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Authority *NAID 969053*
By *SP* NARA Date *8/2/02*

Pol 23-9 Iraq



Department of State

TELEGRAM

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ACTION NEA-15

INFO OCT-01 EUR-20 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-10 P-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-20 USIA-12 IO-13
RSR-01 AF-12 /126.W

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P R 231525Z JAN 70
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5424
INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMCONSUL DHAHRAN
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
CINCSTRIKE/CINCMEA/AFSA

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SUBJ: IRAQI COUP ATTEMPT

1. INFORMATION ON EVENTS IN IRAQ NOW AVAILABLE TO FONOFF IS SIMILAR TO REPORTS APPEARING LONDON PRESS DATED LINED BEIRUT. FONOFF AND PRESS DETAILS APPEAR BELOW. FONOFF IRAQ DESK (HINCHCLIFFE) TELLS US THAT IT FAIRLY CLEAR THAT IRAQIS HAVE KNOWN ABOUT PLOT FOR SOME TIME AND DELIBERATELY WAITED UNTIL LAST MINUTE TO NAB PARTICIPANTS. FURTHERMORE, HINCHCLIFFE SAYS, FONOFF IS REASONABLY SATISFIED IRANIANS WERE INDEED BEHIND ATTEMPT; RELATIVE RESTRAINT OF IRANIAN REACTION TO DATE MAY REFLECT THEIR UNCERTAINTY OVER BEST RESPONSE UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES.

2. FONOFF'S LATEST FIGURES ON NUMBER OF PLOTTERS EXECUTED IS 41 WITH UNDETERMINED NUMBER OF OTHERS JAILED FOR VARIOUS TERMS. WORD FROM BAGHDAD INDICATES THAT IRANIAN AMBASSADOR AND FOUR OF HIS STAFF WERE GIVEN BRUSQUE TREATMENT IN EXPULSION EXERCISE. DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES HAVE NOT

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RPT NOT BEEN SEVERED AND, AT THIS MOMENT, FONOFF DOUBTS FULL DIPLOMATIC RUPTURE WILL COME. PRESS REPORTS HERE SPEAK OF TROOP MOVEMENTS BY BOTH COUNTRIES ON EITHER SIDE OF SHATT AL ARAB BUT FONOFF HAS NO CONFIRMATION.

3. FONOFF INFORMATION INDICATES THAT IRAQI REGIME HAS IRANIAN INVOLVEMENT IN PLOT FAIRLY WELL DOCUMENTED AND THAT BAGHDAD INTENDS TO EXPLOIT ITS "EVIDENCE" TO MAXIMIZE EMBARRASSMENT FOR IRAN. HINCHCLIFFE NOTES THAT UK WAS MENTIONED DURING FIRST FEW HOURS AFTER COUP ATTEMPT WAS BROKEN BUT HAS NOT BEEN SPOKEN OF SINCE. HOWEVER, BAGHDAD RADIO CONTINUED TO LINK CIA WITH IRANIANS AS PERPETRATORS OF ATTEMPT.

4. ONLY PRESS COMMENT TO DATE APPEARED IN TODAY'S TIMES WHICH TREATS PLOT AS SIMPLY ANOTHER INEVITABLE CONSPIRACY AGAINST SMALL GROUP WHO HOLD POWER IN BAGHDAD. MORE SUCH PLOTS WILL COME SINCE THIS IS ONLY WAY TO CHANGE REGIME WHICH IS "INCOMPETENT AND BLOODTHIRSTY." TALLY OF EXECUTIONS OF PAST TWO DAYS IS HIGH EVEN BY IRAQI STANDARDS. "SO THE REVOLUTION EATS ITS CHILDREN, AND A GREAT MANY OTHER UNFORTUNATES AS WELL." ACCUSATIONS AND ACTION AGAINST IRAN ARE NEW ELEMENT IN THIS LATEST TERROR, PAPER SAYS. REAL TRUTH IS DIFFICULT TO UNCOVER: "ALL THAT IS CERTAIN IS THAT ONCE AGAIN THE MEN IN BAGHDAD HAVE SHOWN THEMSELVES TO BE MEN OF BLOOD."
HUGHES