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TELEGRAM

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FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1622
INFO USINT SANAA
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 3 JIDDA 1147

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SUBJ: PRINCE SULTAN ON YEMEN

NC 10/15/72

REF: JIDDA 992 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: PRINCE SULTAN DESCRIBED AT LENGTH MISGIVINGS AND FRUSTRATION YEMEN SITUATION, RECITING DANGERS AND SAUDI DISAPPOINTMENT AT LACK OF STRONG USG BACKING TO ASSIST THEM IN MEETING COMMUNIST THREAT STEMMING FROM PDRY. MENTIONING RECENT MASSACRE OF NORTH YEMEN TRIBESMEN BY PDRY, SULTAN CLAIMED YAR FORCES COULD PENETRATE FAR INTO SOUTH BUT IMPORTANT AID ADVANTAGE LIES WITH ADEN REGIME. MEANWHILE, RUSSIANS, CHINESE AND EAST GERMANS ARE ALL ASSISTING PDRY. EXPANSION THIS KIND OF INFLUENCE INTO SAUDI ARABIA OR ELSEWHERE ON PENINSULA HAD TO BE PREVENTED. AMB SYMPATHIZED WITH SULTAN'S MILITARY DILEMMA BUT, NOTING HEAVY YAR SUFFERING IN CIVIL WAR, URGED CURE NOT TURN OUT TO BE WORSE THAN DISEASE, SINCE YEMEN NEEDED MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE TIME AND OPPORTUNITY ACHIEVE PROSPERITY WITH SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROGRESS. US STILL ANXIOUS ASSIST WITH ECONOMIC MEASURES WHENEVER YAR COULD SEE WAY TO REESTABLISHMENT RELATIONS. MEANWHILE, PERHAPS THERE WERE OTHER WAYS SAUDIS AND US COULD COOPERATE FOR YAR WELFARE. SULTAN SEEMED IN GENERAL MORE FRUSTRATED THAN AGGRESSIVE. WE BELIEVE SAUDIS WILL CONTINUE SUPPLY MONEY AND ARMS STRENGTHEN YAR TRIBES AND MILITARY BUT DOUBT SAG WILL ENDEAVOR PUSH YAR INTO RISKY ATTACKS AGAINST SOUTH YEMEN. SAUDI ECONOMIC AID CAN BEST BE REALIZED BY

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YEMENI REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE WITH SPECIFIC, ASSESSABLE PROJECTS. IN LONG RUN WE BELIEVE SAUDIS MAY PRESS AHEAD WITH IDEA WESTERNIZING YAR ARMS SUPPLY, AND SUGGEST WASHINGTON CONSIDER HOW WE MIGHT CONCUR AT LEAST IN PRINCIPLE. END SUMMARY.

1. IN HOUR'S CONVERSATION APRIL 3 DCM AND I HEARD SAUDI MINDEF PRINCE SULTAN EXPOUND HIS MISGIVINGS REGARDING PRESENT SITUATION IN YEMEN AND HAD OPPORTUNITY STRESS SOME OF CONSIDERATIONS WE THINK SIGNIFICANT. SULTAN'S COMMENTS SHOWED EMOTIONAL EMPHASIS AT ONE OR TWO POINTS BUT PRINCIPALLY HE REFLECTED PUZZLEMENT AND FRUSTRATION AS WELL AS CONSIDERABLE RECOGNITION COMPLEXITIES AND DANGERS.

2. PRINCE COMMENCED WITH LENGTHY HISTORICAL REVIEW, ASCRIBING TO BRITISH RESPONSIBILITY FOR SOWING SEEDS OF PRESENT DIFFICULTIES. IN THEIR HASTY DEPARTURE UK HAD LEFT GOVT IN HANDS OF EXTREMISTS AND RADICAL YOUTHS, ABORTING THEREBY CAREFULLY WORKED OUT ARAB LEAGUE PROPOSAL IN WHICH ALL POLITICAL FACTIONS MIGHT HAVE BEEN REPRESENTED.

3. TURNOVER TO RADICALS IN SOUTH YEMEN, PRINCE SAID, CAME AT TIME WHEN SAUDI ARABIA STILL STRUGGLING DESPERATELY WITH DIFFICULT PROBLEM IN NORTH YEMEN, FACING ALONE AND WITHOUT US ASSISTANCE, OR THAT OF OTHER ARABS, THREAT OF LEFTIST SOUTH YEMEN AND A RADICAL GOVT IN NORTH YEMEN SUPPORTED BY 80,000 EGYPTIAN TROOPS. SAUDI ARABIA HAD ADJURED ISOLATIONIST COURSE AND HAD ACTED WITH RESOLUTION AND FIRMNESS, EVENTUALLY ENDING SUPPORT FOR HAMID-ALADIN DYNASTY EVEN BEFORE WITHDRAWAL OF EGYPTIANS. THIS HAD BEEN PERSONAL DECISION OF KING PROVOKING DISSENSION AMONG HIS ADVISERS WITH MANY FEELING THAT KING'S CHOICE WAS UNWISE ONE. HE HAD, HOWEVER, BEEN PROVEN RIGHT AND SAUDI ARABIA MOVED THEN TO PROVIDE FINANCIAL AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO NORTH YEMEN THOUGH AS TIME WENT ON IT WONDERED WHY ITS FRIENDS WERE NOT DOING MORE HELP WITH YEMENI BURDEN. THERE HAD BEEN LONG AND FREQUENT EXCHANGES WITH US AMB AND BETWEEN KING FAISAL AND PRESIDENT JOHNSON. SULTAN UNDERSTOOD KING HAD RECEIVED ON HIS VISIT TO US IN 1971 SEMI-OFFICIAL

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PROMISE OF $20 MILLION AID TO STRENGTHEN NORTH YEMEN. YET US HAD BEEN ABLE TO MAKE GOOD ONLY WITH SOME FLOUR TO ALLEVIATE FAMINE A YEAR AGO.

4. PRINCE FELT THAT ABSENCE OF FULLY EFFECTIVE US BACKING FOR ITS FRIENDS IN ARABIA HAS HELPED BRING ABOUT PRESENT CRITICAL SITUATION IN SOUTH, AND INCREASING LETHARGY IN NORTH. SOUTH YEMEN AGGRESSIVENESS REFLECTED LATELY IN SHAMEFUL INCIDENT WHERE 65 NORTH YEMENI TRIBESMEN, INCLUDING RESPECTED SHEIKHS, WERE AMBUSHED AND MASSACRED. NORTH YEMENI APPREHENSIONS NOW INTENSE WITH ACTIVE DEMAND FOR MILITARY REVENGE.

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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 3 JIDDA 1147
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5. THUS DILEMMA IS MORE ACUTE THAN EVER FOR SAUDI ARABIA. NORTH YEMEN GROUND FORCES, TRIBAL AND REGULAR, CAN PENETRATE FAR INTO SOUTH YEMEN, BUT PDRY HOLDS IMPORTANT ADVANTAGE IN AIR SINCE YAR AIR FORCE IS NEARLY USELESS BECAUSE USSR HAS HELD BACK SPARES FOR MIG'S. TO DATE SAUDI ARABIA HAD NEVER COMMITTED ANY OF ITS OWN FORCES TO HOSTILITIES WITH PDRY, ALTHOUGH IT WOULD DEFEND ITSELF IF ATTACKED. WHAT COURSE SHOULD IT FOLLOW IF WIDESPREAD FIGHTING WERE TO BREAK OUT BETWEEN TWO YEMENS?

6. COMMENTING FURTHER ON THREAT FROM SOUTH, SULTAN NOTED CONSTANT FLOW OF COMMUNIST VESSELS ARRIVING IN ADEN WITH ARMS AND AMMUNITION. RUSSIANS ARE PROVIDING TECHNICAL AND MILITARY EXPERTISE, CHINESE SUPPLYING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AND MANPOWER SUPPORT. EAST GERMANS ARE ENTRENCHED IN SECURITY FIELD AND ARE TRAINING GENERATION OF IGNORANT, YOUNG FANATICS. EVERYTHING POSSIBLE MUST BE DONE PREVENT EXPANSION THIS KIND OF INFLUENCE INTO SAUDI ARABIA OR ELSEWHERE ON PENINSULA.

7. SAUDI ARABIA REMAINED, PRINCE STATED, DEEPLY CONCERNED WITH ZIONIST THREAT AND CONTINUED REPROACH US FOR ITS SUPPORT OF ISRAEL. BUT TODAY SAUDI ARABIA REGARDED PRESENCE OF COMMUNISTS IN SOUTH YEMEN AS GRAVER MATTER THAN THREAT OF ZIONISM IN PALESTINE.

8. IN RESPONSE I TOLD SULTAN I RECOGNIZED AND DEPLORED AS HE DID EXISTENCE OF DANGEROUS AND APPARENTLY DYNAMIC COMMUNIST-INFLUENCED REGIME IN PDRY. WE RECOGNIZED

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DILEMMA SAUDIS FACED. IF MILITARY INITIATIVE WERE LAUNCHED FROM YAR RESULT WOULD CERTAINLY BE TO STRENGTHEN GREATLY FOREIGN COMMUNIST GOVT SUPPORT FOR ADEN REGIME AND TO HEAL SERIOUS DIVISIONS WITH WHICH PDRY NOW AFFLICTED. AT SAME TIME WE COULD NOT CLAIM LEAVING PDRY IN PEACE WOULD ASSURE LESSENING OR WITHDRAWAL OF COMMUNIST INFLUENCE.

9. ACCORDINGLY, I FELT HARDLY COMPETENT SUGGEST APPROPRIATE MILITARY REACTION TO PRESENT SITUATION EXISTING BETWEEN TWO YEMENS. DEFENSE OF NORTH YEMEN PRIMARILY A SAUDI PROBLEM. BUT OVERRIDING CONSIDERATION SHOULD BE TO ASSURE THAT CURE NOT TURN OUT TO BE WORSE THAN DISEASE. YEMEN HAD SUFFERED TRAGICALLY FROM LONG YEARS BITTER CIVIL WAR AND DEVASTATION. YEMEN NEEDED MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE TIME AND OPPORTUNITY ACHIEVE PROSPERITY WITH SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROGRESS. FOR EXAMPLE, INSTEAD OF BEING WAR RAVAGED, WERE YAR TODAY A COUNTRY ENJOYING STEADY AND BENEFICIAL ECONOMIC PROGRESS SUCH STATE OF AFFAIRS COULD BE REGARDED AS BEST POSSIBLE DEFENSE AGAINST DESIGNS OF SOUTH YEMEN. THUS I EARNESTLY HOPED THAT WHATEVER COURSE SAUDI ARABIA FELT IT HAD TO FOLLOW RESULT WOULD NOT BE TO FURTHER EXHAUST NORTH YEMEN AND DESTROY CHANCES FOR STABILITY AND GROWTH.

10. REMINDED PRINCE I HAD DISCUSSED WITH HIM BEFORE REASONS WHY US UNABLE AT THIS STAGE MAKE SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO YAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. WE WERE STILL HOPEFUL YAR GOVT COULD SEE WAY TO REESTABLISH DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS AND WERE GRATEFUL FOR SAUDI ENDEAVORS PERSUADE YEMENIS THIS END. PERHAPS BEFORE TOO LONG YAR WOULD SEE BENEFITS OF REVIVING BONDS WITH US. ONCE THIS ACCOMPLISHED WE SAW SEVERAL POSSIBILITIES FOR EXTENDING ECONOMIC AID.

11. I ADDED THAT IN MEANTIME WE CONTINUED READY CONSULT CLOSELY WITH SAUDIS ON WHATEVER ECONOMIC PROGRAMS THEY MIGHT HAVE IN MIND. PERHAPS THERE WAS SOME CONTRIBUTION OF TECHNICAL NATURE WHICH WE COULD MAKE IF SAUDI ARABIA COULD SUPPLY RESOURCES. WE AWARE AND APPRECIATED CONTRIBUTIONS SAUDI ARABIA HAS ALREADY MADE BUT YEMEN

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NEEDS STILL GREAT. REGARDING PROSPECTS FOR ALLEVIATING TENSION I ASKED SULTAN IF HE HAD REPORTS ON OUTCOME AL-AYNI VISITS TO ARAB CAPITALS. SULTAN SAID REPORTS WERE MIXED WITH SOME INDICATING AL-AYNI DETERMINATION DEFEND YAR VIGOROUSLY WHILE OTHERS SHOWED HIM WAVERING IN SUPPORT OF TRIBAL-MILITARY COALITION.

12. COMMENT: DEEP SAUDI FEARS OF COMMUNIST ENTRENCHMENT IN SOUTH YEMEN EMERGED AGAIN AS THEY HAVE OFTEN IN OTHER DISCUSSIONS. THERE WAS CLEAR IMPLICATION AGGRESSIVE DEEDS SUCH AS SLAUGHTER OF NORTH YEMEN TRIBESMEN COULD NOT GO UNAVENGED, BUT AT SAME TIME WE DETECTED IN SULTAN'S REMARKS A SIGNIFICANT LACK OF BRAVADO. INDEED, WE MIGHT ASSUME PART SULTAN'S SENSE FRUSTRATION STEMS FROM REALIZATION THAT TRIBAL AND YAR DISORGANIZATION MAKE DOUBLY DIFFICULT AND RISKY TASK OF STRIKING AT PDRY. SULTAN APPARENTLY QUESTIONS WHETHER AL-AYNI IS MAN TO ADMINISTER EFFORTS OF MILITARY COUNTER THRUSTS, THOUGH HE REVEALED NO INTENTION PRESS FOR AL-AYNI'S REMOVAL.

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S E C R E T SECTION 3 OF 3 JIDDA 1147
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13. SAUDIS WILL CONTINUE NO DOUBT SUPPLY MONEY AND SMALL ARMS STRENGTHEN YAR TRIBES AND MILITARY. OUR GUESS IS SULTAN WILL NOT RPT NOT, HOWEVER, PRESS AGGRESSIVELY URGE YAR UNDERTAKE WIDE-SCALE ATTACKS AGAINST PDRY IF ONLY PERHAPS BECAUSE HE SEEMS WELL UNDERSTAND DEFENSELESSNESS OF NORTHERN FORCES TO PDRY AIR STRIKES. JUDGE ALSO SAUDIS REMAIN INTENSELY PRUDENT WITH REGARD ANY POSSIBILITY ENGAGEMENT THEIR OWN FORCES.

14. IN ECONOMIC SPHERE WE CAN ENCOURAGE SAUDIS MAKE BETTER CONTRIBUTION. WE MUST RECOGNIZE, HOWEVER, THAT CONCEIVING AND IMPLEMENTING PROJECTS PRESSES VERY LIMITS OF THEIR ADMINISTRATIVE ABILITIES. WE NOTE YOUNG, WESTERN EDUCATED MINISTER OF DEVELOPMENT JUNAID (SANAA 0207) WORKING UP POTENTIAL PROJECTS. YAR MIGHT PRESENT THREE OR FOUR OF THESE TO SAUDIS WITH AS MANY SPECIFIC DETAILS AND COSTING AS POSSIBLE. I WOULD BE PREPARED DISCUSS THEM WITH SULTAN OR PRINCE FAH'D ONCE YEMENIS HAVE DECIDED WHAT THEY WANT. IF PROJECTS REQUIRE CAREFUL TECHNICAL APPRAISAL, WE MIGHT SEE IF SAUDIS PREPARED PAY FOR US SPECIALISTS TO ASSESS AND PRICE YEMENI PROPOSALS. BEYOND SAUDI ENGAGEMENT OF WILSON-MURROW TO DO ROAD DESIGN STUDY (FACT WHICH COMPANY HAS ASKED US KEEP CONFIDENTIAL, JIDDA 4255), WE KNOW OF LITTLE ELSE THAT SAUDIS DOING TO IMPLEMENT THEIR PROMISES OF ECONOMIC AID. THEY WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE TO FLOUNDER UNTIL SPECIFIC IDEAS ARE PRESSED UPON THEM.

15. THERE GROUNDS NOW FOR HOPING YAR RESPONSE TO PDRY

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KILLING OF NORTHERN TRIBESMAN MAY BE LIMITED TO TRIBAL FORAYS INSTEAD OF MASSIVE COUNTER ATTACKS. WHAT SEEMS MORE CERTAIN IS THAT IMPACT RECENT EVENTS WILL GALVANIZE SAUDIS GO AT STRENGTHENING YAR FORCES IN MORE ORDERLY LONG-RANGE FASHION. WE CAN RECOGNIZE RISKS MOVING TOO PRECIPITATELY UNDER PRESENT CONDITIONS BUT BELIEVE THERE WILL BE INCREASING SAUDI INTEREST SECURING AT LEAST US APPROVAL IN PRINCIPLE FOR ENDEAVORS SUPPLANT MIG'S AND OTHER SOVIET MATERIAL WITH WESTERN PLANES AND WEAPONS. HOPE THEREFORE WASHINGTON MAY CONTINUE GIVE PRIORITY CONSIDERATION TO OVERALL BENEFITS WHICH COULD ACCRUE FROM US ARMS FLOWING TO YAR THROUGH SAUDI ARABIA AND/OR IRAN (JIDDA 0859). GP-3.
THACHER

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