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TELEGRAM NUMBER 394 OF 09 OCT

INFO MODUK (DI4B), BAGHDAD, DAMASCUS, TEL AVIV, UKMIS NEWYORK  
 AND WASHINGTON.

JORDAN AND IRAN/IRAQ.

1. I CALLED ON THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF OF THE JORDANIAN ARMED FORCES THIS MORNING, PRIMARILY TO SEEK HIS IMPRESSIONS ON HIS RECENT VISIT TO BAGHDAD WITH KING HUSSEIN AND ALSO TO OBTAIN PRECISE CONFIRMATION FROM HIM OF THE EXTENT OF JORDANIAN MILITARY INVOLVEMENT IN THE PRESENT CONFLICT (I AM REPORTING SEPARATELY HIS COMMENTS ON KING HUSSEIN'S FORTHCOMING VISIT TO MOSCOW AND POSSIBLE JORDANIAN ARMS PURCHASES FROM THE RUSSIANS).
2. ON THE MILITARY SITUATION, GENERAL SHAKER CLAIMED TO HAVE BEEN VERY FAVOURABLY IMPRESSED BY THE IRAQI MILITARY EFFORT AND IN PARTICULAR BY THEIR ABILITY TO DEPLOY SUCH LARGE MILITARY FORMATIONS EFFECTIVELY AGAINST IRAN. HE THOUGHT THEIR COMMAND AND CONTROL PROCEDURES WERE WORKING SMOOTHLY AND THAT ON THE WHOLE IRAQI MILITARY AND CIVILIAN MORALE WAS HOLDING UP WELL. HE REMARKED THAT PRESIDENT SADDAM HUSSEIN HAD TAKEN THE KING AND HIMSELF INTO AN ALMOST WHOLLY SHI'ITE QUARTER OF BAGHDAD AND THAT EVEN THERE THEY HAD BEEN ENTHUSIASTICALLY RECEIVED. HE READILY ADMITTED, HOWEVER, THAT THE PERFORMANCE OF THE IRANIAN AIR FORCE HAD COME AS AN UNWELCOME SURPRISE TO THE IRAQIS. THE IRAQIS WERE NOW PREPARING FOR A LONG HAUL AND WERE, FOR EXAMPLE,

IRAQIS WERE NOW PREPARING FOR A LONG HAUL AND WERE, FOR EXAMPLE, BUILDING ROADS TO PROVIDE ACCESS INTO THE IRANIAN TERRITORY WHICH THEY HAD CAPTURED. HE THOUGHT THEY COULD AFFORD TO SIT IT OUT, AND REGARDED THEIR CONTROL OF OIL PIPELINES AS THE KEY TO BRINGING ABOUT THE EVENTUAL DOWNFALL OF THE KHOMEINI REGIME. HE DID NOT, HOWEVER, PLACE MUCH FAITH IN THE EFFORTS OF IRANIAN EXILES TO SET UP A RIVAL REGIME AND READILY AGREED WHEN I SUGGESTED THAT THEY COULD SCARCELY HOPE FOR SUCCESS IF THEY WERE SEEN TO BE DEPENDING ON A VICTORIOUS IRAQ.

3. GENERAL SHAKER WAS EMPHATIC THAT THE IRAQIS HAD NOT REQUESTED ANY FORM OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE, EITHER MEN OR MATERIAL, BEFORE, DURING OR SINCE KING HUSSEIN'S VISIT TO BAGHDAD. I ASKED HIM WHETHER THE JORDANIANS HAD BEGUN ANY CONTINGENCY PLANNING FOR POSSIBLE FUTURE MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO IRAQ AND HE EMPHATICALLY DENIED THIS. HE EQUALLY DISMISSED ISRAELI AND OTHER REPORTS OF JORDANIAN UNITS EITHER BEING ON THEIR WAY OR BEING STOOD READY FOR DESPATCH TO IRAQ AS COMPLETELY WITHOUT FOUNDATION. THE IRAQIS DID NOT NEED SUCH HELP, AND HAD PLENTIFUL RESERVES OF BOTH MEN AND MATERIAL. NOR DID HE FORESEE THAT THEY WOULD NEED JORDANIAN MILITARY ASSISTANCE EVEN IF THE WAR WERE TO BE PROLONGED FOR SOME MONTHS.

4. AS FAR AS OTHER FORMS OF HELP WERE CONCERNED, IT WAS NO SECRET THAT IRAQI CIVIL AIRCRAFT AND A FEW MILITARY TRANSPORTS HAD MADE USE OF JORDANIAN AIRFIELDS (GENERAL SHAKER HOWEVER SPECIFICALLY DENIED THAT ANY IRAQI FIGHTER AIRCRAFT HAD BEEN DEPLOYED TO JORDANIAN AIRFIELDS). SUCH ASSISTANCE WAS CONSISTENT WITH THE OTHER HELP JORDAN WAS EXTENDING TO IRAQ, FOR EXAMPLE THROUGH INCREASED USE OF THE PORT OF AQABA FOR IRAQI CARGOES. BUT THE JORDANIANS HAD NOT GONE BEYOND THIS AND, ALTHOUGH THEY HAD OFFERED THE IRAQIS FULL USE OF THE KING HUSSEIN MEDICAL CENTRE FOR THE TREATMENT OF CASUALTIES, NONE HAD SO FAR BEEN SENT.

5. I ASKED THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF ABOUT THE ATTITUDE OF SYRIA TO THE PRESENT CONFLICT. HE REFERRED TO THE IRAQI BELIEF THAT THE SYRIANS WERE SUPPLYING BOTH MEN AND MATERIAL TO IRAN: HE SAID THAT JORDAN HAD NO INDEPENDENT EVIDENCE FOR THIS, BUT THAT HE WOULD NOT BE SURPRISED. HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT THE JORDANIANS WERE SERIOUSLY CONCERNED OVER THE SUBVERSIVE THREAT TO JORDAN FROM SYRIA, WHICH HE THOUGHT HAD INCREASED AS A RESULT OF JORDANIAN/SYRIAN DIFFERENCES WITH REGARD TO THE WAR, AND WOULD REMAIN VERY WATCHFUL.

6. MY DEFENCE ATTACHE SAW GENERAL SHAKER EARLIER IN THE MORNING AND IS REPORTING IN GREATER DETAIL HIS MILITARY IMPRESSIONS ON THE IRAN/IRAQ CONFLICT.