

## ADVANCE COPY

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FM MUSCAT

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELNO 340

OF 231000Z AUGUST 90

INFO IMMEDIATE ACTOR, MODUK, WASHINGTON

INFO PRIORITY BAGHDAD, OTHER GULF POSTS, SANA, 'A

SIC: A2T

MY TELNO 336: VICE-CHIEF OF DEFENCE STAFF'S VISIT

1. A M BENNETT TOLD VCDS AND ME LAST NIGHT (22 AUGUST) OF REQUESTS MADE BY US DEFENCE SECRETARY OF THE SULTAN DURING THE VISIT TO SALALAH. CHENEY APPARENTLY ASKED FOR:

(A) IN THE EVENT OF AN ATTACK BY YEMEN ON SAUDI ARABIA, PERMISSION FOR US FORCES TO COUNTER-ATTACK FROM OMAN. THE SULTAN REFUSED, SAYING IF SAUDI ARABIA NEEDED HELP IN SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES, OMANI FORCES WOULD INTERVENE DIRECT.

(B) AGREEMENT TO CONVOKE IN OMAN A CONFERENCE OF ALL THE NAVIES NOW REPRESENTED IN THE GULF TO DISCUSS COORDINATION. THE SULTAN REFUSED, SAYING IT WOULD BE MORE APPROPRIATE TO HOLD IT ELSEWHERE, E.G. BAHRAIN.

(C) PERMISSION TO UNDERTAKE OPERATIONS AGAINST ANY IRAQI SHIP WHICH MIGHT PUT INTO AN OMANI PORT. THE SULTAN REFUSED, SAYING OMAN WOULD TAKE ANY NECESSARY ACTION.

(D) PERMISSION TO INTERCEPT IRAQI SHIPS IN OMANI TERRITORIAL WATERS. THE SULTAN GRANTED THIS (ALTHOUGH IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT IN THE SPECIFIC CASE OF THE IRAQI TANKER KHANAQIN, THE AMERICANS MADE A FURTHER REQUEST).

COMMENT

2. THESE DECISIONS BY THE SULTAN FIT WITH HIS GENERAL RELUCTANCE TO RAISE THE PROFILE OF THE U.S. FORCES IN OMAN. HE MADE IT CLEAR TO VCDS AND ME THAT HE FEARED BEING SWAMPED BY U.S. FORCES AND IS CONCERNED TO KEEP THEM IN THEIR PLACE. FOR THIS REASON HE ASKED FOR BRITISH AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS AT THUMRAIT (TUR) IN ORDER TO PREVENT A U.S. TAKE-OVER OF THE BASE.

CLARK

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