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By CM NARA Date 6-12-03

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S E C R E T SECTION I OF I2 JIDDA 3568

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SUBJECT: URGENT SAUDI PLEA FOR US MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO YAR.

SUMMARY: SAGGAF GAVE ME LENGTHY AND DETAILED SAUDI ASSESSMENT OF PRESENT SITUATION BETWEEN TWO YEMENS. SAG REGARDS WITH UTMOST MISGIVINGS PLANNED ENDEAVORS FOR UNIFICATION AND SEES YAR IN STEADILY WEAKENING POSITION SO THAT IT HAS BEEN FORCED TO ACCEPT THIS CONCEPT. HE ASKED URGENTLY US CONSIDER HOW IT MIGHT PROVIDE YAR WITH ARMS EITHER DIRECTLY OR THROUGH FRIENDLY NEIGHBORS SUCH AS SAUDI ARABIA. HE SAID HE WISHED I UNDERSTAND HE WAS SPEAKING ON KING'S BEHALF AND ASKED MESSAGE BE PASSED TO ASSISTANT SECRETARY SISCO AND SECRETARY ROGERS. AMBASSADOR REVIEWED BRIEFLY SOME OF PROBLEMS U.S. FINDS WITH CONCEPT OF MILITARY AID TO YEMEN BUT ASSURED SAGGAF HIS VIEWS WOULD BE PROMPTLY SENT WASHINGTON. END SUMMARY.

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1. SAGGAF BEGAN BY COMMENTING THAT SAUDI ARABIA COULD NOT ACCEPT PRESENCE OF A COMMUNIST CONTROLLED COUNTRY ON THE SOUTHERN EDGE OF ARABIAN PENINSULA. ACCORDINGLY, IT HAD NOT APPROVED OF ARAB LEAGUE EFFORTS TO NEGOTIATE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TWO YEMENS MUCH LESS CONCEPT OF THEIR UNIFICATION. SAGGAF SAID THAT SOUTH YEMENIS ARE PROCEEDING SO PRECIPITATELY WITH COMMUNIZATION THAT SOVS AND CHICOMS ALLEGEDLY CLAIMING "WE LEARNING ABOUT COMMUNISM FROM ADENIS". PDRY IS KNOWN TO BE VERY WEAK AND POOR BUT IT IS SUBSTANTIALLY BUOYED UP BY IMPORTANT HELP FROM CHINESE, SOVIETS AND IRAQ. WHEN SAGGAF WAS IN BAGHDAD RECENTLY HE FOUND IRAQIS COMPLAINING ABOUT QUARRELSOME NATURE OF PDRY LEADERS.

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SYRIANS CLAIM THEY HAVE STOPPED ALL AID TO PDRY.

2. SAGGAF THEN CONTRASTED YAR'S MODERATE OUTLOOK, ITS DESIRE FOR REASONABLE RELATIONS WITH ALL COUNTRIES AND ITS STRIVING FOR STABILITY AND PROGRESS. AWARE OF YAR'S GRADUALLY RETURNING STRENGTH PDRY HAS UNDERTAKEN PROGRAM OF HARASSMENT, THROWING BOMBS IN BORDER VILLAGES, MOUNTING GUERILLA ATTACKS, ETC., MEANWHILE CHINESE AND SOVIETS, PARTICULARLY LATTER, ON WHOM YAR HAD BECOME HEAVILY DEPENDENT FOR MILITARY EQUIPMENT, HAVE FURTHER IMMOBILIZED YAR BY THEIR PASSIVE AND UNHELPFUL ATTITUDES. NORTH YEMEN SUFFERS SERIOUS DISADVANTAGE IN LACK OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT ALL THE WAY FROM SMALL ARMS TO AIRCRAFT AND TANKS. WITHOUT SUFFICIENT TRANS-PORT AND LONG RANGE WEAPONS YAR UNABLE STRIKE BACK AT FORAYS LAUNCHED FROM PDRY. SAUDI ARABIA HAS PROVIDED HELP IN MANY RESPECTS BUT A GREAT DEAL MORE IS NEEDED TO KEEP NORTH YEMEN AFLOAT.

3. PDRY ON OTHER HAND HAS HELICOPTERS, ITS FORCE OF MIGS RECENTLY INCREASED TO 9 AND EXTENSIVE OTHER EQUIPMENT SUPPLIED BY COMMUNIST SIDE. IRAQIS ARE APPARENTLY FLYING PDRY'S MIGS.

4. GOING BACK TO POINT HE HAD MADE PARA 1, SAGGAF DESCRIBED ARAB LEAGUE MEDIATION EFFORT AS A MISTAKE AND ACCORDINGLY SAUDI ARABIA HAD REFUSED TO PARTICIPATE. RESULT WAS THAT TRUCE-MAKING ENDEAVORS HAD BEEN CONTINUED OUTSIDE AL FRAMEWORK BY SYRIA, KUWAIT AND EGYPT (LIBYA, HE ASSERTED, HAD DROPPED OUT OF ACTIVE ROLE). AL-AYNI LIKES TO REGARD HIMSELF AS MAN OF PEACE SO HE WAS SUSCEPTIBLE THESE ENDEAVORS, ALTHOUGH, SAGGAF NOTED, AL-AYNI "NOT DELAING WITH NEIGHBORS WHO ARE PEACEFUL."

5. SAGGAF FEELS YAR REPS WERE IN ANY CASE BACKED INTO CORNER BECAUSE OF WEAKNESS AND HAD LITTLE CHOICE BUT ACCEPT CEASEFIRE AND UNIFICATION PROPOSALS SUPPORTED BY REPRESENTATIVES OF THREE MEDIATING COUNTRIES WHOM SAGGAF THINKS DO NOT REALLY UNDERSTAND VICIOUS AGGRESSIVENESS OF PDRY. HOWEVER ARAB SUPERVISORS HAVE NOW BEEN SENT TO POLICE THE TRUCE (KUWAITIS AND ALGERIANS SO FAR).

6. SAGGAF APPREHENSIVE WITH REGARD UNITY DISCUSSIONS EVEN THOUGH CONVINCED THEY CANNOT SUCCEED. TWO GOVERNMENTS GUIDED BY DIAMETRICALLY OPPOSED PRINCIPLES WHICH NEITHER PREPARED TO SACRIFICE. NEVERTHELESS TWO HEADS OF STATE ARE SUPPOSED TO MEET IN LIBYA AND WORK OUT DETAILS FOR ELECTIONS, COMBINED LEGISLATURE,

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ETC.. ANY EFFORT TO IMPLEMENT SUCH IDEAS IN PRACTICAL FASHION  
COULD BE DISASTROUS AND SIMPLY RESULT IN GREATLY INCREASED COMMUNIST INFLUENCE IN NORTH YEMEN.

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7. SAGGAF UNDERSTANDS YAR HAS APPROACHED US FOR MILITARY HELP AND THAT WE HAVE INDICATED WE DO NOT BELIEVE IT WISE TO OFFER ARMS. IN SAUDI EYES THIS IS AN INVALID VIEW. US HAS SHOWN ITS WILLINGNESS TO FIGHT ELSEWHERE AGAINST COMMUNIST INFILTRATION AND SEEMS TO HAVE FEW SCRUPLES ABOUT KEEPING ISRAEL'S WELL SUPPLIED WITH MOST SOPHISTICATED GEAR. SAUDI ARABIA CONTINUES DEEPLY CONCERNED WITH GROWTH OF HOSTILE FORCES ON ITS BORDERS. SAUDI'S WOULD EXPECT US TO RECOGNIZE THAT IN VIEW SAUDI ARABIA'S VITAL ROLE IN SUPPLYING

FREE WORLD'S OIL THAT IT IS VERY MUCH TO US ADVANTAGE HELP RESIST SERIOUS THREATS TO SAUDI SECURITY. SINCE AMERICANS GENERALLY BELIEVE PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CURE, SAGGAF URGED QUICK AND POSITIVE RESPONSE BY ANY MEANS WE MIGHT CHOOSE WHETHER THROUGH OTHER ARAB GOVERNMENTS OR OUR RICH EUROPEAN FRIENDS.

SAGGAF HINTED HE WOULD LIKE FULL US VIEW OF WHAT GOING ON IN PDRY, SINCE "NOBODY KNOWS REALLY WHAT RUSSIANS OR CHINESE ARE UP TO AND SOMETIMES WE GUESS WRONG." KING CONTINUES DEEPLY WORRIED ABOUT WHOLE SITUATION AND FEELS THAT PDRY, IF UNOPPOSED, WILL SOON BE SPREADING ITS INFLUENCE TO GULF. ACCORDINGLY HE WISHED WE KNOW HE WAS SPEAKING ON KING'S BEHALF AND THAT HE WANTED HIS MESSAGE GET THROUGH TO ASSISTANT SECRETARY SISCO AND SECRETARY ROGERS. PLEASE DO YOUR BEST TO HELP NORTH YEMEN.

8. I THOUGHT HE KNEW OUR FEELING THAT SIGNIFICANT SUPPLIES OF US EQUIPMENT, HOWEVER THEY REACHED YAR, COULD RAISE SPECTER OF COLD WAR CONFRONTATION WHICH COULD ESCALATE YAR/PDRY DIFFERENCES TO

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MUCH MORE DANGEROUS LEVEL. MOREOVER I WONDERED IF MUCH OF YAR TROUBLES COULD NOT BE TRACED TO FACT THAT THREE SOMEWHAT DISPARATE GROUPS: TRIBES, YAR ARMY AND POLITICAL REFUGEES FROM SOUTH WERE CONDUCTING MAJOR SEPARATE CAMPAIGNS. THESE GROUPS WERE OFTEN BEYOND CONTROL OF YARG AND COULD LAUNCH PROVOCATIVE ATTACKS INTO SOUTH. SAGGAF REJECTED ANY THOUGHT THAT MAJOR ONUS MIGHT NOT LIE ON PDRY AND AGAIN PLEADED URGENCY OF SITUATION.

9. COMMENT: IN NEXT DAY OR SO, WE WILL FORWARD FULL COMMENTS ON ABOVE AND SUGGESTIONS FOR POSSIBLE US RESPONSE WHICH SAGGAF IN ANY CASE WILL NOT BE EXPECTING UNTIL AFTER ID HOLIDAYS ENDING NOV 10. GDS.  
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