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Authority: 100-969000
By: MB NARA Date: 3/3/02

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE

WASHINGTON
January 31, 1969

(91)

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MEMORANDUM FOR: The Secretary

THROUGH: S/S *FPW*

FROM: IO - Joseph J. Sisco *JJS*
NEA - William J. Handley *WJH*

SUBJECT: Arthur Goldberg's Suggestion for U.S.
Initiatives to Seek Immigration of
Iraq's Jews - ACTION MEMORANDUM

Arthur Goldberg has written you suggesting that we attempt to influence the Government of Iraq to permit its Jews to emigrate (TAB A). He suggests that the United States signify its readiness, either privately or publicly, to admit these Jews into this country.

We believe this idea should be pursued. It reflects the highest American humanitarian tradition, and if successful it would remove a serious irritant from the Middle Eastern scene. Even if it failed, the impact on world opinion would be very favorable and the President's action when it became known, would be widely acclaimed at home.

The Jewish community in Iraq, which was once large and prosperous, has now dwindled to some 2,500 harassed individuals. There is some slight possibility that Iraq would agree to divest itself of these people, if suitable inducements in cash or kind were offered, and if negotiations were carried on through a proper intermediary and in secret. Israel would probably be prepared to consider some form of compensation for Iraq.

Iran would appear to be the most appropriate intermediary. Iraq is anxious to maintain correct relations with Iran because the latter has the capability of assisting the Iraqi Kurds in their continuing insurrection.

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The Iraqis would no doubt demand as one condition of any arrangement that none of the refugees be permitted to go to Israel. As the attached memorandum (TAB B) from the Legal Adviser indicates, the United States would be able to admit them here. Certain other countries would no doubt be willing to receive some of them, if we decided that the group should be dispersed.

Iranian Ambassador Ansary is leaving Washington February 3 for Switzerland, where he will consult with the Shah, the only Iranian who can make a decision in a matter of this importance. If the President should decide that we should take action along the lines suggested by Justice Goldberg, Ansary could raise this sensitive question in a direct and discreet manner.

We do not believe that this operation would adversely affect our efforts to free the two Americans now held in Iraq.

At the appropriate time, we would wish to do some selective consultations with Congress.

RECOMMENDATION:

That you seek Presidential authorization to permit us to pursue this proposal with representatives of Iran and Israel. A draft memorandum is attached (TAB C).

I have also prepared a brief interim reply from you to Arthur Goldberg (TAB D).

Attachments:

- TAB A - Letter from Justice Goldberg
- TAB B - Legal Memorandum
- TAB C - Draft Memorandum to the President
- TAB D - Interim Reply to Justice Goldberg

NEA:RD *RM* / IO:DH *DM* Popper:mtb

~~SECRET EYES~~