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DEF 6-3 IRAN
XA DEF 19-8 US-IRAN

Department of State
TELEGRAM



(55)

446

PAGE 01 TEHRAN 07283 230501Z

17
ACTION NEA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 NSC-10 NSCE-00 PM-03 SA-01 L-02 INR-05
GIAE-00 NSAE-00 AID-10 MC-02 EUR-10 E-03 IO-03 ACDA-10
RSR-01 RSC-01 /082 W
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R 221400Z DEC 71
FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6868
INFO CINCEUR
DOD

~~TEHRAN 7283~~

*Tehran 7283
12/21/71*

CINCEUR FOR GEN. BURCHINAL

SUBJ: SHAH'S PLANS FOR LONG-TERM AIR FORCE BUILD-UP

1. SUMMARY: DURING DECEMBER 21 MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR AND GENERAL BURCHINAL OF EUCOM, SHAH REVIEWED NEW STRATEGIC SITUATION DEVELOPING IN MIDDLE EAST AND SOUTH ASIA, STATED THIS MAKES IMPERATIVE CONTINUED MODERNIZATION AND BUILD-UP OF IRANIAN DEFENSE FORCES, AND THEN OUTLINED PROJECTION OF LONG TERM IRANIAN AIR-FORCE STRUCTURE AFTER 1975. HE AGAIN STATED DESIRE PURCHASE 3 SQUADRONS OF F-15S (IF LATTER SELECTED FOR PRODUCTION BY USAF), RECALLING HIS PREFERENCE FOR COMPLETELY US-EQUIPPED AIR FORCE AND THAT THIS DESIRE FIRST DISCUSSED WITH SECRETARY LAIRD IN OCTOBER 1969. HE EXPRESSED HOPE THERE WOULD NO DIFFICULTIES IN ACQUIRING F-15S (IF AND WHEN AVAILABLE) BUT MADE CLEAR HE MUST HAVE NEXT GENERATION AIRCRAFT EVEN IF NECESSARY PURCHASE THEM ELSEWHERE (MENTIONING APPROACHES BY FRENCH AND BRITISH-GERMAN GROUP).

(2)

SHAH ALSO EXPRESSED HOPE, IN LIGHT PLANS FOR INCREASED AIR FORCE, USG COULD CONTINUE TRAIN 150 PILOTS EACH IN FY 75 AND 76, WITH GRADUAL PHASE-DOWN BEGINNING FY 77. RE TRAINING OF IRANIAN AIR FORCE, THERE WAS INFORMAL DISCUSSION OF POSSIBILITIES OF

~~7~~

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Department of State

TELEGRAM

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PAGE 02 TEHRAN 07283 230501Z

EXCHANGE OF F-4 PILOT VISITS BETWEEN IRAN AND EUCOM WITHIN A/M TRAINING FRAMEWORK; AND/OR JOINT US-IRANIAN (AND POSSIBLY TURKS) AERIAL EXERCISES UNDER CENTO RUBRIC. SHAH ALSO TOUCHED BRIEFLY ON PLANS FOR GROUND FORCES AND NAVY. END SUMMARY

2. ON DEC 21 AMBASSADOR PRESENTED TO SHAH GENERAL BURCHINAL (EUCOM), TO WHOSE COMMAND ARMISH/MAAG WILL BE RESPONSIBLE AFTER JANUARY 1, 1972; BRIG GEN PRICE, ACTING A/M CHIEF, WAS ALSO PRESENT. AUDIENCE LASTED ONE HOUR AND QUARTER, DURING WHICH SHAH GAVE IN DETAIL HIS ESTIMATE OF STRATEGIC SITUATION IN THIS PART OF WORLD AND INCREASING POTENTIAL THREAT WHICH IRAN AND OTHER NATIONS FRIENDLY TO WEST FACE AS RESULT OF EXPANSION OF SOVIET INFLUENCE OVER PAST SEVEN MONTHS. HE POINTED OUT THAT NOT ONLY HAD SOVIET UNION SUBSTANTIALLY INCREASED ITS PRESENCE AND INFLUENCE IN MID-EAST--SOUTH ASIA AREA AS RESULT OF SOVIET-EGYPTIAN AND SOVIET-INDIAN PACTS, BUT THAT PARALLEL WITH THIS DISTURBING EXPANSION OF SOVIET INFLUENCE, IRAQ HAD RECEIVED VISIT OF EAST GERMAN DEFENSE MINISTER AND MOST RECENTLY SOVIET DEFENSE MINISTER GRECHKO, WHO HAD STATED PUBLICLY NOT ONLY THAT SOVIETS AND IRAQ HAD TOTAL IDENTITY OF VIEWS ON ALL SUBJECTS BUT ALSO THAT SOVIETS WOULD ASSIST IRAQ IN FURTHER STRENGTHENING ITS ARMED FORCES. "WHO ARE THEY STRENGTHENING THEM AGAINST?" HE ASKED, MENTIONING THE WEAKNESS OF SOME OF THE MODERATE GULF STATES AND THE VITAL IMPORTANCE TO JAPAN AND THE WEST OF PERSIAN GULF OIL. SIMILARLY, EARLIER VISIT OF EAST GERMAN DEFENSE MINISTER HAD ALSO OBVIOUSLY BEEN DESIGNED TO FURTHER ASSIST IRAQI ARMED FORCES SINCE EAST GERMANY HAS MILITARY TRAINING MISSION IN IRAQ.

3. SHAH SAID THIS SITUATION, COUPLED WITH AFGHANISTAN'S UTTER WEAKNESS AND PAKISTAN DEFEAT WHICH MIGHT RESULT IN VERY UNSTABLE AND DANGEROUS SITUATION ON IRAN'S EASTERN FRONTIER, IN ADDITION TO IRAQI THREAT ON WEST, MADE IT IMPERATIVE THAT IRAN GO AHEAD WITH FURTHER BUILD-UP OF ITS FORCES SINCE IRAN'S GREATEST DETERRENT WAS TO HAVE FORCES OF SUCH STRENGTH THAT ANY UNFRIENDLY NEIGHBORS THAT MIGHT BE ENCOURAGED TO UNDERTAKE ADVENTURE AGAINST IRAN WOULD KNOW BEFOREHAND THAT THEY COULD BE SMASHED.

4. IN FIRST INSTANCE SHAH GAVE HIGHEST PRIORITY TO HIS AIR FORCE AND ITS LONG TERM BUILD-UP, STRESSING HE WANTED IT

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June 21, 2006

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Department of State **TELEGRAM**

PAGE 03 TEHRAN 07283 230501Z

TO CONTINUE TO BE AMERICAN EQUIPPED AND TRAINED. HE SAID DEVELOPMENT OF HIS AIR FORCE IS PROGRESSING VERY SATISFACTORILY AND EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR OUR COOPERATION, WHICH HAD MADE THIS POSSIBLE. AS TO LONG TERM FUTURE, HE WANTED TO LET US KNOW CONFIDENTIALLY THAT IN POST-1975 PERIOD, IIAF FIGHTER AIRCRAFT FORCE STRUCTURE IS TENTATIVELY BEING PROJECTED AS FOLLOWS:

- 8. SQDNS OF F-4D/E AIRCRAFT
- 2 SQDNS OF F-5E AIRCRAFT
- 6 SQDNS OF P-530 TYPE AIRCRAFT OR F-5E IF P-5J30 TYPE NOT DEVELOPED
- 3 SQDNS OF F-15 AIRCRAFT

HE ALSO SAID HE PLANNED TO DEVELOP AIR REFUELING CAPABILITY USING DC-8 OR 707 AIRCRAFT AND PLANNED ACQUIRE P-3C LONG RANGE NAVAL SURVEILLANCE AIRCRAFT.

5. SHAH REFERRED TO HIS DISCUSSIONS WITH DEFENSE SECRETARY AJAIRD IN WASHINGTON AT BLAIR HOUSE IN 1969 WHEN SHAH HAD FIRST DISCUSSED HIS DESIRE TO EVENTUALLY PURCHASE F-15 AIRCRAFT FROM US. HE RECOGNIZED THIS AIRCRAFT IS STILL IN DEVELOPMENTAL STAGE BUT WANTED US TO KNOW THAT IF IT IS SELECTED FOR LARGE-SCALE PRODUCTION BY USAF, HE WANTS PLACE ORDER FOR THREE SQDNS OF THIS NEXT GENERATION AIRCRAFT. HE HOPED MOST EARNESTLY THAT THERE WOULD BE NO DIFFICULTIES AND SAID THAT A) WHILE FRENCH HAD BEEN DISCUSSING WITH IRANIAN MILITARY DESIRABILITY OF PURCHASING THE PROPOSED MIRAGE G-8 AIRCRAFT WHICH WILL BE ABOUT MACH 2#31/2, AND B) THERE HAD ALSO BEEN DISCUSSIONS WITH BRITISH-GERMAN GROUP, WHICH IS TRYING TO DEVELOP A NEXT GENERATION AIRCRAFT, HE WANTED F-15 AS HE WISHED TO KEEP HIS AIR FORCE COMPLETELY US EQUIPPED. FURTHERMORE, IF HE COULD PLACE ORDER AT SAME TIME AS WE PLACED ORDERS FOR MASS PRODUCTION, IT SHOULD HELP IN KEEPING COST DOWN. HE ASSUMED THERE WOULD BE NO PROBLEM BUT DID WANT US TO KNOW THAT HE MUST HAVE NEXT GENERATION AIRCRAFT AND WOULD PURCHASE ONE COME WHAT MAY.

6. IN LIGHT OF ABOVE PLANS FOR POST-1975 AIRCRAFT INCREASES,

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Department of State

TELEGRAM

PAGE 04 TEHRAN 07283 230501Z

HE ALSO HOPED WE WOULD CONTINUE TO BE ABLE TO TRAIN 150 PILOTS EACH IN FY-75 AND FY-76. IN FY-77 AND FOR SEVERAL YEARS THEREAFTER NUMBER OF TRAINING SLOTS COULD GRADUALLY BE PHASED DOWN AND OUT AS HE PLANNED EVENTUALLY TO HAVE HIS OWN AIR FORCE SCHOOL. SHAH HAD THOUGHT ABOUT TRYING TO ESTABLISH PILOT TRAINING SCHOOL IN NEXT YEAR OR SO BUT, GIVEN NATURE OF THREAT IN THIS AREA WHICH HAS SUBSTANTIALLY INCREASED AS RESULT OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS WHICH HAD HAD EXPLAINED ABOVE, HE COULD NOT TRANSFER HIS BEST PILOTS FROM HIS F-4 SQDNS TO TRAINING AS INSTRUCTORS WITHOUT DESTROYING EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PRESENT AIR FORCE. HE REALIZED FROM DISCUSSION WITH AMBASSADOR THAT WE COULD NOT GIVE FIRM COMMITMENT FOR 150 PILOT TRAINING SLOTS FOR EACH YEAR THROUGH FY-76, BUT HE DID WANT US TO KNOW THAT THIS IS WHAT HE HAS IN MIND AND WHAT HE WOULD REQUEST.

7. IN CONNECTION WITH PRESENT TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT OF IRANIAN PILOTS, THERE WAS BRIEF INFORMAL DISCUSSION OF POSSIBILITY OF (A) FEW USAF PILOTS VISITING IRAN FOR BRIEF PERIOD TO FLY WITH IRANIAN F-4 PILOTS FROM TIME TO TIME IN IRANIAN AIRCRAFT WITH STATUS AS SPECIAL TRAINING MISSION UNDER ARMISH/MAAG AND CONVERSELY, OF IRANIAN PILOTS VISITING USAF SQDNS IN EUCOM, OR (B) SOME JOINT US-IRAN (AND POSSIBLY TURK) JOINT AERIAL EXERCISES UNDER CENTO RUBRIC. GENERAL BURCHINAL UNDERTTODK TO LOOK INTO THESE POSSIBILITIES UPON HIS RETURN TO HIS HEADQUARTERS.

8. SHAH ALSO DISCUSSED BRIEFLY PLANS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF HIS GROUND AND NAVAL FORCES SAYING HIS OBJECTIVE IS MODERATE SIZED BUT HIGHLY EFFECTIVE MOBILE AND WELL EQUIPPED FORCES. AS CONTRASTED WITH AIR FORCE, WHICH IS VIRTUALLY ENTIRELY US EQUIPPED, HIS ARMY AND NAVY HAVE MIX OF EQUIPMENT FROM DIFFERENT SOURCES. HE PLANS TO HAVE MOBILE GROUND FORCES WITH STRONG ARMOR SUPPORTED BY THEIR OWN HELICOPTER FORCE ARMED WITH TOW MISSILES FOR ANTI-TANK OPERATIONS. HIS NAVY WILL HAVE SOME CAPABILITY IN GULF OF OMAN AND ARABIAN SEA, AS WELL AS PERSIAN GULF, AND WILL BE EQUIPPED WITH SURFACE-TO SURFACE MISSILES. (HE MENTIONED INDIAN NAVY HAD DESTROYED PAKI VESSELS WITH NAVAL MISSILES).

MACARTHUR

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