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FM PARIS 301650Z OCT 80

TO PRIORITY FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 898 OF 30 OCTOBER 1980

INFO BAGHDAD, DAMASCUS, AMMAN, WASHINGTON, UKMIS NEW YORK, JEDDA,
TEL AVIV AND BONN

Read in full

MS

MY TELNO 890: IRAN/IRAQ: VISIT OF M MORIZET

1. WHEN MINISTER CALLED TODAY ON M LECLERCQ, DIPLOMATIC COUNSELLOR AT THE ELYSEE, HE ASKED HIM WHAT THE BACKGROUND WAS TO THE VISIT OF M MORIZET TO BAGHDAD.

2. LECLERCQ SAID THE IDEA HAD BEEN TO MAKE A GESTURE TOWARDS PRESIDENT SADDAM HUSSEIN. THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT HAD HAD A NUMBER OF CLOSE CONTACTS WITH THE IRAQI GOVERNMENT OVER THE LAST FEW MONTHS AND SEVERAL MESSAGES HAD PASSED BETWEEN PRESIDENT SADDAM HUSSEIN AND PRESIDENT GISCARD. THE IRAQIS WERE NOT DOING WELL IN THEIR WAR AGAINST IRAN. WHEN AGHA SHAHI HAD PASSED THROUGH PARIS THE OTHER DAY, HE HAD SAID THE IRANIANS WERE DISORGANISED BUT PROSECUTING A WAR WITH FULL NATIONAL SUPPORT. THE IRAQIS WERE COMPARATIVELY WELL ORGANISED BUT THE LEADERSHIP WAS COMPLETELY CUT OFF FROM THE POPULAR ROOTS. LECLERCQ SAID THE REPUTATION OF SADDAM HUSSEIN HAD SUFFERED AND, GIVEN THE FRENCH INTERESTS IN IRAQ, THE PRESIDENT HAD JUDGED IT WISE TO MAKE A GESTURE IN HIS DIRECTION. MORIZET HAPPENED TO BE IN PARIS AT THE TIME ATTENDING A CONFERENCE OF AMBASSADORS AND HAD THEREFORE BEEN USED AS ENVOY, GIVEN HIS GOOD CONTACTS WITH THE IRAQIS FROM HIS TIME AS AMBASSADOR THERE.

3. THERE WAS NO QUESTION OF ANY FRENCH INITIATIVE. THE ONLY INITIATIVES WHICH WERE LIKELY TO RUN WERE THOSE UNDERTAKEN BY THE ISLAMIC AND NON-ALIGNED GROUPS. JAMES ASKED ABOUT A REPORT IN THE PARIS PRESS THAT THE FRENCH WERE MAKING PROPOSALS FOR A CEASEFIRE AT THE UNITED NATIONS. LECLERCQ SAID THAT THE IRAQIS HAD ASKED THE FRENCH TO HELP IN ENSURING THAT ANY RESOLUTION THAT WAS PUT BEFORE THE SECURITY COUNCIL SHOULD BE A BALANCED ONE AND SHOULD NOT MERELY CONDEMN IRAQ. THE FRENCH WERE PREPARED TO HELP IRAQ IN THIS WAY. LECLERCQ SAID THAT HE THOUGHT THAT BRITISH AND FRENCH POLICY IN THE IRAN/IRAQ DISPUTE WAS DIFFERENT BUT COMPLEMENTARY. THE FRENCH WERE MAINLY CONCERNED WITH THE POSSIBLE COLLAPSE OF PRESIDENT SADDAM HUSSEIN'S REGIME AND IRAQ'S POSSIBLE RETURN TO SOVIET INFLUENCE. THEY WERE IN FAVOUR OF THE EVOLUTION WHICH HAD TAKEN PLACE IN IRAQ OVER THE LAST YEAR TOWARDS A LESS PRO-SOVIET POLICY. HE THOUGHT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT WERE MORE CONCERNED THAN THE FRENCH WITH THE POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES OF TOTAL COLLAPSE OF THE IRANIAN REGIME AND OF THE ENSUING RISK OF AN EXPANSION OF SOVIET INFLUENCE IN IRAN AND IN THE AREA GENERALLY.

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ALTHOUGH THE FRENCH HAD AN EMBASSY IN IRAN AND INDEED THEIR
AMBASSADOR HAD ARRIVED IN TEHRAN YESTERDAY, THEY HAD LITTLE
INFLUENCE ON OR CONTACT WITH THE IRANIAN GOVERNMENT AT THE PRESENT
TIME. THE FACT THAT THEIR RELATIONS WITH THE IRAQIS WERE CLOSE
DID NOT FAVOUR THEM IN IRANIAN EYES.

HIBBERT.

THIS TELEGRAM
WAS NOT
ADVANCED

IRAQ/IRAN STANDARD

MEMD	MAEMD
RENAD	REEMD
NAD	REED
UND	ECON D
DESD	CONS D
ECOD	CONS EM UNIT
VED	CABINET OFFICE
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ADDITIONAL DISTR.

IRAQ/IRAN

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