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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 /026 W

1972-11-9 Iryani, Saudi, Aid

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FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2722
INFO AMEMBASSY SANAA

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 JIDDA 3621

EXDIS

SUBJECT: MILITARY ASSISTANCE FOR YAR

REF: JIDDA 3568

SUMMARY: SAUDI ENTREATIES DELIVERED THROUGH SULTAN AND MORE RECENTLY BY SAQQAF (REFTEL) SHOULD BE CONSIDERED IN LIGHT FACT SAG REGARDS THREAT FROM PDRY AS BY FAR GRAVEST FOREIGN POLICY ISSUE IT FACES AND THAT PERSISTENTLY NEGATIVE USG RESPONSE MAY HAVE IN TIME SOME IMPACT ON KING'S VIEW OF VALUE OF TIE WITH US OR ON HIS WILLINGNESS RESPOND IN OTHER SITUATIONS WHERE WE SEEK CONSTRUCTIVE SAUDI HELP. WE HAVE HITHERTO GIVEN SAUDIS NUMBER REASONS FOR OUT ADVERSE RESPONSES TO THEIR PLEAS FOR HELP TO YAR BUT THESE SEEM TO HAVE MADE LITTLE IMPRESSION. FOR IMPORTANT REASONS, THEREFORE, OF SAUDI-US BILATERAL RELATIONS, AS WELL AS TO ADD WEIGHT TO OUR VOICE RE SAUDI POLICY TOWARD YEMEN, WE SUGGEST CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN TO MAKING AVAILABLE SOME TYPE OF MILITARY TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT FOR YAR GOVT UNDER RSAF AUSPICES. IN INTERIM RESPONSE AMB MIGHT BE INSTRUCTED POINT OUT NEED FOR SAUDI ARABIA DOING EVERY-THING POSSIBLE ASSIST YAR PRESERVE ITS MOST IMPORTANT ASSET: EXISTING, ALMOST UNIVERSAL, SUPPORT BY OTHER ARAB GOVTS. LATER, IF DECISION MADE TO HELP YAR WITH TRANSPORT PLANES, OTHER VALID SUGGESTIONS COULD BE PLACED BEFORE SAUDIS, PARTICULARLY NEED FOR UNIFYING ALL FOREIGN AID EFFORTS THROUGH YAR GOVT AND PRESERVING CEASEFIRE. END SUMMARY.

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1. IN RECENT MONTHS DEFENSE MINISTER PRINCE SULTAN HAS ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS CONVEYED URGENTLY TO US SAUDI HOPE THAT USG COULD PLAY SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN SUPPLYING ARMS TO YAR. THIS REQUEST HAS NOW BEEN REPEATED WITH FURTHER EMPHASIS AND AS COMING FROM KING IN SAQQAF'S DISCUSSION WITH AMBASSADOR REPORTED REF MESSAGE.

2. CLEARLY PROSPECT OF UNITY BETWEEN TWO YEMENS HAS SHARPLY ACCENTUATED SAUDI FEAR THAT COMMUNIST CANCER IN SOUTHWEST ARABIA WILL FURTHER EXPAND ITS DESTRUCTIVE INFLUENCE. DREAD OF COMMUNIST REGIME IN SOUTH YEMEN IS IN MANY WAYS MOST COMPELLING SINGLE CONSIDERATION AFFECTING DETERMINATION OF SAUDI FOREIGN POLICY. EVEN IF, AS SEEMS LIKELY, YAR-PDRY UNIFICATION ENDEAVOR FIZZLES OUT, YET SAUDI FEARS OF PDRY POTENTIAL HAVE BEEN BROUGHT TO NEW HIGH-WATER MARK OF INTENSITY FROM WHICH THEY WILL NOT READILY RECEDE.

3. SAUDIS' "FORWARD POLICY" WHICH HAS ENCOURAGED AGGRESSIVE TACTICS BY TRIBES AND NUF MAY HAVE BEEN UNWISE, BUT REFLECTS DEPTH SAUDI DETERMINATION PROTECT THEMSELVES AGAINST SPREAD OF COMMUNIST INFLUENCE FROM SOUTH. CENTRAL FACT IS THAT US ATTITUDE TOWARD MILITARY SUPPLIES FOR YAR SEEMS TO BE BECOMING STEADILY MORE SIGNIFICANT ISSUE IN US-SAUDI RELATIONS. IN KING'S MIND US AND SAUDI ARABIA SHARE ONE GREAT COMMON INTEREST: OPPOSITION TO COMMUNIST EXPANSION. THIS IS BEDROCK OF KING'S DETERMINATION MAINTAIN, DESPITE VARIOUS OTHER DIFFERENCES, CLOSEST TIES WITH USG. WE SEE STRONG POSSIBILITY OF BOTH NORTH AND SOUTH YEMEN TAKING ADVANTAGE CURRENT CEASEFIRE TO REGROUP AND RETURN VIGOROUSLY TO HOSTILITIES. AS WE PRESS SAUDIS TO BE MORE FORTHCOMING REGARDING ECONOMIC AID FOR JORDAN, WE MAY FIND THEIR RESPNSE ON THAT ISSUE AFFECTED BY OURS TOWARD SUPPLY OF ARMS FOR YAR (DESPITE OUR BEST EFFORTS EXPLAIN WHOLLY SEPARATE CONSIDERATIONS AFFECTING TWO SITUATIONS). IF WE PREPARED APPROVE SALE OF C-130'S TO KING'S UNDEPENDABLE NEIGHBOR, SHEIKH ZAYID, HE MAY WONDER WHY WE UNWILLING HELP WITH SIMILAR TYPE EQUIPMENT FOR SEVERELYTHREATENED YAR.

4. TO DATE WE HAVE JUSTIFIED OUR NEGATIVE POSITION

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TOWARD SAUDI REQUESTS BY STRESSING US DETERMINATION
CONCENTRATE ON BADLY NEEDED ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE FOR
WAR-TORN YAR, BY OUR BELIEF THAT OTHERS (SAUDIS AND
IRANIANS) SHOULD ASSUME BURDENS OF MILITARY AID.
WE HAVE SAID WE WANTED TO AVOID ALSO POSSIBLE ADVERSE
IMPLICATIONS OF EAST-WEST CONFRONTATION WHICH SIG-
NIFICANT US CONTRIBUTION OF ARMS TO YAR MIGHT IMPLY.
BUT SAUDIS HAVE REMAINED UNCONVINCED. IT WOULD SEEM
DESIRABLE WE ADVISE THEM DO ALL POSSIBLE MAINTAIN YAR-
PDRY CEASEFIRE AND SEEK MEANS STRENGTHENING YAR GOVERNMENT.

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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 JIDDA 3621
EXDIS
5. AT PRESENT WE HAVE LITTLE LOCUS STAND TO URGE SUCH POLICIES ON KING FAISAL. BOTH TO DEMONSTRATE HELPFUL USG ATTITUDE TOWARD WHAT SAUDIS REGARD AS MOST ACCURE THREAT TO THEIR SECURITY AND TO ADD WEIGHT TO EXPRESSION OF OUR VIEWS ON YEMEN SITUATION, WE SUGGEST CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN TO SELLING SAUDI GOVT TWO USED C-130 AIRCRAFT WITH UNDERSTANDING SAUDI AIR FORCE WOULD THEN ARRANGE MAKE THESE AVAILABLE FOR USE BY YAR. PERHAPS EXIM OR MAP CREDIT COULD BE OFFERED AS FURTHER PROOF OUR DESIRE BE HELPFUL. IT WOULD BE MADE CLEAR THAT ONCE PLANES DELIVERED THEIR EFFECTIVE OPERATION SOLELY MATTER FOR RSAF AND YAR, WHICH PRESUMABLY WOULD HAVE TO DEPEND ON MAINTENANCE FACILITIES AVAILABLE IN JIDDA. C-130'S COULD BE USEFUL NOT ONLY FOR MILITARY BUT HUMANITARIAN PURPOSES, I.E. EMERGENCY DISTRIBUTION OF FOOD. WE RECOGNIZE WORLD SHORTAGE OF THIS TYPE AIRCRAFT, BUT BELIEVE IMPORTANCE OUR RELATIONS WITH SAUDI ARABIA AND DESIRABILITY PROPOSING SOME POSITIVE RESPONSE TO CURRENT REQUEST COULD JUSTIFY INTENSE SEARCH FOR PLANES IN GOOD CONDITIONWHICH COULD BE MADE PROMPTLY AVAILABLE.

6. WE SUGGEST C-130'S AS FLEXIBLE, HIGHLY USEFUL EQUIPMENT, PARTICULARLY APPROPRIATE IN VIEW OF SAUDIS' REITERATED CLAIMS THAT YAR SUFFERS MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE FROM INABILITY TO CARRY ON MILITARY AND CIVILIAN SUPPLY OPERATIONS TO REMOTE QUARTERS OF COUNTRY. WE RECOGNIZE, THAT THERE ARE OTHER TYPES AIRCRAFT NEARLY AS USEFUL SUCH AS CARIBOU OR C-123, WHICH USG MIGHT PERHAPS BE ABLE MAKE AVAILABLE MORE EASILY THAN SCARCE C-130'S. ANY OF THESE AIRCRAFT COULD, WE THINK,

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BE PROPERLY OPERATED BY RSAF AND YAR JOINTLY WITH SAUDI MAINTENANCE BACK UP. POINT IS THAT IF WE ARE TO MAKE POSITIVE RESPONSE, IT BEST TO DO SO WITH SOME SIGNIFICANT PIECE OF EQUIPMENT WHICH HAS CONSIDERABLE CIVILIAN AS WELL AS MILITARY USE AND WHICH SAUDIS AND YAR COULD NOT OBTAIN WITHOUT USG ASSISTANCE. TO DEFINE AT OUTSET POSITIVELY AND PRECISELY TYPE OF EQUIPMENT WE ARE PREPARED TO OFFER IS BY FAR BEST MEANS KEEPING UNDER CONTROL SAUDI EXPECTATIONS AND EXHORTATIONS WITH REGARD TO WHAT THEY WOULD LIKE TO HAVE US DO NOW AND IN THE FUTURE.

7. MOST SIGNIFICANT SUGGESTION WE CAN OFFER SAUDIS AT THIS STAGE RE YEMEN IS THAT SAUDI ARABIA MANIPULATE ITS OWN ACTIONS SO AS ABOVE ALL TO RETAIN, AND NOT TO DISSIPATE, MOST IMPORTANT ASSET NOW POSSESSED BY YAR; NAMELY, WIDESPREAD SUPPORT IT ENJOYS AMONG OTHER ARAB GOVTS. WE COULD NOTE THAT SAUDI ARABIA (WHICH SO OFTEN BELIEVES ITSELF PURSUING COURSES THAT TEND SEPARATE IT FROM FELLOW ARABS) IS IN PRESENT INSTANCE APPARENTLY AT ONE WITH OTHER ARAB COUNTRIES IN EFFORT SHORE UP YAR.

8. SUGGEST, THEREFORE, AS FORM OF INTERIM RESPONSE AND BECAUSE POINT ABOUT UNIFED ARAB SUPPORT IS SO IMPORTANT THAT AMB BE INSTRUCTED SEE SAQQAF AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AFTER PRESENT HOLIDAY HIATUS STATING MESSAGE RE AID TO YEMEN NOW UNDER CONSIDERATION IN WASHINGTON. MEANWHILE, WE NOTE, AS HOPEFULLY HELPFUL OBSERVATION, GREAT DESIRABILITY PRESERVING AND ENCOURAGING AT ALL COSTS EXISTING COMMON ARAB SUPPORT BEHIND YAR.

9. IF DECISION MADE OFFER SOME US AID ON LINES DESCRIBED ABOVE, BELIEVE WE COULD AT LATER TIME PUT FORWARD OTHER POSITIVE SUGGESTIONS RE SAUDI POLICY TOWARD YAR, PARTICULARLY URGENT NEED FOR FUNNELING ALL AID THROUGH YAR GOVT AS BEST MEANS ASSURING ULTIMATELY DEVELOPMENT COORDINATED EFFECTIVE DEFENSE AND GENERAL STRENGTHENING OF YAR AGAINST THREAT FROM PDRY. WE COULD IN ADDITION, OF COURSE, GIVE VIGOROUS SUPPORT TO BENEFICIAL ADVANTAGES OF MAINTAINING CEASEFIRE.

10. ACCORDINGLY, POSITIVE RESPONSE TO SAUDI ENTREATIES

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WILL, WE THINK GIVE US SOME LEVERAGE EXPRESS VIEWS RE DEVELOPMENTS IN YEMEN. MORE FUNDAMENTALLY, HOWEVER, WE THINK NEED FOR CONSTRUCTIVE REPLY SPRINGS FROM EXIGENCIES OF US-SAUDI RELATIONS: BY REITERATED NEGATIVE RESPONSE TO SAUDI REQUEST FOR HELP WITH THREAT THEY CONSIDER MOST URGENT ONE FACING THEM WE RISK OVER PERIOD OF TIME SOME EROSION IN SAUDI ATTACHMENT FUNDAMENTAL RELATIONSHIPWITH US AS WELL AS PERHAPS DIMINISHING RESPONSIVENESS TO OUR REQUESTS FOR SAUDI SUPPORT IN SPHERES OF SPECIAL IMPORTANCE TO US.

GDS.
THACHER

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