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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BAGHDAD 1446

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E.O. 12065: RDS 1 5/28/01 (EAGLETON, WILLIAM L.) OR-M
TAGS: PEPR, US, IZ
SUBJ: MEETING WITH TARIQ AZIZ

1. (C - ENTIRE TEXT)

2. SUMMARY: IN A MEETING WITH RCC IDEOLOGUE AND FOBEIGN POLICY SPOKESMAN TARIQ AZIZ, BOTH SIDES EXPRESSED SUPPORT FOR EFFORTS TO PROMOTE BETTER US-IRAQI RELATIONS. TARIQ AZIZ GAVE THE IMPRESSION IRAQ WOULD MOVE QUICKLY TO RESTORE DIILOMATIC RELATIONS IF A NEW US MIDDLE EAST POLICY WAS, IN THE IRAQI'S VIEW, MORE BALANCED. HE WELCOMED AN INCREASE IN US-IRAQI TRADE AND WIDER CONTACTS IN GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE SECTORS. HE SUGGESTED CONCENTRATING ON PROMOTING US-IRAQI UNDERSTANDING AS A PRELUDE A DETAILED DISCUSSIONS OF THORNY ISSUES SUCH AS THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT. HE SAID USINT'S REQUEST TO OPERATE A TRANSMITTER TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE DEPARTMENT WOULD BE APPROVED. IN CONCLUSION, HE ASKED THAT I CONVEY HIS PERSONEL BEST WISHES TO SECRETARY HAIG ALONG WITH IRAQ'S DESIRE TO IMPROVE RELATIONS. END SUMMARY.

3. HAVING MADE THE REQUEST FOLLOWING MY RETURN FROM
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WASHINGTON CONSULTATIONS, ON MAY 28 I HAD A ONE-AND-A-HALF HOUR MEETING WITH RCC MEMBER TARIQ AZIZ. THIS IS HIGHEST LEVEL IN THE IRAQI GOVERNMENT OUR BAGHDAD MISSION HAS MET WITH SINCE THE 1967 BREAK IN RELATIONS. TARIQ AZIZ HAS CONSIDERABLY MORE CLOUC WITHIN IRAQ'S LEADERSHIP THAN FOREIGN MINISTER HAMADI AND IS THE HIGHEST LEVEL SPOKEWPN OF FOPEIGN POLICY AFTR SADDAM HUSSAIN. AS AN IRAQI CHRISTIAN, HE IS NO THREAT TO THE LAT ER AS HE COULD NOT ASPIRE TO SUPREME

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DEADERSHIP.

4. AFTER OPENING PLEASANTRIES, TARIQ AZIZ SUGGESTED THAT I BEGIN WITH A DESCRIPTION OF THE ATMOSPHERE IN WASHINGTON. I EXPLAINED IN SOME DETAIL THE APPROACH OF THE NEW ADMINISTRATION, EMPHASIZING CONSTANCY, RELIABILITY AND BALANCE AND A DETERMINATION TO STRENGTHEN U.S. ARMED FORCES AND PLAY AN APPROPRIATE ROLE IN OPPOSING SOVIET DESIGNS, PARTICULARLY IN THE THIRD WORLD. I ALSO DESCRIBED THE CENTRAL POSITION OF THE TERRORISM ISSUE IN U.S. ATTITUDES. I REFERRED TO SECRETARY HAIG'S RECENT VISIT TO THE MIDDLE EAST AND REPEATED SOME OF THE BRIEFING GIVEN FOREIGN MINISTER HAMMADI BY DAS DRAPER. I EXPRESSED THE U.S. GOVERNMENT'S SATISFACTION WITH THE POSITIVE TREND IN U.S.-IRAQI RELATIONS. NOTING THAT WE DID NOT BELIEVE IT WAS NORMAL FOR THESE RELATIONS TO REMAIN SEVERED, I EMPHASIZED THAT WE DID NOT WISH TO PRESSURE THE IRAQI GOVERNMENT ON THIS ISSUE AND THAT MEANWHILE THERE WAS MUCH TO BE DONE WITHIN THE EXISTING FRAMEWORK. I DESCRIBED OUR NEUTRAL POLICY ON THE IRAQ-IRAN CONFLICT, WHICH CAUSED US TO REFRAIN FROM SELLING TO OR LICENSING ARMS FOR EITHER SIDE. I SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED THE IRAQI CONCERN OVER HELICOPTER DELIVERIES FROM ITALY,
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NOTING THAT THESE LICENSES HAD BEEN OBTAINED AND PAYMENT MADE PRIOR TO THE TAKING OF AMERICAN HOSTAGES AND THE OUTBREAK OF THE IRAQ-IRAN WAR.

5. TARIQ AZIZ REPLIED AT LENGTH, OPENING WITH THE STATEMENT THAT IRAQ WOULD CONTINUE TO PROMOTE BETTER RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. AND HIGHER LEVEL CONTACTS IN WHICH EACH SIDE COULD EXPLAIN ITS VIEWS. AS IF IT WERE UPPERMOST IN HIS MIND, HE SAID HE HAD HEARD FROM THE HEAD OF THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL DEPARTMENT, AT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, OF THE UNFORTUNATE CANCELLATION OF A U.S. TRADE MISSION AT THE LAST MOMENT. "WHAT HAPPENED WAS NOT INTENTIONAL." IRAQ WISHED TO INCREASE ITS TRADE WITH THE U.S. AND TRADE MISSIONS WOULD BE WELCOME IN THE FUTURE.

6. TARIQ AZIZ SAID THAT THE NATURE OF THE U.S.-IRAQI RELATIONSHIP NOW SEEMED TO BE UNDERSTOOD ON BOTH SIDES. IRAQ FOR ITS PART SOUGHT A WIDER UNDERSTANDING BASED ON INCREASED CONTACT. IN THE PAST IRAQ HAS BEEN AVAILABLE FOR CONTACTS, VFOR EXAMPLE BY THE FOREIGN MINISTER DURING HIS TRIPS TO NEW YORK. IRAQ HAS ALSO WELCOMED U.S. CONGRESSMEN AND OTHER OFFICIALS. NEVERTHELESS CONTACTS HAVE BEEN FEW IN COMPARISON WITH OTHER COUNTRIES. MORE SUCH CONTACTS WOULD BE USEFUL.

7. ON U.S.-IRAQI RELATIONS, TARIQ AZIZ RECALLED THAT IN 1975 SADDAM HUSSAIN HAD TOLD DAVID ROCKEFELLER THAT THE RELATIONSHIP WAS LIKE A DOOR WITH TWO KEYS, THE FIRST INVOLVING IRAQ-U.S. RELATIONS AND THE SECOND, ARAB-U.S. RELATIONS. THE FIRST KEY WOULD TURN WHEN THE U.S. STOPPED INTERFERING IN IRAQI INTERNAL AFFAIRS, SUCH AS COLLABORATING WITH THE SHAH IN SUPPORT OF BARZANI'S REVOLT. HE COULD OFFICIALLY TEL ME THAT THE FIRST KEY WAS NOW TURNING. THE SECOND ONE, HOWEVER, WAS AWAITING THE OUTCOME
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OF U.S. POLICY DELIBERATIONS. THIS LED TO A LENGTHY DISCUSSION OF THE PERIOD LEADING UP TO THE CAMP DAVID AGREEMENT WHICH IRAQ CONSIDERED TO BE A CHALLENGE TO ARAB PUBLIC OPINION. HE ARGUED THAT IT WAS NOT IN THE U.S. INTEREST TO MAINTAIN A ONE-SIDED POLICY AND INDICATED THAT IF U.S. POLICIES

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 BAGHDAD 1446

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TOOK INTO CONSIDERATION ARAB VIEWS, THE OTHER KEY
WOULD TURN. HIS TREATMENT OF THE SUBJECT SEEMED TO
INDICATE AN IRAQI DESIRE TO RENEW RELATIONS AS
SOON AS SUITABLE MOVEMENT IS FOUND IN THE U.S.-ARAB
CONTEXT.

8. TARIQ AZIZ EMPHASIZED THAT THE ATTITUDE OF THE
U.S. TO THE IRAQ-IRAN CONFLICT IS OF SUPREME IMPORTANCE
TO IRAQ. IRAQ DID NOT BELIEVE THAT THE U.S. WAS PRO-
VIDING ARMS TO IRAN, BUT SOMEHOW THE IRANIANS WERE
GETTING SOME U.S. ARMS AND SPARE PARTS. I INVITED
TARIQ AZIZ TO PROVIDE US ANY INFORMATION HE HAD IN
THIS REGARD SINCE IT WAS OUR POLICY TO OPPOSE SUCH SALES
OR LICENSES.

9. TARIQ AZIZ THEN TRACED THE DEVELOPMENT OF IRAQI
POLICY FROM ITS PRO-WESTERN ORIENTATION UNDER THE
MONARCHY TO AN ANTI-U.S. REACTION THERAFTER AND
FINALLY A BALANCED POLICY UNDER THE PRESENT REGIME
WHICH HAS EMBARKED UPON A NATIONALIST, SOCIALIST
AND INDEPENDENT COURSE HOSTILE ONLY TO THOSE WHO
THREATEN IRAQI VITAL INTERESTS. IRAQ, HE ARGUED,
IS A FACTOR FOR STABILITY IN THE AREA AND THIS IS
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IN THE INTEREST OF THE U.S. AND WESTERN EUROPE. IRAQ
DOES NOT WANT THE SPREAD OF SOVIET INFLUENCE, NOR
DOMINATION BY THE U.S. IT WOULD BE IN THE U.S.
INTEREST, HE SAID, TO PROMOTE AN INDEPENDENT TREND IN
THE AREA AS REPRESENTED BY IRAQ. ALTHOUGH IRAQ WOULD
MAINTAIN ITS GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE SOCIALIST COUNTRIES,
IRAQIS WERE AWARE THAT WESTERN EUROPE AND THE U.S.
WERE MORE TECHNOLOGICALLY ADVANCED AND AFFLUENT.
SINCE IRAQ IS PAYING THE PRICE, THEY WANT THE BEST

PRODUCT. THUS, THERE IS AN OZJECTIVE GROUND FOR CLOSE RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. AND EUROPE.

10. IN REPLY, I REITERATED OUR POSITION ON ARMS AND TOOK SSUE WITH HIS STATEMENT THAT THE CAMP DAVID AGREEMENT HAD BEEN DELIBERATELY DESIGNED TO ANTAGONIZE THE ARAB MAJORITY. I EXPLAINED THE PROCESS WE EX-PECTED TO FOLLOW IN THE COMING MONTHS TO DEVELOP A RAB MAJORITY. I EXPLAINED THE PROCESS WE EX-PECTED TO FOLLOW IN THE COMING MONTHS TO DEVELOP A

A DDLE EAST POLICY. SINCE IRAQ HAS JOINED THE GROUP REPRESENTING THE ARAB CONSENSUS AND BASED ITS ATTITUDE TOWARD MIDDLE EAST PEACE ON THE BAGHDAD SUMMIT PROPOSALS, WE WOULD AT SOME POINT WANT TO EXPLORE IN MORE DETAIL IRAQI THINKING IN THIS REGARD.

11. TARIQ AZIZ REPLIED THAT IT WOULD BE BEST FIRST TO PROMOTE GREATER UNDERSTANDING AND A MORE FIRM RELATIONSHIP BEFORE TACKLING DIFFICULT QUESTIONS LIKE THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT. "WHEN THE TIME IS RIPE, HOWEVER, IRAQ WILL BE READY KO ENGAGE IN A DISCUSSION OF DETAILS."

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12. TARIQ AZIZ THEN REVERTED TO HIS HOPE FOR BETTER RELATIONS AND WIDER EXCHANGE OF SCHOLARS, JOURNALISTS, ETC. HE SUGGESTED WE WORK TOGETHER TO PROMOTE THE ECONOMIC RELATIONUHIP IN WHICH U.S. INSTITUTIONS WOULD PLAY AFMAJOR ROLE. U.; . BUSINESS REPRESENTATIVES, HE SAID, WOULD BENEFIT FROM THE CLEAN BUSINESS PRACTICES INIRAQ WHERE THERE WAS NO CORRUPTION AS IN SOME OTHER COUNTRIES. IN THIS CON-TEXT, I SAID THE U.S. GOVERNMENT SUPPORTS THE PARTICIPATION OF AMERICAN FIRMS IN PROJECTS DESIGNED TO RESOTRE IRAQ'S OIL FACILITIES AS RAPIDLY AS POSSIBLE AFTER THE WAR. TARIQ AZIZ SEEMED PLEASED WITH THIS POSITION. HE THEN REFERRED TO "SOME KIND OF A TELEX PROBLEM AT USINT." I EXPLAINED OUR DESIRE LO UPDATE COMMUNICATIONS BY THE INSTALLATION OF A RADIO TRANSMITTER. HE ASKED WHETHER OTHER MISSIONS IN BAGHDAD HAD SUCH FACILITIES. WHEN I REPLIED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE, HE SAID "THEN THERE WILL BE NO PROBLEM IN YOUR HAVING A TRACSMITTER -- I WILL SPEAK TO THE FOREIGN MINISTER ABOUT IT."

13. IN THE CONTEX" OF INCREASING TRADE, I MENTIONED THE PARTICIPATION OF J.S. FIRMS IN THE BAGHDAD INTERNATIONAL FAIR AND SUGGESTED THAT NEXT YEAR PERHAPS U.S. EXHIBITORS SHOULD BE GROUPED IN A NATIONAL PAVILION AS ARE THOSE OF OTHER COUNTRIES.

TARIQ AZIZ SAID THIS SEEMED LOGICAL AND SHOULD BE LOOKED INTO. AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE MEETING, HE ASKED THAT I CONVEY HIS BEST WISHES TO SECRETARY HAIG ALONGWITH IRAQ'S DESIRE TO PROMOTE BETTER RELATIONS.

14. COMMENT: IN THIS FIRST ACCESS TO THE INNER CIRCLE OF IRAQI LEADERSHIP, TARIQ AZIZ WAS OBVIOUSLY TRYING TO PUT THE MOST POSITIVE LIGHT ON FUTURE PROSPECTS FOR U.S.-IRAQI RELATIONS WHILE MAINTAINING IRAQ'S POSITION THAT A NEW U.S. APPROACH TO

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MIDDLE EAST PEACE WOULD BE NECESSARY IF OUR RELATIONS WITH IRAQ AND WITH THE REST OF THE ARAB WORLD WERE TO HAVE A SOLID BASIS. WHILE THE MEETING WILL PROBABLY NOT BE PUBLICIZED BY IRAQI MEDIA, ITS OCCURRENCE WILL BECOME KNOWN AND SHOULD BE HELPFUL TO OUR POSITION AND THAT OF U.S. BUSINESS INTERESTS IN IRAQ. WITH THE OPENING OF THIS CONTACT, WE ARE IN A POSITION TO COMMUNICATE DIRECTLY WITH THE LEADERSHIP SHOULD WE HAVE ANY SENSITIVE OR PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT MESSAGE TO CONVEY.

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