

SECRET

GR650

SECRET

FM WASHINGTON 182315Z OCT

TO IMMEDIATE F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 4323 OF 18 OCTOBER 80.

INFO IMMEDIATE MODUK (AUS (D STAFF), ACDS (OPS) DS5, DNOT). AND
HMY BRITANNIA (FOR WALDEN).

INFO PRIORITY PARIS, BONN, JEDDA, BAGHDAD, MUSCAT.

INFO ROUTINE KUWAIT, ABU DHABI, DUBAI, DOHA AND BAHRAIN.

INFO SAVING UK MIS NEW YORK, MOSCOW AND UK DEL NATO.

M.I.P.T. : U.S. TALKS WITH GULF STATES ON AIR DEFENCE.

1. BARTHOLOMEW NOTED THAT THERE WERE TWO ASPECTS TO DISCUSSIONS WITH THE GULF STATES ABOUT AIR DEFENCE:

(I) THE PROVISION VIA THE AWACS OF INFORMATION ON POTENTIAL THREATS;

AND

(II) THE POSSIBILITY OF INTEGRATED AIR DEFENCE COOPERATION BETWEEN THE GULF STATES. THIS SECOND PROPOSAL HAD ONLY BEEN RAISED WITH THE SAUDIS AND OMANIS WHO WERE IN A SPECIAL CATEGORY.

2. ON THE AWACS INFORMATION OFFER, HE HAD ALREADY DESCRIBED THE REACTION OF THE OTHER GULF STATES (MIPT).

THE OMANIS HAD ASKED FOR A U.S. TECHNICAL TEAM, EITHER FROM SAUDI ARABIA OR FROM THE U.S., TO VISIT MUSCAT TO PURSUE THE OFFER. THIS THE U.S. WOULD NOW BE ARRANGING. BARTHOLOMEW SAID THAT THE OMANIS HAD BEEN TOLD THAT, SINCE THE AWACS ORBIT DID NOT COVER THEIR TERRITORY, SOME LINK MIGHT NEED TO BE ESTABLISHED BETWEEN THE AWACS AND THE CARRIER-BASED AIRCRAFT IN THE ARABIAN SEA TO COVER THEIR INTERESTS. TECHNICALLY, HE NOTED, THE INFORMATION FROM RIYADH COULD BE PASSED EITHER BY SIMPLE LAND LINES OR BY STATIONING A U.S. TEAM (OF ABOUT 10 MEN) IN OMAN TO HANDLE THE TRANSFER OF INFORMATION.

3. ON INTEGRATED AIR DEFENCE, THE U.S. HAD SUGGESTED TO THE OMANIS THAT THEY MIGHT WISH TO DISCUSS THIS FURTHER AMONG THE GULF STATES. NO SUBSTANTIVE REPLY HAD YET BEEN RECEIVED FROM MUSCAT, BUT PRELIMINARY REACTIONS WERE FAVOURABLE. THE SAUDIS ALSO SEEMED INTERESTED AND THE U.S. EMBASSY IN JEDDA HAD BEEN INSTRUCTED TO EXPLORE THE FEASIBILITY OF THE CONCEPT FURTHER

/ WITH THEM.

SECRET

WITH THEM. (BARTHOLOMEW UNDERLINED THAT IN ALL THESE APPROACHES U.S. REPRESENTATIVES HAD BEEN EMPHASISING THE U.S. POSITION OF NEUTRALITY AND NON-BELLIGERENCE IN RESPECT OF THE IRAN/IRAQ CONFLICT). THE U.S. HAD INDICATIONS THAT SULTAN MIGHT DISCUSS THE AIR DEFENCE CONCEPT DURING HIS PRESENT VISIT TO OTHER GULF STATES. THEY HAD LEARNED (AND THIS WAS VERY SENSITIVE) THAT THE SAUDIS WERE ALREADY EXPLORING THE POSSIBILITY OF MOVING SOME OF THEIR OWN RADAR CAPABILITY INTO BAHRAIN.

4. FRETWELL ASKED WHAT WOULD BE REQUIRED TO INSTALL A REAL AIR DEFENCE CAPABILITY IN THE GULF STATES. BARTHOLOMEW REPLIED THAT, IN THE CASE OF SAUDI ARABIA, IT WAS PARTLY A MATTER OF REALISING THE POTENTIAL OF WHAT THEY ALREADY HAD.

THIS INCLUDED FILLING GAPS IN THEIR RADAR AND COMMUNICATIONS CAPABILITIES, IMPROVING LINKS WITH THE HAWK SYSTEMS AND INCREASING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THEIR F5S. FOR THE UAE AND BAHRAIN, GREATER INITIAL INVESTMENT WOULD BE NEEDED. THE FORMER HAD INDICATED INTEREST IN NEW SAM SYSTEMS AND THE U.S. HAD BEEN DISCUSSING WITH THE BAHRAINIS FOR SOME TIME THE SUPPLY OF HAWK MISSILES. BARTHOLOMEW EMPHASISED THAT THE U.S. HAD NO READY-MADE SCHEME FOR INTEGRATED AIR DEFENCE IN THE GULF.

AS THEY HAD TOLD THE OMANIS, THE EXISTENCE OF SUCH A SCHEME WOULD BE POSITIVELY UNHELPFUL, IN PUTTING TOO MUCH OF A WESTERN STAMP ON THE DEFENCE OF THE GULF STATES.

FCO PASS SAVING MOSCOW AND UK DEL NATO.

HENDERSON

IRAQ/IRAN STANDARD
DEFENCE D

MED

MAED

NEWAD

TEED

NAD

EED

UND

ECON D

EDSD

CONS D

ECOD

CONS EM UNIT

VED

CABINET OFFICE

ES4SD

RID

ADDITIONAL DISTR.

IRAQ/IRAN

[ADVANCED AS
REQUESTED.]

2

SECRET