

SECRET

Sp 5.

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LNWBAN 0962 OCMIAN 2021  
SECRET  
OO WASHI  
FM FCOLN TO WASHI  
220107Z DEC  
GRS 379

SECRET  
FM FCO  
TO IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON  
TELNO 2226  
OF 220107Z DECEMBER 90  
AND TO IMMEDIATE PARIS, BONN, ROME, BRUSSELS, THE HAGUE, MADRID  
AND TO IMMEDIATE LISBON, ATHENS, COPENHAGEN, DUBLIN  
INFO IMMEDIATE BAGHDAD, LUXEMBOURG

*Yes - Rather overridden  
by your talks  
with the President  
- My inclination is to  
thin' as op + w/draw  
by say, 10th. of.*

*(CD)*

FUTURE OF EMBASSIES IN BAGHDAD

1. WE ARE CONSIDERING THE FUTURE OF THE BRITISH EMBASSY IN BAGHDAD IN THE LIGHT OF THE APPROACHING 15 JANUARY DEADLINE AND OF THE ENSUING RISK OF HOSTILITIES. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT AND SOME OF OUR EC PARTNERS ARE ALSO LOOKING AT THIS.

2. WE HAVE IDENTIFIED THREE MAIN OPTIONS:

- (I) TO WITHDRAW ALL UK-BASED STAFF FROM THE EMBASSY AT A NOTIONAL DATE VERY SHORTLY AFTER 15 JANUARY.
- (II) TO REDUCE TO A CORE STAFF, WHOM WE WOULD ATTEMPT TO WITHDRAW IMMEDIATELY ON THE OUTBREAK OF HOSTILITIES.
- (III) TO REDUCE TO A CORE STAFF, WHO WOULD STAY IN BAGHDAD (IN ONE OF THE EMBASSY HOUSES AWAY FROM THE COMPOUND) AT THE OUTSET OF HOSTILITIES, AND WHO WOULD TRY TO LEAVE BY ROAD TO TURKEY AS SOON AS THIS WAS POSSIBLE.

3. THE MAIN ADVANTAGES OF OPTION (I) ARE THAT STAFF ARE NOT EXPOSED TO THE THREAT OF IRAQI REPRISALS WHICH WE JUDGE TO BE HIGHLY LIKELY IN THE EVENT OF HOSTILITIES AND WHICH COULD BE VIOLENT (WHETHER OR NOT OFFICIALLY INSPIRED, OR THE RESULT OF MOB ACTION); IN ADDITION, WITHDRAWAL WOULD BE A FURTHER SIGNAL TO THE IRAQI LEADERSHIP THAT THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY IS SERIOUS ABOUT THE MILITARY OPTION, BUILDING ON THE PRESSURES GENERATED BY SCR 678. OPTION (II) WOULD REDUCE THE RISK TO STAFF, BUT NOT ELIMINATE IT.

4. AGAINST THIS, WITHDRAWAL WOULD LEAVE THE (NOW) SMALL BRITISH COMMUNITY IN IRAQ WITHOUT CONSULAR PROTECTION; WE COULD NO LONGER CONDUCT BUSINESS DIRECT WITH THE IRAQI AUTHORITIES WHETHER OVER POLITICAL OR CONSULAR MATTERS; NO POLITICAL REPORTING; THE EVENTUAL RETURN OF STAFF TO BAGHDAD COULD BE THE SUBJECT OF IRAQI BARGAINING.

5. PLEASE DISCUSS URGENTLY WITH HOST GOVERNMENTS, EMPHASISING THE NEED FOR CONFIDENTIALITY. YOU SHOULD GO OVER THE OPTIONS, AND THE PROS AND CONS FOR WITHDRAWAL AS OUTLINED ABOVE, MAKING CLEAR THAT MINISTERS ARE STILL CONSIDERING THE QUESTION AND THAT, IF POSSIBLE, WE SHOULD PREFER TO ACT IN STEP WITH OUR ALLIES AND PARTNERS. WE HOPE THEY WILL KEEP US INFORMED OF THEIR THINKING.

6. INITIAL REACTIONS BY 24 DECEMBER WOULD BE WELCOME.

HURD