, WHILE WORKING FOR A COLLECTIVE WESTERN OR EUROPEAN RESPONSE TO THE CRISES. E. G. THROUGH THE IEA ON OIL, THROUGH THE EC POLITICAL COOPERATION MACHINERY ON STATEMENTS OF POLICY (THE POLITICAL DIRECTORS AGREEMENT ON 7/8 OCTOBER)

(E) WORKING WITH OUR ALLIES AND THE MINIMUM OF PUBLICITY ON CONTINGENCY PLANS, E. G. JOINT NAVAL MEASURES TO ENSURE FREEDOM OF NAVIGATION: POSSIBLE INGREDIENTS OF AN EVENTUAL SETTLEMENT: POSSIBLE COLLECTIVE PRESSURE TO BE BROUGHT ON THE BELLIGERENTS THROUGH DENIAL OF ARMS, ECONOMIC PRESSURE, ETC.

4. SO FAR EFFORTS TO PREVENT THE CONFLICT SPREADING HAVE PROVED SUCCESSFUL. WE MAY HAVE TO GO FURTHER IF IT SHOWS SIGNS OF SPREADING. EVEN IF IT DOES NOT, A PERIOD OF STALEMATE BETWEEN IRAQ AND IRAN MAY FOLLOW. MEANWHILE, WE NEED TO KEEP IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH CONCERNED GOVERNMENTS, PARTICULARLY THOSE IN THE REGION. IN PARTICULAR:

(A) WE CAN EXCHANGE INFORMATION ABOUT THE CONFLICT AND ANALYSES RELATED TO IT, E. G. ON SOVIET ATTITUDES.

(B) WE CAN REASSURE OUR FRIENDS, PARTICULARLY THOSE WHO FEEL THREATENED BY THE CONFLICT, THAT WE SHARE THEIR CONCERN AND DO NOT INTEND TO CREATE DIFFICULTIES FOR THEM, E. G. BY PREMATURE INTRODUCTION OF NAVAL FORCES (FCO TELNO 1598 TO WASHINGTON)

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(C) WE CAN CONFIDE IN THEM OUR VIEWS ON CERTAIN IMPLICATIONS OF THE CRISES (E. G. ON OIL SUPPLY, SHIPPING INSURANCE) AND THANK THEM WHERE APPROPRIATE, FOR THEIR DECISIONS TO INCREASE OIL PRODUCTION. 5. TO FURTHER THESE EXCHANGES, RECIPIENTS HAVE BEEN SENT BY BAG COPIES OF BRIEFING MATERIAL PREPARED IN THE DEPT DURING THE WEEK.

CARRINGTON

IRAQ/IRAN STANDARD
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ADDITIONAL DISTN.
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