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FM PARIS φ617φ4Z NOV 8φ

TO PRIORITY FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 915 OF φ6 NOVEMBER 198φ

INFO PRIORITY BAGHDAD, UKMIS NEW YORK, WASHINGTON AND AMMAN.

INFO SAVING TO BONN AND MOSCOW.

VISIT TO PARIS OF MR TAREQ AZIZ

1. I ASKED THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE ELYSEE THIS MORNING IF HE COULD TELL ME ANYTHING ABOUT MR TAREQ AZIZ'S VISIT TO PARIS YESTERDAY.

2. WAHL SAID THAT THE IRAQI ATTITUDE WAS NOW A BLEND OF SATISFACTION AND EMBARRASSMENT - SATISFACTION THAT THEY HAD SEIZED THE TERRITORY WHICH THEY FELT THEY NEEDED FOR BARGAINING WITH IRAN AND EMBARRASSMENT BECAUSE THEY COULD NOT FIND A WAY OF BRINGING IRAN TO BARGAIN. WAHL SAID THAT THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN REASONABLY SATISFIED WITH THE OUTCOME OF MR TAREQ AZIZ'S FIRST VISIT TO PARIS. DURING IT PRESIDENT GISCARD HAD IMPRESSED ON HIM THE NEED FOR THE IRAQ GOVERNMENT TO CLARIFY PUBLICLY ITS OBJECTIVES, TO AVOID ENLARGING THE WAR AND NOT TO MAKE UNNECESSARY ENEMIES. SUBSEQUENTLY THE IRAQI GOVERNMENT HAD SEEMED TO HAVE HOISTED IN THESE POINTS.

3. ON THIS OCCASION A NEW ELEMENT HAD EMERGED IN THE IRAQI ARGUMENT. THEY WERE NOW SAYING THAT THE IRAQI ARMED FORCES WOULD NOT REMAIN CONTENT FOR LONG WITH AN INDETERMINATE SITUATION AND WOULD WANT TO PRESS ON TO NEW OBJECTIVES. IRAQ NEEDED CERTAIN SUPPLIES AND WOULD BE STRONGLY OPPOSED TO ANY AMERICAN HELP BEING GIVEN TO IRAN. IRAQ WOULD HAVE TO TURN TO THE SOVIET UNION FOR HELP IF DEVELOPMENTS APPEARED TO BE AGAINST IRAQ'S INTERESTS. WAHL SAID THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD DONE HIS BEST TO PERSUADE THE IRAQIS TO BE OPEN TO THE INITIATIVES OF THE NON-ALIGNED, OF THE ARAB STATES AND IN THE UNITED NATIONS. HE DREW MY ATTENTION TO REUTER AND AFP REPORTS OF WHAT TAREQ AZIZ HAD SAID AFTER LEAVING THE ELYSEE YESTERDAY. I ASSUME THAT YOU WILL HAVE SEEN THE REUTER TAPES. TAREQ AZIZ WAS ACCUSING THE US ADMINISTRATION OF BEING PRO IRANIAN AND SAID THAT DIRECT OR INDIRECT AID FROM THE US ENCOURAGED TEHRAN TO CONTINUE WAR AND THIS WAS DAMAGING TO THE INTERESTS AND SECURITY OF THE MIDDLE EAST REGION. WAHL AGREED WITH ME WHEN I COMMENTED THAT THIS SEEMED TO BE BAD LINE FOR TAREQ AZIZ TO HAVE TAKEN. HE ADDED THAT IN CONVERSATION TAREQ AZIZ HAD INSISTED THAT IRANIAN AIRCRAFT WERE FLOWN BY ISRAELI PILOTS. THERE WAS NOTHING ONE COULD DO TO STOP HIM TALKING LIKE THIS BECAUSE HE COULD NOT ADMIT THAT THE IRANIANS WERE RESISTING SUCCESSFULLY.

4. WAHL WENT INTO A LONGISH ACCOUNT OF THE FRENCH RELATIONSHIP WITH IRAQ, SAYING THAT IT HAD STARTED WHEN MONSIEUR CHIRAC WAS PRIME MINISTER AND HAD THEN BEEN PURSUED BY MONSIEUR BARRE, THE

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AIMS ON THE FRENCH SIDE BEING SIMPLY TO SECURE A SOURCE OF OIL AND TO OPEN A MARKET FOR FRENCH EXPORTS. IN THE COURSE OF TIME THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT HAD COME TO UNDERSTAND THAT PRESIDENT SADDAM HUSAIN DID NOT WANT TO BE COMPLETELY COMMITTED TO THE SOVIET UNION AND WAS PREPARED TO MOVE INTO A BETTER RELATIONSHIP WITH WESTERN POWERS. THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT HAD UNDERSTOOD ON VARIOUS OCCASIONS THAT THE US GOVERNMENT (HE SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED BRZEZINSKI) AND THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT SYMPATHISED WITH WHAT FRANCE WAS DOING. IT WAS STILL IMPORTANT NOT TO LEAVE IRAQ TO THE SOVIET UNION, BUT AT THE SAME TIME IT WAS IMPORTANT TO TRY TO ENCOURAGE THEM TO LIMIT THEIR PRESENT ADVENTURE.

5. I ASKED WAHL ABOUT FRENCH ARMS SUPPLIES FOR IRAQ. HE DID NOT REPLY DIRECTLY BUT SEEMED TO INDICATE CLEARLY THAT HE THOUGHT THE MIRAGE F1 AIRCRAFT ORDERED BY IRAQ WOULD HAVE TO BE DELIVERED WHEN THEY WERE READY. HE SAID THAT FRANCE WAS OF COURSE DOING NOTHING AT ALL TO ACCELERATE THE COMPLETION AND DELIVERY OF THESE AIRCRAFT. BUT EVEN IF THE AIRCRAFT WERE TO BE DELIVERED IRAQ WOULD NOT HAVE THE PILOTS TO FLY THEM. THERE WERE SOME PILOTS BEING TRAINED IN FRANCE BUT THEY WOULD NOT BE READY BY THE TIME THE AIRCRAFT WERE. DELIVERY OF THE AIRCRAFT WOULD THEREFORE HAVE A SYMBOLIC RATHER THAN A PRACTICAL VALUE.

6. I ASKED WAHL WHAT THE POSITION WAS OVER THE RESEARCH REACTOR WHICH FRANCE WAS SUPPLYING TO IRAQ. HE SAID THAT THE FRENCH TECHNICIANS AT THE REACTOR SITE HAD BEEN REDUCED TO 20 AND THE URANIUM FUEL HAD BEEN WITHDRAWN FROM THE REACTOR. AS IT HAD BEEN IRRADIATED THERE WAS NO FEAR THAT THE IRAQIS COULD DO ANYTHING WITH IT. IT WAS AT PRESENT BEING GUARDED BY THE IRAQI ARMED FORCES. STEPS WERE IN HAND TO ACTIVATE INSPECTION OF THE ARRANGEMENTS BY THE IAEA.

7. IN AN ATTEMPT TO OBTAIN A CLEAR IMPRESSION OF WAHL'S ATTITUDE I SUGGESTED THAT IT SEEMED POSSIBLE THAT IRAN MIGHT BECOME THE RUSSIA FOR SADDAM HUSAIN'S GRANDE ARMEE. WAHL SAID HE FEARED THAT THIS MIGHT BE SO. WHEN I ASKED ABOUT THE ACTIVITIES OF THE FRENCH EMBASSY AT TEHRAN HE COMMENTED THAT HE HOPED THE IRANIANS WOULD NOT BE TEMPTED TO LOOK FOR HOSTAGES THERE BECAUSE OF FRANCE'S RELATIONSHIP WITH IRAQ.

FCO PLEASE PASS SAVING TO ABOVE ADDRESSEES.

THIS TELEGRAM
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ADVANCED

HIBBERT.

(REPEATED AS REQUESTED).

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