

~~TOP SECRET~~

SC 12420-85

INR/NESA:WJORDAN/SROBERTS/WWHITE
7/18/85 EXT. 21888
INR:MABRAMOWITZ

S/S-0: RPACE

SCAT ONLY

IMMEDIATE SECRETARY

EXDIS/CODEWORD CHANNEL/NOFORN/NOCONTRACT/ORCON

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR

TAGS: EG, IS, PINR

SUBJECT: ARAB AND ISRAELI HIGHLIGHTS, JULY 18, 1985

HANDLE VIA COMINT CHANNELS ONLY

K U W A I T : U N P R E P A R E D F O R T H E
" D A Y S O F R A G E " T O C O M E

1. ~~IS/NF~~ WE EXPECT THE FREQUENCY OF TERRORIST INCIDENTS IN KUWAIT TO RISE. EXPLOITING INTERNAL SECURITY WEAKNESSES AND RELYING ON EVIDENTLY WELL-ORGANIZED SUPPORT INSIDE KUWAIT, ELEMENTS OPPOSED TO THE KUWAITI REGIME INCITED FROM ABROAD HAVE TAKEN THE INITIATIVE IN WAGING A CAMPAIGN OF TERROR. DESPITE THESE ASSAULTS, WHICH FEED PUBLIC ANXIETY AND CRITICISM OF REGIME POLICIES, HOWEVER, WE DO NOT EXPECT KUWAIT TO ACCEDE TO TERRORIST DEMANDS. THE AMIR IS ESPECIALLY UNWILLING TO RELEASE INDIVIDUALS CONVICTED FOR STAGING THE DECEMBER 1983 BOMBINGS. THE OUTLOOK, THEREFORE, IS FOR MORE ATTACKS AND, AS OFFICIALDOM AND THE PUBLIC SEARCH FOR SCAPEGOATS, HEIGHTENED INTERNAL TENSION.

2. ~~IS/NF~~ MANY QUESTIONS REMAIN IN THE WAKE OF THE

DECLASSIFIED IN PART

NLS 97-109/1 719

By QIS, NARA, Date 7/6/03

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LATEST SERIES OF INCIDENTS AIMED AT KUWAIT--INCLUDING A SMALL RASH OF MYSTERIOUS FIRES AND THE KIDNAPPING IN BEIRUT OF A LEBANESE-BORN EMPLOYEE OF THE KUWAITI EMBASSY THERE. MOST PUZZLING IS THE ABSENCE OF CLEAR EVIDENCE ESTABLISHING A CONNECTION BETWEEN THESE EPISODES AND THE CULPABILITY OF SPECIFIC GROUPS. THE ARAB REVOLUTIONARY BRIGADES--A COVER NAME FOR ABU NIDAL'S ORGANIZATION--HAS TAKEN RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE JULY 11 EXPLOSIONS AT TWO CAFES IN KUWAIT CITY. HIZBALLAH, THE LIKELIEST CULPRIT BEHIND THE BEIRUT KIDNAPPING, THOUGH, HAS SO FAR NOT REGISTERED AN AUTHORITATIVE CLAIM IN EITHER CASE.

3. ~~{S/NF}~~ THE MOTIVE FOR THE ASSAULTS IS EQUALLY VAGUE, THOUGH WE BELIEVE THERE IS A LINK BETWEEN THE BEIRUT SEIZURE AND THE KUWAITIS' INCARCERATION OF THE 1983 BOMBERS. THE INCIDENTS IN KUWAIT HAVE A MORE QUESTIONABLE RELATIONSHIP TO THE DAWA PRISONERS. A TIE-IN TO THE PRISONERS CANNOT BE RULED OUT, BUT NEITHER CAN AN INDIRECT SYRIAN EXPRESSION OF DISPLEASURE OVER THE KUWAITI NATIONAL ASSEMBLY'S CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSALS TO DISCONTINUE ENTIRELY KUWAIT'S BAGHDAD PAYMENTS TO THE PLO AND THE ARAB "CONFRONTATION" STATES (INCLUDING SYRIA). WHOEVER MAY ULTIMATELY BE BEHIND THE BOMBINGS, THE LIKELY SUSPECTS--IRAN, SYRIA, AND LIBYA--HAVE EACH BEEN QUICK TO JOIN THE CHORUS DEPLORING TERRORISM AGAINST KUWAIT.

4. ~~{S/NF}~~ OF PROBABLY GREATEST IMPORT HAS BEEN THE LATEST PUBLIC OUTCRY IN KUWAIT AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT'S LAX APPROACH TO SECURITY. ACCORDING TO EMBASSY KUWAIT, NATIONAL ASSEMBLY MEMBERS SWIFTLY CRITICIZED INSUFFICIENT SECURITY MEASURES TAKEN FOLLOWING THE MAY 25 ATTEMPT ON THE AMIR'S LIFE. NEWSPAPER EDITORIALS HAVE ALSO CLAMORED FOR THE EXECUTION OF THE THREE 1983 BOMBERS ALREADY SENTENCED TO DEATH. MOST OMINOUSLY, SOME PARLIAMENTARIANS HAVE ASSERTED THAT "FIFTH COLUMNS" COMPOSED OF SECTARIAN GROUPS, WHOSE MEMBERS HAD "IMPROPERLY" OBTAINED KUWAITI CITIZENSHIP, CONSTITUTE A LINGERING THREAT NOT ONLY TO KUWAIT BUT TO ALL OF THE ARAB GULF STATES.

5. ~~{S/NF}~~ WHERE THIS MOUNTING PUBLIC PRESSURE WILL LEAD THE KUWAITI REGIME--FEELING BELEAGUERED ON THE ONE HAND BY TERRORISTS AND ON THE OTHER BY A CONCERNED POPULACE--IS UNCERTAIN. THE AMIR IS STILL, WE BELIEVE, DISINCLINED TO ORDER THE EXECUTION OF THOSE DAWA PRISONERS CONDEMNED TO DEATH, ALTHOUGH HE MUST RECOGNIZE THAT THEIR CONTINUED CAPTIVITY GUARANTEES FUTURE ATTACKS. THE POTENTIALLY GREATER DANGER, THOUGH, IS THAT

THROUGH THE INEVITABLE IMPLEMENTATION OF STANDARD MEASURES--SUCH AS DEPORTATIONS OF MOSTLY SHIA AND PALESTINIAN INHABITANTS--THE REGIME RISKS ALIENATING THESE ELEMENTS WITHOUT AMELIORATING ITS IMMEDIATE SECURITY ILLS. OVER TIME, SUCH FESTERING RESENTMENT COULD PROVE CATASTROPHIC, GIVEN THE CHRONIC DEFICIENCIES OF KUWAIT'S SECURITY APPARATUS. KUWAIT IS FAR FROM READY TO FACE A TRULY SUSTAINED, COORDINATED TERRORIST OFFENSIVE.

OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

6. ~~IS/EXDIS~~ ISRAELIS BEGIN FOCUS-
ING ON JOINT DELEGATION: OFFICIAL
ISRAELI PUBLIC REACTION TO THE ANNOUNCEMENT THE US HAS
RECEIVED A LIST OF POSSIBLE PALESTINIAN PARTICIPANTS FOR
A JORDANIAN-PALESTINIAN MEETING WITH ASSISTANT SECRETARY
MURPHY HAS BEEN UNCHARACTERISTICALLY MUTED, ACCORDING TO
EMBASSY TEL AVIV.

[REDACTED] TOLD THE EMBASSY THAT BOTH PERES AND
FOREIGN MINISTRY DIRECTOR GENERAL KIMCHE HAD TOLD HIM
THEY WOULD NOT REACT ONE WAY OR ANOTHER TO THE
PROSPECTIVE MURPHY MEETING. FOREIGN MINISTER SHAMIR IS
PUBLICLY OPPOSING ISRAELI PARTICIPATION IN THE PROCESS OF
CHOOSING PALESTINIAN DELEGATES.

7. ~~IS/EXDIS~~ TEL AVIV COMMENT: THE MOOD
IN ISRAEL THUS FAR IS ANTICIPATORY WITHOUT THE EXPECTED
HYPE AND HAND-WRINGING. CLEARLY, THE DEBATE OVER PERES'
ECONOMIC PROGRAM IS DIVERTING ATTENTION FROM THE PEACE
PROCESS--A DEVELOPMENT THAT IS CLEARLY TO OUR ADVANTAGE
AT THIS TIME.

8. ~~IS/EXDIS~~ INR COMMENT: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] THE DEEP SUSPICIONS OF MANY ISRAELI
LEADERS REGARDING JORDANIAN AND PALESTINIAN INTENTIONS,
AND THE POLITICAL EXPLOSIVENESS OF PEACE PROCESS ISSUES
DOMESTICALLY, WILL COOL THE ARDOR OF ALL SAVE THE MOST
FANATICAL MODERATES.

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10. ~~{S/NF/NC/OC}~~ SYRIA TALKS TOUGH
TO ANTI-ARAFAT PALESTINIANS:
SYRIAN VICE-PRESIDENT KHADDAM PRESIDED OVER A MEETING
BETWEEN AMAL AND THE SYRIAN-SUPPORTED PALESTINIAN
NATIONAL SALVATION FRONT (PNSF) ON JULY 15.

11. ~~{S/NF/NC/OC}~~ INR COMMENT :

12. ~~{S/NF}~~ ISRAELIS JUDGE SOUTH
LEBANON "QUIET:"

AMAL, IN THE
ISRAELI VIEW, IS CONTINUING TO PREVENT HIZBALLAH AND
PALESTINIAN ELEMENTS FROM TURNING THE SOUTH INTO A BASE
FOR ATTACKS ON ISRAEL. ON THE OTHER HAND, AMAL REMAINS
STRONGLY OPPOSED TO LAHAD'S ARMY OF SOUTH LEBANON (ASL)

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AND THE SECURITY ZONE. THE ISRAELIS BELIEVE AMAL PROBABLY GAVE AT LEAST TACIT APPROVAL TO THE CAR BOMB ATTACKS ON JULY 9. AMAL IS ALSO ENCOURAGING SHIA SOLDIERS IN THE ASL TO DESERT.

13. ~~(S/NF)~~ I N R C O M M E N T: THE PRESENT SITUATION IN THE SOUTH--A TEMPORARILY STABLE BALANCE CHARACTERIZED BY AMAL PREDOMINANCE, THE EXISTENCE OF SEVERAL POTENTIAL FLASHPOINTS (INCLUDING JAZZIN AND THE PALESTINIAN CAMPS), AND LIMITED SYRIAN EFFORTS TO DESTROY THE ASL AND THE SECURITY ZONE THROUGH THE USE OF PROXY LEBANESE GROUPS--ALLOWS THE CURRENT ISRAELI POLICY OF SUPPORT FOR THE ASL AND THE SECURITY ZONE TO COEXIST WITH EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH A DIALOGUE WITH AMAL. SHOULD ATTACKS AND PRESSURE ON THE ASL AND THE SECURITY ZONE REACH THE POINT OF THREATENING THE EXISTENCE OF THESE TWO PROPS OF ISRAEL'S POLICY, THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT WOULD BE CONFRONTED WITH A PAINFUL CHOICE: EITHER ABANDON LAHAD AND RELY ON AMAL--AND, IMPLICITLY, ON SYRIA--FOR BORDER SECURITY, OR COME TO LAHAD'S AID, ENTAILING A RADICALIZATION OF AMAL POLICY VIS-A-VIS ISRAEL. 44

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