

GRAM

65 Department of State 787.00/11-2452

RESTRICTED

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Control: 9195
Rec'd: November 25, 1952
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FROM: Baghdad

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 649, November 24, 11 a.m.

PRIORITY

Upon receipt info from two American eyewitnesses that situation near USIS bldg relatively quiet Embassy officers and two security guards proceeded USIS at 0800 today. Rashid Street quiet as far as USIS bldg itself. All shops closed. Army guarding hotel and machine gun emplacements at main intersections. Armored cars patrolling.

However, there was crowd of some 100 persons outside USIS bldg and at least similar number inside looting bldg and destroying property. No (rpt no) army or police either outside or inside the bldg.

Bldg had been fired but structure still appeared sound. There was water on floor probably due fire fighting attempt yesterday. As far as cld be seen all furniture, fixtures, books, film equipment, file cabinets and office equipment had been removed. Several file cabinets and other equipment were on street and sidewalks and some had been burned. One safe cabinet which contained all USIS material classified up to confidential had been removed from restricted zone to which entry had been effected by forcing window bars. Papers scattered over floor of restricted zone. Safe cabinet may be among those on street but impossible identify with crowd milling around.

As Embassy personnel were making cursory inspection tension among crowd outside and inside bldg increased within ten minutes. Several men began brandishing clubs and there was shouting, blissing and spitting. Police and army still nowhere in evidence near bldg although there were several stationed at main intersections near both approaches to the bldg. Embassy guards attempt to stop one passing army jeep containing five armed soldiers was ignored. Embassy personnel, who were unarmed, thereupon returned to their car parked outside bldg. Upon leaving two personnel recd minor blows. Tattoo of blows rained on vehicle as it departed at 8:20.

Upon returning to Embassy similar crowd observed outside and inside Bab Sheikh police station which also fired yesterday.

BERRY

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