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TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 441 OF 15 JULY 82

INFO BAGHDAD, UKMIS NEW YORK, WASHINGTON, AMMAN, JEDDA,  
KUWAIT, BAHRAIN, MUSCAT, DOHA, ABU DHABI, DUBAI, CAIRO,  
DAMASCUS, ISLAMABAD, ANKARA, ALGIERS, MOSCOW, UKDEL NATO.

MY TELNO 439 : IRAN/IRAQ

1. PRESS COVERAGE OF THE WAR HERE SUGGESTS THAT THE IRANIAN FORCES ARE ACHIEVING THEIR OBJECTIVES, TAKING PRISONERS AND CAUSING CASUALTIES, BUT NOT THAT THERE HAS YET BEEN ANY MAJOR VICTORY. THEY ARE REPORTED NOW TO BE 25 KILOMETRES INSIDE IRAQ.
2. THERE HAS BEEN AN INDIRECT PRESS REFERENCE TO AN IRAQI ATTEMPT TO BOMB ONE OF THE SOUTHERN IRANIAN ISLANDS (PRESUMABLY KHARG) IN WHICH OPERATION THE IRANIAN AIR FORCE ARE REPORTED TO HAVE SHOT DOWN FOUR IRAQI PLANES.
3. MEANWHILE THERE ARE RUMOURS HERE OF SEVERE CASUALTIES, WITH THE WOUNDED BEING HELICOPTERED INTO TEHRAN HOSPITALS.
4. THERE ARE THEORIES AMONG THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS IN TEHRAN THAT THE IRANIANS' MILITARY OBJECTIVE IS TO CUT OFF THE BAY OF PERSIA. WHATEVER MORE LIMITED MILITARY OBJECTIVE

4. THERE ARE THEORIES AMONG THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS IN TEHRAN THAT THE IRANIANS' MILITARY OBJECTIVE IS TO CUT OFF THE TOWN OF BASRA. WHATEVER MORE LIMITED MILITARY OBJECTIVE MIGHT HAVE BEEN PROCLAIMED OR INTENDED, HOWEVER, KHOMEINI'S APPEAL TO THE IRAQI NATION TO RISE AND OVERTHROW THE BA'ATH PARTY MEANS THAT THE IRANIANS ARE GAMBLING ON THE BIG THROW. KHOMEINI'S TARGET IS NOT JUST SADDAM HUSSEIN BUT THE WHOLE OF THE BA'ATH PARTY WHOM HE CALLS INFIDELS AND ACCUSES OF BEING WORSE THAN THE MONGOLS (EXAGGERATED), OF KILLING AYATOLLAH HAKIM (SURELY HE DIED OF OLD AGE) AND AYATOLLAH SADR AND HIS SISTER (FAIR ENOUGH). KHOMEINI HAS APPEALED TO THE IRAQIS AS THE PATRIOTS AS WELL AS MOSLEMS TO RISE UP AND JOIN THEIR IRANIAN BROTHERS. HE HAS TOLD THE IRANIANS THAT DEFEAT FOR THEM WILL BE A DEFEAT FOR ISLAM AND A DISGRACE ON THE IRANIAN NATION.

5. A WELL INFORMED ARAB COLLEAGUE TOLD ME TODAY THAT NOW THAT KHOMEINI HAD SPOKEN, THE DIRECTION OF THE WAR IN IRAN WOULD GET OUT OF HAND SINCE NO-ONE COULD CONTRADICT THE OLD MAN, WHO WAS VINDICTIVELY DETERMINED TO UPSET THE SADDAM HUSSEIN REGIME. THE IRANIANS THOUGHT THEY WERE GODS GIFT TO THE WORLD AND UNDERESTIMATED BASIC HOSTILITY TOWARDS PERSIANS IN IRAQ.

6. IT IS DIFFICULT TO SEE HOW THE IRANIANS CAN NOW WITHDRAW FROM THE BATTLEFIELD UNLESS AT LEAST SADDAM HUSSEIN IS OVERTHROWN, IF NOT THE BA'ATH PARTY

7. ONE HOPE MAY BE ALGERIAN MEDIATION. THE ALGERIAN AMBASSADOR HAS BEEN SUMMONED HOME TO ALGIERS, AND IT IS REPORTED THAT THE IRANIAN PRIME MINISTER MAY GO THERE, PRESUMABLY TO FORESTALL A CRITICAL ALGERIAN GOVERNMENT STATEMENT.

BARRINGTON

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