

INCOMING TELEGRAM

Department of State

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Info TO: Secretary of State

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The making and receiving of official calls, and other contacts a new chief of mission establishes with local people in all walks of life, have provided me in concentrated form with an appreciation of Iraqi attitudes which we must take into account if we are to make progress with our area objectives. This, I hope for summary of my impressions will prove timely to Dept in developing its over-all ME policy, and particularly in shaping its position on MEDO and several items on GA agenda.

Without any exception each new Iraqi acquaintance brought up first the Palestine issue and left no doubt as to depth of his feeling. With little variation each said the Iraqis has no quarrel with Jews as Jews who had been welcomed in Orient when the West persecuted them. But Zionism was something else which was cruelly selfish and dangerously aggressive. Zionism at work in Palestine, creating an Israeli state on lands which since days of Caliph Omar were Arab and today are part of Arab spiritual heritage, inflicted an injury to the Arab soul which will never heal. And what was done could not have been done except through active intervention and continuing support of US. This I was told always with sincerity and sometimes with very considerable heat. I was warned too that in the Orient where grudges are nourished and blood feuds flourish not to believe that lapse of time will change Arab attachment to Palestine or that the young generation will hold different views or that US loans and grants will cause Arabs to forget and forgive.

French and British imperialism in North Africa regularly was second subject introduced by Iraqis. They say North African Arab states are controlled by French and British armies with civil liberties suppressed and right of self-determination denied. They consider that US, by supporting British and French, has become equally responsible with them. Frequently I was asked why the US fights to save South Koreans from domination by foreign aggressors when we do not fight to save

Tunisians

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Tunisians and Moroccans from similar destiny. Then I was informed that we discriminate because Chinese and North Koreans do not belong to "international aristocracy" whereas the French and British do. I was advised that all nations today demand equality of treatment and warned that the prospect of survival of western civilization depends on the West practicing equality now and abandoning in the next GA its outmoded policy of discrimination. If US continues its old course the Iraqis expect to see in North Africa and throughout Asia a violent reaction to old ideologies and an increasing eagerness of these people to turn to communism as the only alternative to the former shining but now corroded democratic idea.

Development of natural resources generally came up next for discussion although Foreign Minister Jamawi and a few others gave third place to the advancement of Fertile Crescent idea. Our Point IV program was lightly brushed aside. The PRIMIN said it was "nothing" while other Ministers, generally sympathetic, said it had had little impact to date. The more critical complained that we had over-sold the program for two years and ended by creating a housing shortage in Baghdad to provide homes for TCA personnel. The openly hostile accused US of trying with trifling Point IV aid to bribe the Arabs to forget Palestine but it was the British that rec'd the heavy fire. All of the ills of today were laid to the reactionism of IPC and British Govt. My informants seemed to prefer to look to the past rather than the future. They felt things were not right and so sought someone to blame. The Brit and their Iraqi friends were the natural targets and they were pounded unmercifully. The pathological unanimity of this expression caused me to sympathize with members of Development Board who fear that the three years necessary to complete their major projects may not be accorded them by a people impatient for results. It caused me to share concern of FONMIN who said that the govt has no effective propaganda machinery, that there is not a single Arab language pro-West newspaper in Iraq, and therefore those who hold pro-West views are shy while others who hold anti-Western views shout them out. I found that our good works were not known or when known were interpreted by our enemies as being undertaken for nefarious purposes.

Area defense was a subj where the chief interest was to reject the concept of Western participation. Today neutrality is the refuge planned against time when war clouds threaten. When suggested that an Iraqi wartime neutrality wld invite a Soviet occupation, many professed to prefer an untried Soviet occupation to an actual Brit domination. In searching an explanation

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of such unrealistic attitude I was reminded that Mesopotamia has experienced wars from the beginning of time but never reconstruction after a war. Moreover, in two world wars Arabs fought with the Allies but experienced disillusionment and felt abandoned in the post-war period. So area defense, which they interpret as involvement and as inviting Soviet attack, is unpopular and will not be embraced now as an idea. On the other hand, a MEDO in Cyprus developing healthfully with Iraqi Govt, informed of its development on continuing basis, can have a growing fascination for the Iraqi mil and through them improve likelihood of eventual association of Iraqi Govt.

This description points up how weak our position is in Iraq. In view of location of Iraq, this sitn seems serious to me, even hazardous, and cries for remedial action. I suggest, therefore, that Dept determine whether sitn in Iraq is characteristic of that in other Arab countries. If it is, then we shld re-examine whether the lands, manpower and oil of Arab world are as important to us as we have thought. Assuming that they are, I suggest that we look urgently to our plans to bring Arabs around to West outlook and from Baghdad today it seems that surest way to accomplish this is by our govts squarely facing two problems.

First, is restoration of the Arab's confidence in Amer good will and good faith. A dramatic way to bring this home to Arabs might be by insisting on enforcement of UN resolutions on PAL. It might also be accomplished as effectively but less dramatically through our day-by-day decisions demonstrating that our ME policy is as genuinely concerned with reactions of Arabs as that of Israelis. Such action wld go far in restoring Arab faith in UN and US. Secondly, is attitude of the UK and France. To harmonize such with world conditions today we may have to insist that UK assume in ME same statesmanlike attitude it assumed in Indian subcontinent in 1946 and then insist that Fr adopt similar attitude. I realized that these are heavy demands, but ME is a great prize. Whether gaining it is worth risking taking this suggested position with Israel, UK and France only Dept can decide, but from here it is very clear that until US is again respected in ME for justice of its position our local friends will not risk raising their voices to support us. But when we have demonstrated a policy of fairness and friendship towards Arab world we will have laid foundation for rebuilding prestige that US traditionally has enjoyed in this area.

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