

IRAN/IRAQ

ADVANCE COPIES

22 (20)

IMMEDIATE

D/B 121030Z

(Rec'd 1450Z)

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PS/MR HURD

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SIR J LEAHY

MR J C MOBERLY

MR ADAMS

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CONSULAR EMERGENCY UNIT

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NO 10 DOWNING STREET (2)  
CABINET OFFICE DIO

CONFIDENTIAL

DESKBY FCO 121030Z

FM BRIT INT SECT TEHRAN 120900Z JUL

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 424 OF 12 JULY 82

INFO PRIORITY MODUK, BAGHDAD, AMMAN, DAMASCUS, MOSCOW,

UKMIS NEW YORK

INFO ROUTINE OTHER ME POSTS, STOCKHOLM, UKDEL NATO

INFO SAVING UKREP BRUSSELS.

MY TELNO 418 AND JIC TELS: POSSIBLE IRANIAN INVASION.

1. I FEAR THAT THE IRANIANS MAY AFTER ALL HAVE DECIDED TO LAUNCH AN ATTACK INTO IRAQI TERRITORY. FOR THE LAST FEW DAYS THERE HAS BEEN A STRONG PRESS BUILD-UP TO THIS EFFECT AND AN EVEN STRONGER CAMPAIGN ON THE TELEVISION AND RADIO, APPARENTLY DESIGNED TO CONDITION THE IRANIAN PUBLIC TO THE IDEA OF GOING INTO IRAQ. THIS IS DONE BY SLANTED EDITORIALS, CAPTIONS ON PHOTOGRAPHS ('WITH RECENT OFFICIAL PRONOUNCEMENTS THE QUESTION IS NOW WHEN IRANIAN TROOPS (SEE ABOVE) WILL MARCH TO BAGHDAD'), AND INTERVIEWS WITH PRIMED REGIME SUPPORTERS, RATHER THAN THROUGH ANY AUTHORITATIVE STATEMENTS OF GOVERNMENT INTENTIONS. THERE ARE ALSO CONTINUED REPORTS OF IRAQI BOMBARDMENTS AND OVERFLIGHTS, AND POSSIBLE PREPARATIONS TO COUNTERATTACK.

2. AT THE BEST THE GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED MEDIA ARE DELIBER-

2. AT THE BEST THE GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED MEDIA ARE DELIBERATELY TRYING TO BRING THE PUBLIC NEAR TO THE BOIL ON THE IRAQ ISSUE. THERE IS TALK AROUND TOWN THAT THE DAY OF THE INVASION MAY EVEN BE TOMORROW, 13 JULY, ONE OF THE SHI'A HOLY DAYS, OR 16 JULY WHICH IS "INTERNATIONAL JERUSALEM DAY".

3. MOHAMMAD BAQER HAKIM, ONE OF THE IRAQI RELIGIOUS LEADERS IN IRAN, IS REPORTED TO HAVE SAID THAT THE IRANIAN MILITARY HAD THE RIGHT TO ENTER IRAQI TERRITORY TO DEFEND IRAN AND LIBERATE THE MOSLEM NATION OF IRAQ. THE ENTRY OF IRANIAN FORCES INTO IRAQ WOULD BE JUSTIFIED BY ISLAMIC AND HUMANITARIAN PRINCIPLES. PUBLICITY HAS BEEN GIVEN TO MODERATELY ATTENDED PARADES BY IRAQIS RESIDING IN TEHRAN, LED BY THEIR CLERGY. THE GROUND FORCES COMMANDER, SHIRAZI, IS REPORTED TO HAVE SAID THAT IRANIAN SOLDIERS WERE IMPATIENT TO INFLICT FINAL BLOWS ON THE IRAQI REGIME.

4. A CAREFUL READING OF STATEMENTS BY THE TOP LEADERSHIP REVEALS NO COMMITMENT TO CROSS THE FRONTIER. RAFSANJANI'S SPEECH AT TEHRAN FRIDAY PRAYERS ON 9 JULY DISCUSSED COMPENSATION RATHER THAN MILITARY ACTION. THE GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN, TAVAKOLI, SAID ONLY THAT SINCE IRAQ CONTINUED TO OCCUPY CERTAIN PIECES OF IRANIAN TERRITORY THE IRANIANS WOULD CONTINUE TO FIGHT THE ENEMY OFF. IN A PRESS INTERVIEW ON 11 JULY THE PRIME MINISTER SAID, "WE THINK WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO TAKE ANY MEASURE DEEMED NECESSARY IN ORDER TO PROTECT OUR COUNTRY, CREATE REAL SECURITY AND TO OBTAIN REPARATION FOR WAR DAMAGES." HARDLY A CLARION CALL FOR ATTACK. MOUSSAVI CRITICISED ONCE AGAIN THE HOLDING OF THE NON-ALIGNED MEETING IN BAGHDAD. AYATOLLAH MONTAZERI, MEANWHILE, HAS DONE NO MORE THAN TO REPEAT THAT THE WAY TO JERUSALEM LIES THROUGH KERBALA. HE PLANS TO SEND EIGHT ISLAMIC DELEGATIONS TO 24 COUNTRIES WORLDWIDE TO SPREAD THE WORD ON JERUSALEM DAY.

5. WHEN I HAD A TOUR D'HORIZON A WEEK AGO WITH A CONTACT WELL

PLACED WITH THE REGIME (AFROUZ), HE SAID THAT HE DID NOT THINK THE GOVERNMENT WOULD SEND TROOPS INTO IRAQ. THEY WANTED TO TOPPLE THE SADDAM HUSSEIN REGIME, BUT THERE WERE MANY DISADVANTAGES IN SEEKING TO DO THIS BY A MILITARY OPERATION. IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT, AND WOULD LOSE THE IRANIANS INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT. WHAT WAS REALLY IMPORTANT WAS FOR THEM TO SECURE

IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT, AND WOULD LOSE THE IRANIANS INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT. WHAT WAS REALLY IMPORTANT WAS FOR THEM TO SECURE REPARATIONS TO REBUILD THE ECONOMY. BUT THIS TALK WAS BEFORE THE RECENT INTENSIFIED PRESS BUILD-UP.

6. WHEN I CALLED ON THE ALGERIAN AMBASSADOR, SHORTLY TO BE TRANSFERRED TO PEKING, ON 8 JULY, HE SAID THAT HIS GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN WARNING THE IRANIANS FOR SIX MONTHS NOT TO INVADE IRAQ. THEY HAD TOLD THEM FRANKLY THAT JUST AS THEY NOW SUPPORTED IRAN, THEY WOULD SIMILARLY SUPPORT IRAQ IF IRAN WERE TO BE THE AGGRESSOR. I SUGGESTED THAT THE SYRIAN AND LIBYAN GOVERNMENTS MIGHT ALSO BE OF THE SAME OPINION, BUT GHARAIEB DEMURRED. THESE COUNTRIES WERE BOTH EGGING THE IRANIANS ON, BECAUSE THEY WERE SO ANXIOUS TO TOPPLE SADDAM HUSSEIN. GHARAIEB SAID THAT HIS INFORMATION WAS THAT THERE WERE CERTAIN IRANIAN LEADERS, SUCH AS PRESIDENT KHAMENE'I HIMSELF AND THE FOREIGN MINISTER, WHO TOOK A LEGALISTIC VIEW ABOUT CROSSING THE FRONTIER AND WERE ADVISING CAUTION. ON THE OTHER SIDE WERE THE HOT-HEADED MILITARY AND RAFSANJANI, WHO SEEMED TO BE WINNING THE ARGUMENT. EVEN THE DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER AZIZI HAD TOLD HIM SEVERAL TIMES THAT HE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO AVOID SOME ADVANCE INTO IRAQI TERRITORY BECAUSE ONLY WITH THIS BARGAINING COUNTER COULD THE IRANIANS HOPE TO GET AN APPROPRIATE SUM FROM THE ARABS IN REPARATIONS. GHARAIEB WAS NOW DOUBTFUL WHETHER THE IRANIANS WOULD AFTER ALL ADOPT THE PRUDENT COURSE.

7. IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS THE EVIDENCE OF MILITARY DISPOSITIONS IN THE SOUTH (CF BAGHDAD TELNO U2G OF 8 JULY) APPEARS CONCLUSIVE: WHEREAS THE PRESS CAMPAIGN COULD BE AIMED TO DECEIVE IT LOOKS AS IF THIS BUILD-UP MEANS BUSINESS. I AM TOLD THAT THREE DAYS AGO THERE WAS A CALL-UP FOR FIVE NEW CATEGORIES (THOSE BORN IN THE YEARS 1959 TO 1963 INCLUSIVE), AND PENALTIES FOR EVADING THE DRAFT HAVE BEEN INCREASED.

8. IF THE IRANIANS DO MAKE A MOVE IT WILL PRESUMABLY BE JUSTIFIED OUTWARDLY AS ESSENTIAL TO PREVENT IRAQI SHELLING OF IRANIAN CIVILIANS, AND THEREFORE MAY ONLY INVOLVE OCCUPYING A SLICE OF TERRITORY CONTIGUOUS TO THE FRONTIER. BUT WE KNOW FROM ISRAEL'S POLICY IN THE LEBANON WHERE THIS THEORY CAN LEAD. THE REAL REASON WILL BE THE FEELING THAT IN A SITUATION OF STALEMATE THE IRANIAN POSITION WILL BE ERODED: THE ARMY WILL LOSE MOMENTUM AND MOTIVATION AND THERE WILL BE NO REAL INCENTIVE FOR THE ARABS TO COME UP WITH THE FINANCIAL COMPENSATION THE IRANIANS NEED. THE IRANIANS WILL BE PREPARED TO IGNORE INTER-

LOSE MOMENTUM AND MOTIVATION AND THERE WILL BE NO REAL INCENTIVE FOR THE ARABS TO COME UP WITH THE FINANCIAL COMPENSATION THE IRANIANS NEED. THE IRANIANS WILL BE PREPARED TO IGNORE INTERNATIONAL CRITICISM, PARTICULARLY IF IT IS TRUE THAT THEY WILL HAVE THE SUPPORT OF THE SYRIANS (NEEDING A DIVERSION FROM THE LEBANON?) AND LIBYANS. BUT THEY WILL BE AWARE THAT THERE MUST BE MANY UNKNOWN FACTORS SUCH AS THE ATTITUDE OF THE USSR AND WHETHER THE POPULATION OF IRAQ DO INDEED RESPOND IN THE WAY THAT THEY HOPE.

FCO PLEASE PASS SAVING TO UKREP BRUSSELS.

CCN...PARA 2 LAST LINE.. WHICH IS "INTERNATIONAL JERUSALEM DAY"

BARRINGTON

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