

109
CONFIDENTIAL

GRS 360

CONFIDENTIAL

FM BAGHDAD 151105Z DEC 81

TO PRIORITY FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 766 OF 15/12/81

AND TO PRIORITY MODUK (FOR DI4); AND PRIORITY TEHRAN.

INFO ROUTINE AMMAN, JEDDA, KUWAIT, WASHINGTON, STOCKHOLM, DAMASCUS.

INFO SAVING UKDEL NATO, ANKARA, BONN, PARIS, ROME, UKMIS NEW YORK

AND TEL AVIV.

SIC

TEHRAN TEL NO 634 (NOT TO ALL): IRAQ/IRAN

1. ACCORDING TO IRAQI COMMUNIQES, THE LATEST BATTLE WHICH BEGAN WITH AN IRANIAN ATTACK IN THE GILAN GHARB AND SAR POLE-ZOHAB (CENTRAL) SECTOR AT DAWN ON 11 DECEMBER HAS NOW ENTERED ITS FIFTH DAY. FIERCE FIGHTING IS SAID TO BE CONTINUING, WITH THE IRAQIS CLAIMING TO HAVE MOUNTED SUCCESSFUL COUNTER-ATTACKS IN WHICH 1,150 IRANIANS WERE KILLED IN THE PERIOD 11-13 DECEMBER AND A FURTHER 1,600 ON 14 DECEMBER, FOR THE LOSS OF A GRAND TOTAL SO FAR OF 133 IRAQIS.

2. ALTHOUGH THE FIGURES FOR IRANIAN CASUALTIES ARE PROBABLY EXAGGERATED, THE VIEW HERE, BASED ON THE TONE OF THE IRAQI COMMUNIQES AND SOME CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE, INCLUDING THE APPEARANCE OF IRANIAN POWS SAID TO HAVE BEEN CAPTURED IN THE GILAN GHARB AREA ON IRAQI TV, IS THAT THE IRAQIS HAVE, ON THIS OCCASION, MET WITH SOME SUCCESS, PERHAPS BECAUSE THEIR DEFENSIVE POSITIONS IN THIS HILLY REGION ARE MUCH STRONGER THAN THOSE IN THE RELATIVELY OPEN TERRAIN FURTHER SOUTH.

3. THERE HAS INEVITABLY BEEN SOME SPECULATION ABOUT WHY THE IRANIANS HAVE SWITCHED THEIR ATTACK FROM BOSTAN TO THE RELATIVELY WELL DEFENDED GILAN GHARB AREA. ONE POSSIBILITY BEING CANVASSED HERE IS THAT THE IRANIANS WISH TO PREVENT THE IRAQIS TRANSFERRING TROOPS FURTHER SOUTH TO REINFORCE ANY COUNTERATTACK ON THE SALIENT WHICH THE IRANIANS OPENED UP IN THE IRAQI LINES AROUND BOSTAN EARLIER THIS MONTH.

CONFIDENTIAL

/ 4. IRAQI

CONFIDENTIAL

4. IRAQI COMMUNIQES HAVE NOT MENTIONED ANY AIR RAIDS ON IRANIAN TOWNS, ALTHOUGH THEY REPORT CONSTANT SORTIES AGAINST BATTLEFIELD TARGETS. THE IRAQIS REPORT AN IRANIAN AIR RAID ON BASRA ON 14 DECEMBER. TWO F14S ARE SAID TO HAVE BEEN SHOT DOWN IN A DOG-FIGHT OVER GILAN GHARB FOR THE LOSS OF ONE IRAQI PLANE ON 12 DECEMBER.

5. THE IRAQIS HAVE AT LAST PUBLICLY ADMITTED THE LOSS OF BOSTAN BUT CLAIM THAT THIS, AND THE CAPTURE OF A 2 KM SECTION OF AN 11 KM IRAQI HELD CORRIDOR AT SHAIB, NEAR BOSTAN, WERE THE ONLY IRANIAN SUCCESSES DURING THE 29 NOVEMBER TO 5 DECEMBER BATTLE, GAINED AT THE VAST COST OF MEN AND MATERIAL DETAILED IN MY TEL NO 759.

FCO PLEASE PASS SAVING ADDRESSES.

EGERTON

[REPEATED AS REQUESTED]
[THIS TELEGRAM WAS NOT ADVANCED]

STANDARD

MED
NENAD
NAD
UND
EESD
ECD
WED
MAED
ES & SD
CABINET OFFICE

ADDITIONAL DISTRIBUTION

IRAQ/IRAN