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Authority NND 969049

By CM NARA Date 6-12-03

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POL SAUD-YEMEN

TELEGRAM

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*Jidda 2721
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S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 JIDDA 2721

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SUBJECT: YEMEN

SUMMARY: IN STRICTEST CONFIDENCE SULTAN CONFIDED THAT SAG HAS DECIDED ACCORD EARLY RECOGNITION TO YAR. IT HAS DROPPED EARLIER NATIONAL RECONCILIATION CONFERENCE REQUIREMENT AND HAS INVITED HIGH LEVEL YAR DELEGATION, REPRESENTING ALL ELEMENTS YEMENI SOCIETY, COME TO SAUDI ARABIA NEXT FEW DAYS FOR TALKS WHICH WILL HOPEFULLY LEAD TO SUCH RECOGNITION. HAMID AD-DINS WILL BE EXCLUDED FROM SUCH TALKS AND SAG BELIEVES IT CAN CONTROL THEM. SAG RECENTLY ABORTED UNHELPFUL EFFORT BY SOME YEMENI ROYALIST TRIBAL ELEMENTS HOLD UNILATERAL CONFERENCE, BUT REMAINS CONCERNED THAT PRSY IS CONDUCTING ACTIVE PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN IN NORTHERN AND EASTERN TRIBAL AREAS IMPUGNING SAUDI INTENTIONS. IN ADDITION SOME EMERGENCY FLOUR FOR FAMINE RELIEF, SAG HAS ARRANGED WITH BRITISH BANK FOR ONE MILLION DOLLAR, SAUDI GUARANTEED LOAN TO YAR TO PAY YEMENI CIVIL SERVANTS AND MILITARY. SULTAN EXPRESSED HOPE USG WILL WORK WITH SAG IN PROVIDING ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE.

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1. DURING MY FAREWELL CALL TODAY ON MODA PRINCE SULTAN, HE CONFIDED THAT KING FAISAL AND SAUDI COUNCIL OF MINISTERS HAD AGREED LAST NIGHT ON EARLY SAG RECOGNITION OF YAR. THIS IS TO BE ACCOMPLISHED ALONG FOLLOWING LINES:
 2. FIRST, WITH FAISAL'S APPROVAL, A HIGH LEVEL INTEGRATED YAR DELEGATION HAS BEEN INVITED TO COME TO JIDDA NEXT FEW DAYS IN ORDER TO DISCUSS NORMALIZATION SAUDI-YEMENI RELATIONS AND RECOGNITION. DELEGATION WILL REPRESENT PRINCIPAL TRIBAL AND RELIGIOUS ELEMENTS IN YEMENI SOCIETY. AL-AINI HAD EARLIER AGREED SEND DELEGATION AND COMMON SAUDI-YEMENI PURPOSE IS TO EXCLUDE LEFTIST AND EXTREMISTS AND MUSTER MODERATE YEMENI ELEMENTS IN SUPPORT OF PRESENT YAR REGIME. HE HOPED DELEGATION MIGHT ARRIVE TOMORROW PRIOR HIS OWN DEPARTURE FOLLOWING DAY FOR MUCH NEEDED VACATION IN EUROPE. IF IT COMES DAY OR TWO LATER, HIGH LEVEL TALKS WILL BE CONDUCTED BY PRINCE FAHD. I ASKED IF THIS MEANT SAUDIS HAVE DROPPED NATIONAL RECONCILIATION CONFERENCE REQUIREMENT WHICH I HAD HEARD FEW WEEKS AGO SAG WAS STILL INSISTING UPON. SULTAN LAUGHED AND CONTENDED SAUDI DEMAND FOR SUCH CONFERENCE WAS LARGELY A TACTICAL DEVICE AND WAS MADE IN DEFERENCE YEMENI ROYALIST VIEWS. SAUDIS HAVE CONCLUDED, HOWEVER, THAT ANY SUCH CONFERENCE WOULD SIMPLY PERMIT LEFTIST AND EXTREMIST YEMENIS TO DISRUPT INTEGRATION PROCESS AND IS THEREFORE UNDESIRABLE. HE, SULTAN, HAD FEW DAYS AGO OBTAINED FAISAL'S AGREEMENT THAT RECONCILIATION CONFERENCE REQUIREMENT MIGHT BE DROPPED. INSTEAD, PERTINENT TALKS WILL BE HELD WITH EXPECTED HIGH LEVEL YEMENI DELEGATION. IF TALKS INDICATE INTEGRATION PROCEEDING SATISFACTORILY, SAG WILL SET EARLY DATE TO ACCORD FINAL RECOGNITION.
 3. SULTAN ALSO CLAIMED ROYALIST ELEMENTS, ON HAMID AD DIN INSTIGATION, HAD ABOUT THREE WEEKS AGO SOUGHT TO HOLD UNILATERAL NATIONAL RECONCILIATION CONFERENCE IN NORTHERN YEMEN. SAUDIS STRONGLY PRESSED HAMID AD-DINS AND TRIBAL LEADERS DROP IDEA. SULTAN HAD EVEN THREATENED TO SEND SAUDI MILITARY INTO NORTHERN YEMEN TO STOP ANY SUCH UNILATERAL CONFERENCE FROM TAKING PLACE. IT WOULD HAVE SOUNDED DEATH KNELL TO INTEGRATION EFFORTS. HE WAS HAPPY THAT HE HAD SUCCEEDED.

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4. IN THIS CONNECTION, SULTAN NOTED PRSY HAS IN RECENT WEEKS BEEN ACTIVELY SEEKING SPREAD WORD AMONG NORTHERN AND EASTERN YEMENI TRIBAL ELEMENTS THAT SAUDIS UNRELIABLE AND CANNOT BE DEPENDED UPON. SAUDIS HAVE UNDERTAKEN COUNTER PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN IN TRIBAL AREAS OF EASTERN YEMEN, E.G., MURAD, ABIDAH AND DAHM, WHICH REPRESENT SENSITIVE AREAS TO SAUDI SECURITY. SULTAN CLAIMED A NUMBER OF DISSIDENT TRIBAL SHEIKHS HAVE BEEN "REMOVED". HE EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THESE TRIBAL ELEMENTS HAVE NOW BEEN REASSURED ABOUT SAUDI INTENTIONS, BUT NOTED PRSY MAY BE EXPECTED CONTINUE ITS ANTI-SAUDI CAMPAIGN AND MUST BE WATCHED.

5. I CONGRATULATED SULTAN ON PROPOSED SAUDI RECOGNITION OF YAR. I NOTED THIS SHOULD BE HELPFUL IN BUTRESSING MODERATE YEMENIS LIKE AL-AINI AND IRIYANI, AND I OUGHT ALSO TO MAKE IT EASIER FOR USG TO RESUME IN DUE COURSE DIPLOMATIC RELATION WITH YAR. I RECALLED YAR HAS LONG SOUGHT RESUMPTION OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH US AND THAT OUR FAILURE THUS FAR TO AGREE HAS BEEN DUE IN LARGE PART TO OUR DESIRE DO NOTHING THAT WOULD EMBARRASS SA OR SET BACK RECONCILIATION EFFORTS. SULTAN EXPRESSED APPRECIATION.

6. I THEN SUGGESTED THAT NOW THAT INTEGRATION PROCESS APPEARS TO BE WORKING REASONABLY WELL AND EARLY SAUDI RECOGNITION OF YAR WILL PROBABLY TAKE PLACE, IT OUGHT TO BE POSSIBLE FOR SAG TO EXTEND BADLY NEEDED ECONOMIC AID TO YEMEN. I RECALLED HE, FAISAL, AND OTHERS HAD OFTEN ASSURED ME THAT ONCE ACCEPTABLE YEMENI COALITION GOVT ACHIEVED, SAG WOULD BE PREPARED EXTEND AID. THAT TIME SEEMED TO BE JUST ABOUT HERE. SULTAN RESPONDED SAG HAS ALREADY PROVIDED 20,000 "CASES" OF FLOUR FOR FAMINE RELIEF. ADDITIONALLY, IN RESPONSE AINI'S RECENT URGENT APPEAL FOR MONEY TO PAY YEMENI CIVIL SERVANTS AND MILITARY, SAG HAS MADE ARRANGEMENTS WITH "BRITISH BANK" (BBME-?) TO EXTEND ONE MILLION DOLLARS LOAN TO YAR GUARANTEED BY SAG. SULTAN PRIVATELY ADMITTED THAT IN THE END, SAG WILL DOUBTLESS HAVE TO PAY THIS MONEY, SINCE IN FORESEEABLE FUTURE YAR NOT LIKELY HAVE RESOURCES TO DO SO. GP-3 EILTS

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7. SULTAN THEN KICKED BALL BACK INTO OUR COURT SAYING HE HOPED USG MIGHT NOW ALSO PROVIDE "GENEROUS ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE" TO YAR. HE RECALLED THAT YAR HAD ABOUT A MONTH AGO ASKED SAG TO INTERCEDE WITH USG TO TRY TO OBTAIN SOME AMERICAN ECONOMIC HELP. SAG HAD DECLINED TO DO SO UNTIL POLITICAL ARRANGEMENTS IN CONNECTION WITH INTEGRATION AHD BEEN COMPLETED. HE HOPED THAT USG MIGHT NOW WORK WITH SAG IN PROVIDING ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE. I POINTED OUT THAT WE ARE ALREADY PROVIDING SOME FAMINE RELIEF WHEAT THROUGH CRS. IN ABSENCE OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH YAR THERE IS LITTLE ELSE WE CAN DO. SHOULD DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BE RESUMED, WE WOULD DOUBTLESS BE WILLING TO EXPLORE OTHER POSSIBILITIES OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE. I CAUTIONED SULTAN, HOWEVER, THAT WITH DWINDLING CONGRESSIONAL APPROPRIATIONS FOR FOREIGN AID AND HEAVY DEMAND FOR THESE LIMITED RESOURCES, I COULD NOT BE SANGUINE THAT ANY APPRECIABLE US AID WOULD BE FORTHCOMING. SINCE SAG CLEARLY HAS DEEP SECURITY INTEREST IN NEIGHBORING YEMEN, I THOUGHT SAG WOULD HAVE TO THINK IN TERMS OF SHOULDERING IN LARGE PART OF THE BURDEN OF ANY AID NEEDED BY YEMEN. SULTAN SAID SAG WILL DO WHAT IT CAN, BUT IN

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ITS PRESENT TIGHT FINANCIAL SITUATION THERE IS A DISTINCT LIMIT TO WHAT SAG CAN GIVE.

8. HE DID POINT OUT THAT SAG HAS RECENTLY MADE ARRANGEMENTS TO PERMIT REMITTANCES FROM YEMENIS IN SAUDI ARABIA TO BE MADE TO FAMILIES IN YEMEN WITHOUT GOING THROUGH ADEN. THIS SHOULD HELP YEMENI ECONOMY. SAG HAS ALSO AGREED TO DIRECT COMMUNICATIONS LINKS BETWEEN YEMEN AND SAUDI ARABIA. FINALLY, SAG IS CONSIDERING OTHER STEPS THAT MIGHT BE HELPFUL. IT HAD BEEN SUGGESTED THAT SDI RESUME FLIGHTS TO YEMEN, BUT THIS IDEA CURRENTLY IN LIMBO PENDING SAUDI RECOGNITION. IF SUCH FLIGHTS WERE RESUMED BEFORE RECOGNITION, IT WOULD REQUIRE SAG ACCEPT YARI PASSPORTS WHICH WOULD CONSTITUTE DE FACTO RECOGNITION AND LESSEN SAUDI LEVERAGE. ONCE FORMAL RECOGNITION TAKES PLACE, SDI FLIGHTS TO SAANA WILL BE RESUMED.

9. I ASKED IF HAMID AD-DINS WILL PARTICIPATE IN FORTHCOMING TALKS. SULTAN SAID ABSOLUTELY NOT. TALKS WILL BE BETWEEN SAUDIS AND YEMENIS. ALL BUT TWO OF MAJOR HAMID AD-DIN PRINCES ARE NOW IN TAIF OR JIDDA. HE HAD SENT SECRET LETTER TO ONE OF THE TWO (UNNAMED) AND EXPECTS HIM TO ARRIVE IN JIDDA TONIGHT. THE SECOND PRINCE MUHAMMAD BIN IBRAHIM, IS CURRENTLY FARMING IN JDCHABASHA AND SULTAN HAS INVITED HIM COME TO JIDDA FOR HIS OWN PERSONAL SAFETY. SULTAN HAS POINTED OUT THAT ONCE YEMENI SITUATION CLARIFIES, PRINCE MIGHT GO BACK TO YEMEN AS A PRIVATE CITIZEN. HE HOPES PRINCE WILL RESPOND. IN ANY CASE, HE STRESSED HAMID AD-DINS ARE CURRENTLY SAUDI "GUESTS" AND UNDER EFFECTIVE SAUDI CONTROL.

10. SULTAN EMPHASIZED THAT WORD OF ABOVE DECISION HAS NOT YET BEEN PASSED TO SAUDI MINISTRIES. NOR WILL IT BE MADE KNOWN UNTIL YEMENI DELEGATION ACTUALLY ARRIVES. HE ASKED THEREFORE THAT SUBJECT BE TREATED AS HIGHLY SECRET. I ASSURED HIM WE WILL TREAT IT AS SUCH.

11. COMMENT: IF SAUDI RECOGNITION OF YAR MATERIALIZES, IT IS CLEARLY A HIGHLY WELCOME STEP. IT WOULD MARK IN EFFECT END OF EIGHT YEARS SAUDI-YEMENI HOSTILITIES AND, HOPEFULLY, SHOULD ENABLE BADLY NEEDED YEMENI RECON-

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STRUCTION PROGRAM TO BE PLANNED AND BEGUN. YEMEN HAS COST
 SAG TENS OF MILLIONS OF DOLLARS. MOST OF THIS MUST BE
 REGARDED AS WASTED MONEY. SAG IS WELL ADVISED AND DEED TO
 RID ITSELF OF THIS PROBLEM. WE SHALL NOW HAVE TO CONTINUE
 TO URGE SAG TO PROVIDE ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO YEMEN. BUT
 MAY ALSO EXPECT THAT OUR SAUDI FRIENDS WILL RETURN THE
 COMPLIMENT BY PRESSING US TO DO LIKEWISE. GPR3
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