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TELNO 460 OF 6 NOV 80

INFO ROUTINE BAGHDAD PARIS UKMIS NEW YORK AND WASHINGTON

INFO SAVING TO TEL AVIV

BAGHDAD TELNO 605 OF 5 NOVEMBER: IRAQ/IRAN

1. MR EGERTON'S ACCOUNT OF HIS DISCUSSION WITH THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR IS VERY MUCH IN LINE WITH WHAT KING HUSSEIN HAS BEEN SAYING TO ME HERE ABOUT HIS EXCHANGES WITH THE IRAQI PRESIDENT (SEE FOR EXAMPLE MY TELS NOS 430, 447 AND 459). I HOPE TO FIND OUT MORE AFTER TARIQ AZIZ HAS BEEN TO AMMAN FOLLOWING HIS VISIT TO PARIS, BUT IN OUR EXCHANGES ON THIS SUBJECT KING HUSSEIN HAS MADE IT CLEAR THAT BOTH HE AND SADDAM PUT MORE FAITH IN A EUROPEAN INITIATIVE IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL THAN IN THE OTHER PEACE INITIATIVES NOW UNDER WAY.
2. AT THE SAME TIME THE KING HAS GIVEN ME THE VERY STRONG IMPRESSION THAT HE DOES NOT WISH THIS LEFT ENTIRELY IN THE HANDS OF THE FRENCH AND THAT IDELLY HE WOULD LIKE TO SEE BRITAIN AND FRANCE WORKING TOGETHER. HE SETS ALL THIS AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF TOTAL IRAQI DISILLUSIONMENT WITH THE SOVIET UNION AND DISTRUST OF THE UNITED STATES, AND ALSO OF HIS BELIEF THAT WE NOW HAVE A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO PUT OUR RELATIONS WITH IRAQ ON A NEW FOOTING AND AT THE SAME TIME GAIN SUBSTANTIAL COMMERCIAL ADVANTAGES FOR OURSELVES RATHER THAN LEAVING THE FIELD TO THE FRENCH. KING HUSSEIN HAS ALSO RECOGNISED THAT IT WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE FOR US TO BUILD THE NEW RELATIONSHIP FOR WHICH HE HOPES WITH IRAQ UNTIL THE SPARKES AND SMITH CASES ARE SATISFACTORILY SETTLED: HENCE HIS PERSONAL COMMITMENT TO TRYING TO RESOLVE THEM.
3. THERE IS OF COURSE A STRONG ELEMENT OF SELF-INTEREST IN ALL THIS. THE IRAQIS ARE IN A MESS, KING HUSSEIN IS FOR BETTER OR WORSE IN IT WITH THEM AND HE IS LOOKING FOR A WAY OUT. BUT I THINK DUE WEIGHT SHOULD ALSO BE GIVEN TO WHAT I HAVE FOUND IN MANY DISCUSSIONS WITH HIM IN RECENT MONTHS TO BE AN INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT STRAND IN HIS THINKING. THIS IS THAT THE PART PLAYED BY THE TWO SUPER-POWERS IN THE MIDDLE EAST OVER THE LAST 25 YEARS HAD PROVED DEEPLY HARMFUL TO THE ARABS AND THAT THE LONG-TERM AIM OF ARAB POLICY SHOULD BE TO REDUCE THE DEGREE OF INTERFERENCE BY BOTH THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOVIET UNION IN ARAB AFFAIRS AND PARTICULARLY TO GET RID OF SOVIET AND US MILITARY FACILITIES IN THE AREA. HE SEES EUROPE IN AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT LIGHT: COUNTRIES WHICH HAVE SHED THEIR IMPERIAL PAST AND VALUABLE COMMERCIAL PARTNERS WITH WHOM THE COUNTRIES OF THE AREA CAN HAVE

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AN EQUAL AND MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL RELATIONSHIP. BUT ABOVE ALL HE LOOKS TO BRITAIN, BECAUSE OF HER LONG EXPERIENCE OF THE AREA AND OF HIS OWN CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH US AND ADMIRATION FOR THE PRIME MINISTER AND YOURSELF, TO TAKE A LEAD.

4. SOME OF THESE CONSIDERATIONS OF COURSE ALSO APPLY TO HIS THINKING ABOUT ARAB/IKRAEL, ALTHOUGH HE KNOWS THAT WITHOUT US PRESSURE THE ISRAELIS WILL NEVER BE PERSUADED TO WITHDRAW FROM THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES; BUT HE BELIEVES EUROPE HAS A KEY ROLE TO PLAY IN INFLUENCING THE AMERICANS IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION.

5. THE KING IS MUCH LESS GOOD ON DETAIL AND, WHEN I TRY TO PIN HIM DOWN ON PRECISELY WHAT WE SHOULD DO, USUALLY TRIES TO AVOID COMMITTING HIMSELF. THIS SEEMS AT LEAST PARTLY FROM A DISLIKE OF TELLING OTHERS WHAT TO DO (JUST AS HE STRONGLY RESENTS AMERICAN ATTEMPTS TO DICTATE TO HIM) AND ALSO BECAUSE BY TEMPERAMENT HE TENDS TO ESCHEW DETAIL AND CONCENTRATE ON THE BROAD POLICY ISSUES
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[REPEATED AS REQUESTED]

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