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OO WASHINGTON

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FM F C O 171607Z OCT 80

TO IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON

TELEGRAM NUMBER 1658 OF 17 OCTOBER

AND TO IMMEDIATE PARIS, BONN

INFO IMMEDIATE MODUK (AUS(D STAFF)), ACDS (OPS), DS 5, DNOT,

JEDDA, KUWAIT, BAGHDAD, ABU DHABI, DUBAI, DOHA, BAHRAIN, MUSCAT

INFO PRIORITY H M ROYAL YACHT BRITANNIA (FOR S OF S)

INFO SAVING UKMIS NEW YORK, MOSCOW, UKDEL NATO

You may have to glance through this tel. & the three replies from Washington. No need to read in detail.

1/2 hrs

YOUR TELNO 4272: IRAN/IRAQ - DEFENCE ISSUES

1. WE FAVOUR KEEPING OPEN EVERY CHANNEL TO THE US ADMINISTRATION. EVEN THOUGH YOU HAVE NOW SEEN MUSKIE (YOUR TELNO 4276), IT WOULD BE VALUABLE TO MAINTAIN YOUR USEFUL DIALOGUE WITH KOMER AND WITH STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS.

2. THERE ARE SIGNS THAT THE US NAVY REPRESENTATIVES HERE ARE NOW BEING BETTER BRIEFED TO RUN A PROPER DIALOGUE WITH THE ROYAL NAVY. OUR REPRESENTATIONS ALSO SEEM TO HAVE RESULTED IN A USEFUL EVOLUTION IN THE PENTAGON'S THINKING ON THE SORT OF NAVAL PROTECTION EXERCISE THAT WOULD BE NEEDED IN AN EMERGENCY. MUCH MORE STAFF WORK NEEDS TO BE DONE (AS THE TWO NAVIES ARE AWARE) AND MANY ISSUES STILL DEMAND CLOSER AND MORE COORDINATED POLITICAL MANAGEMENT. IN PARTICULAR IT IS IMPORTANT TO ESTABLISH THAT THE DECISION TO PUT INTO EFFECT NAVAL MEASURES OF THE KIND NOW BEING DISCUSSED SHOULD BE TAKEN JOINTLY BY THE GOVERNMENTS WITH SHIPS TAKING PART. THE MEETING WITH CHRISTOPHER WILL BE USEFUL TO THAT END BUT YOU SHOULD ALSO MAKE THIS POINT TO YOUR CONTACTS. TO COUNTER KOMER'S REMARK THAT THERE WOULD BE CONSULTATION, IF THERE WERE TIME, YOU COULD POINT OUT THAT, WHILE ANY ATTACK WOULD CREATE A CRISIS, THERE

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IS PERHAPS NO OVER-RIDING NEED FOR INSTANT REACTION, GIVEN THE HIGH LEVEL OF WESTERN OIL STOCKS.

3. ON THE NAVAL LEVEL, THE AMERICANS NOW SEEM TO AGREE WITH THE RN VIEW THAT:

(A) UNTIL A REAL THREAT TO FREE PASSAGE IN THE GULF MATERIALISES, USN, RN AND PRESUMABLY FRENCH NAVAL FORCES NOW ON STATION OUTSIDE THE STRAITS SHOULD REMAIN THERE ON PATROL (PERHAPS WITH CLOSER COORDINATION TO PREVENT CONFUSION AND OVERLAPPING) SEMI-COLON

(B) THE JOINT ALLIED RESPONSE TO ANY MILITARY THREAT TO THE STRAITS AND THE GULF, WHICH WOULD EFFECTIVELY HAVE CLOSED THEM TO UNPROTECTED MERCHANT SHIPPING, WOULD BE TO MOUNT A SET-PIECE OPERATION TO ESCORT A SMALL NUMBER OF MERCHANT SHIPS THROUGH TO THEIR GULF DESTINATIONS. THIS WOULD INVOLVE AIR COVER FROM THE SEVENTH FLEET. THE PURPOSE OF THE EXERCISE WOULD BE TO RESTORE THE SHIPPING COMMUNITY'S CONFIDENCE. ANY MERCHANT SHIP, WHATEVER FLAG SHE WAS FLYING, COULD AVAIL HERSELF OF THIS PROTECTION SEMI-COLON

(C) THIS OPERATION WOULD BE REPEATED UNTIL THE THREAT HAD DIMINISHED SUFFICIENTLY FOR SHIPOWNERS AND INSURERS TO PUT THEIR SHIPS INTO THE GULF WITHOUT NAVAL SUPERVISION.

4. WE SHOULD BE GRATEFUL IF YOU WOULD TAKE AN EARLY OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK AGAIN TO THE PENTAGON (AND ALSO IF YOU JUDGE IT APPROPRIATE TO STATE DEPARTMENT AT SENIOR OFFICIAL LEVEL). YOU SHOULD SAY THAT WE ARE GLAD THAT OUR RESPECTIVE NAVIES' IDEAS SEEM NOW TO BE CONVERGING. YOU COULD EXPLAIN OUR OWN THINKING ON CERTAIN ASPECTS OF THE LATEST CONCEPT:

(A) WE ASSUME THAT THE OMANIS WOULD ALLOW OUR NAVAL FORCES TO OPERATE IN THIS FASHION INSIDE THEIR CLAIMED TWELVE MILE TERRITORIAL SEA, AND THAT THE NON-BELLIGERENT GULF STATES WOULD DO LIKEWISE.

(B) ONLY THE US BATTLE GROUP IN THE AREA COULD SUPPLY THE AIR COVER WHICH WOULD BE A PREREQUISITE FOR NAVAL ESCORT OPERATIONS AS DESCRIBED. BUT SUCH FLEET AIRCOVER COULD PROBABLY NOT

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OPERATE NORTH OF, SAY, BAHRAIN. IF SHIPS NEEDED TO BE ESCORTED FURTHER THAN THIS (AND NOT ALL WOULD), THEN THIS GAP MIGHT NEED TO BE COVERED BY LANDBASED FLIGHTS. IF SO, FROM WHERE, AND WHAT PRIOR DIPLOMATIC CLEARANCE WOULD BE NEEDED?

(C) A STRAIGHTFORWARD AND WORKABLE COMMAND STRUCTURE WILL BE NEEDED, WITH WHICH THE FRENCH CAN ASSOCIATE THEMSELVES. THE ESTABLISHED RADFORD/COLLINS ARRANGEMENT (FOR CONTROL OF SHIPPING), FOR WHICH WELL UNDERSTOOD RULES OF ENGAGEMENT - PARAGRAPH 3 OF YOUR TUR - HAVE NOW BEEN DRAWN UP, IS OUR PREFERRED FRAMEWORK.

(D) WE THINK CURRENT FORCE LEVELS ARE ADEQUATE TO THE TASK.

(E) ARE NAVAL DISCUSSIONS IN THE AREA IN STEP WITH THOSE ELSEWHERE? (WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE FRENCH SAY THAT ONLY IN EXTREME CIRCUMSTANCES COULD THEY CONSIDER ACTIVE NAVAL COOPERATION SEMI COLON BUT DOUBTLESS BILATERAL TALKS WILL CONTINUE LOCALLY.)

(F) A NAVAL CONTROL OF SHIPPING OPERATION WOULD NEED TO BE MOUNTED TO LIAISE WITH MERCHANT SHIPPING. WE ENVISAGE THAT THIS COULD BE BASED ON FACILITIES AFLOAT, WITH HELICOPTER SUPPORT, IF A SHORE-BASED OPERATION WAS POLITICALLY DIFFICULT. OMAN MIGHT BE WILLING TO COOPERATE, BUT IN ANY CASE PROVISION OF NECESSARY FACILITIES IN ADVANCE OF ANY PROTECTION OPERATION WOULD BE DESIRABLE.

(G) THE THREAT OF MINING REMAINS. A MERE CLAIM TO HAVE MINED AN AREA IN THE GULF MIGHT REQUIRE IT TO BE SWEEPED BEFORE TRAFFIC COULD BE RESTORED. EARLY CONSIDERATION THEREFORE NEEDS TO BE GIVEN TO ESTABLISHING A WESTERN MINE-CLEARING CAPABILITY IN THE AREA. THERE IS NONE AT PRESENT, ALTHOUGH WE BELIEVE THE SAUDIS HAVE A 4 COASTAL MINESWEEPERS.

5. PROBLEMS SUCH AS THESE, WHICH ARE FAR FROM BEING RESOLVED ON THE TECHNICAL LEVEL, CARRY WIDE-RANGING POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS. THAT THEY ARE NOW UNDER ACTIVE DISCUSSION ILLUSTRATES THAT OUR TWO NAVIES ARE COMMUNICATING USEFULLY. BUT THE NEED TO ESTABLISH EFFECTIVE POLITICAL COORDINATION OF THE OPERATION, IN PARTICULAR SOME MECHANISM FOR PROMPT POLITICAL

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CONSULTATION TO OVERSEE ANY NAVAL OPERATION, REMAINS. WE ARE WORKING ON IDEAS TO MEET THIS NEED AND WILL BE PUTTING THEM TO CHRISTOPHER NEXT WEEK.

FOR YOUR OWN INFORMATION THE NEED, IT SEEMS TO US, IS FOR A GROUP IN ONE OF THE FOUR CAPITALS, AT A SUFFICIENTLY INCONSPICUOUS LEVEL TO ESCAPE PUBLICITY, TO BE ABLE TO MEET DAILY OR AT SHORT NOTICE, TO EXCHANGE INFORMATION AND TO FEED BACK PROPOSALS FOR APPROVAL IN CAPITALS. THE QUADRIPARTITE MACHINERY AT POLITICAL DIRECTOR LEVEL IS ADMIRABLE FOR ITS PURPOSE BUT INVOLVING AS IT DOES REPRESENTATIVES FROM CAPITALS IT CANNOT FULFIL THE NEED FOR DAY-TO-DAY CONTACT. THE REPRESENTATIVES IN THE GROUP SHOULD THUS, IT SEEMS TO US, BE COUNSELLORS FROM EMBASSIES MEETING WITH OFFICIALS OF THE HOST GOVERNMENT, PROBABLY IN WASHINGTON.

6. YOU SHOULD DRAW THE ATTENTION OF THE AMERICANS TO MUSCAT TELNO 297, PARAS 4 AND 5, AND SAY THAT WE PROPOSE THAT, AS SOON AS POSSIBLE OUR NA IN MUSCAT SHOULD BRING THE CSON IN ON CERTAIN ASPECTS OF OUR THINKING. WE WOULD HOPE THE AMERICANS WOULD ASSOCIATE THEMSELVES WITH THIS.

7. COPY ADDRESSEES SHOULD NOT REPEAT NOT RAISE THESE MATTERS WITH THEIR US, FRENCH OR GERMAN COLLEAGUES, OR WITH THEIR HOST GOVERNMENTS, WITHOUT FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS.

CARRINGTON

IRAQ/IRAN STANDARD

DEF >
MED >
MAE >
NENAD

NAD

UND

EESD

EGD

WED

ES4SD

MAED
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CABINET OFFICE

ADDITIONAL DISTR.

IRAQ/IRAN

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