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PA/HO Department of State
E.O. 12958, as amended
June 21, 2006

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Authority NND 969000
By RB Date 04/09/02

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

L I M D I S

DATE: May 29, 1969

SUBJECT: Kurdish Threat Against Kirkuk Oil Installations;
Iranian and Israeli Support for Assyrians

PARTICIPANTS: Mr. Zaya Malek Isma'il
Mr. Sam Andrews
Mr. William Yonan

Mr. Rodger P. Davies, NEA *RPD*
Mr. Bryan H. Baas, NEA/ARN

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White House - Mr. Saunders

19

The Assyrian gentlemen called on Mr. Davies at their request. Mr. Yonan introduced Messrs. Isma'il and Andrews stating that they had recently been in Kurdistan and had some information which they wished to share with us.

Mr. Andrews said that he and Mr. Isma'il had gone to Iran in early April 1969. Through the intercession of the Assyrian representative in Majlis, they were able to obtain permission - apparently from the Shah himself - to visit Mullah Mustafa Barzani in Kurdistan. A primary purpose of their visit was to ascertain the condition of Assyrians in Kurdish territory. The Iranian armed forces obligingly provided a helicopter to take them into Kurdistan. They arrived there April 20 and departed April 23.

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~~SECRET~~
2

Mr. Andrews said they had long talks with Mullah Mustafa every evening. The Mullah gave them a letter addressed to Secretary Rogers. The letter, a copy of which is attached, will be officially delivered next week by them in the company of the Kurdish representative in Washington, Shafiq Qazzaz. They permitted us in confidence to make a copy of the letter for our own information. Mullah Mustafa had specifically asked Messrs. Andrews and Isma'il to convey a message to the American Government. That is, the Mullah wants us to know that he is under pressure from his followers to unleash attacks on the Kirkuk oil facilities. The Kurds will give serious consideration to this in the future. The rationale is that the oil earns income for the Iraqi Government which in turn is used to buy arms to attack the Kurds. In reply to a specific inquiry from Mr. Baas, Mr. Andrews said that Mullah Mustafa was not demanding anything from us in return for agreement not to attack the Kirkuk facilities. Mullah Mustafa merely wanted us to be informed. Mr. Andrews said that, of course, Barzani looks for support from any quarter. He added that the Mullah said he would like to see Kurdistan become the 51st state.

In discussing the threat to the IPC facilities at Kirkuk, Andrews and Isma'il seemed to be unaware of the March 1969 attack on the facilities. (This is puzzling, since the Kurds have publicly taken credit for the attack.)

Mr. Andrews said that the Assyrians are fighting the Iraqis alongside the Kurds. There is apparently complete confidence between the Kurds and the Assyrians and some integration of their fighting forces. In this connection, Mr. Andrews said that the Iranian Government had assured him of Iranian assistance to the Assyrians in their confrontation with the Iraqis. In Tehran he had also gotten in touch with the Israelis. The Israelis also assured him that they would be pleased to provide Assyrians with arms. Mr. Andrews added that the Israelis are supplying the Kurds with arms while the Iranians provide them

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~~SECRET~~

3

with food and other supplies. Iranian support for the Kurds, Mr. Andrews noted, tends to vary in direct proportion to tensions between the Iranian and Iraqi Governments. Mullah Mustafa had complained to Mr. Andrews that when there is rapprochement between the Iraqis and the Iranians, aid to the Kurds becomes a mere trickle. At times like the present, the Kurds are well supplied by the Iranians.

Mr. Andrews reported that the Kurds enjoyed high morale and were determined to carry on their war with the Government of Iraq. The Iranians, the Israelis and the Kurds all agreed that even if Mullah Mustafa were to die, the Kurds were united enough in their confrontation with the Iraqis that they would carry on the fight.

Mr. Andrews noted in passing that Jalal Talabani's forces are ineffectual. Mr. Davies said that we had heard about two months ago a rumor that Talabani had been killed in a clash with the Barzani forces. Mr. Andrews said most emphatically that Talabani is still alive. He said that at about the time we understood that he had been killed, Talabani and a band of supporters attempted to ambush Barzani and a group of his followers. The ambush failed, and some 60 Talabani followers were killed. Both Talabani and Barzani escaped unscathed.

In reply to a question from Mr. Davies, Mr. Andrews said there are no negotiations between Barzani and the GOI at present.

Mr. Andrews alluded to the possibility of US assistance to the Kurds and Assyrians. Mr. Davies informed the gentlemen that following the February 1964 truce between the Kurds and the GOI, the US Government had instituted a Title II program in northern Iraq to provide relief to needy Kurds. This program had been terminated by the break in relations between the United States and Iraq. In the absence of relations there is little we can do to provide relief to needy minorities in that country. Mr. Davies went on to say that we are very sympathetic with all the minorities including the Kurds,

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~~SECRET~~

4

the Assyrians, the Jews, the Chaldeans, and others.

Mr. Andrews said that he would get in touch with Shafiq Qazzaz and would then be back in touch with Mr. Baas to arrange for an appointment to deliver Mullah Mustafa's letter to the Secretary. Mr. Andrews said he stands ready to be helpful in any way possible and asked that we feel free to call on him. Mr. Davies thanked him and said we are happy to have this new channel of communication.

Att

Attachment:

Copy of a letter to the Secretary from Barzani.

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DIVISION OF LANGUAGE SERVICES

(TRANSLATION)

LS NO. 10056
T-58
Arabic

The Honorable William Rogers
Secretary of State of the United States of America

Greetings and respects.

Your Excellency, you are aware of the fact that the people of Kurdistan of Iraq have been for more than seven and a half years the victims of a racial war waged against them by the dictators in Baghdad, who seized power through bloody military coups.

In addition to the threat which this war has aimed at the existence and legitimate aspirations of our people, both Kurds and Assyrians, it has brought disaster and affliction upon all its victims, deprived the people of Kurdistan, particularly the Assyrians and the Kurds, of education and health [needs], and rendered tens of thousands of them refugees. All these [calamities] have been inflicted upon us only because we have claimed the basic and legitimate human and national rights, to which we, like any other people, are entitled.

On more than one occasion, our people have appealed to the people and Government of the United States of America for assistance in their tribulation and inclusion in

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-2-

your country's aid, in all fields, to many of the under-developed peoples.

As we reiterate our appeal to the people and government of the United States through Your Excellency, we hope that President Richard Nixon's administration may usher in more propitious times for our cause, and that this appeal may meet a receptive ear on your part and gain the necessary sympathy and support.

Any serious step you may take towards this end will ensure for your country the generous gratitude and support of our people, as well as prove the best application of the policy of the United States, whose objective is to serve humanity and stand by small nations subjected to distress and suffering.

The delegation consisting of Shafiq Qazzaz, Zia Malak Ismail, and Sam Andrews is authorized to speak on my behalf and to set forth in detail the various aspects of our case. I am hopeful that the delegation will enjoy the favor of an audience with you.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Mustafa Al-Barazani
4/22/69