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Authority 969003
By AK Date 7/1/02

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PA/HO Department of State
E.O. 12958, as amended
June 21, 2006

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NO.

TO : Department of State
INFO : AMMAN, ANKARA, JIDDA, LONDON, TEHRAN, USUN

COPY NO 1

SERIES A
ML

FROM : Amembassy BEIRUT DATE: July 16, 1971

SUBJECT : Request from Mustafa Barzani for Clandestine Contact with USG

REF :

LIMDIS

SUMMARY

Zayid Uthman, believed to be a close associate of Iraqi Kurdish leader Mustafa Barzani, has conveyed to Embassy Beirut a purported request from Barzani for clandestine talks between representatives of his faction and representatives of the U.S. Government. Barzani is reportedly interested in investigating the possibility of U.S. support for a Kurdish-Arab insurrection against the Iraqi regime. Uthman was told that it is U.S. policy not to become involved in internal struggles of foreign countries. After two weeks in London with his family, Uthman intends to return via Beirut and may call at the Embassy to see if the U.S. position has changed.

Message from Mustafa Barzani

Zayid Uthman, a Barzani Kurd, called at the Embassy July 8 to convey what he said was a message from Mustafa Barzani to the U.S. Government. Uthman began by saying that Barzani's dream is cooperation with the United States.

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BEIRUT

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Barzani would like the U.S. Government to understand that Kurdish justice will not be satisfied until Iraq is governed by a democratic regime representing both Arabs and Kurds and protecting the principles of Kurdish Society by according the Kurdish community its "national rights of autonomy." Uthman said Barzani wants the USG to know that the Kurds have disregarded requests from the Baathist regime in Baghdad to take "hostile action" against Iran. Likewise, the Barzani Kurds have never incited the Kurds of Turkey against their government or otherwise intervened in Turkish affairs.

In Barzani's opinion, the Baathist regime in Iraq is mistreating the Iraqi people. The Barzani Kurds dislike and distrust that regime. Although circumstances forced them to sign an agreement with the GOI, they never expected the Baathists to honor it. The Kurds are now ready to rise against that Government. If necessary, they will participate with anti-regime Arabs in a general uprising. They already have contact with non-Kurdish elements.

The government that would emerge from such an uprising would be pro-American. Barzani would like the USG to take a sympathetic look at the Iraqi situation. Barzani stands ready to consult with the USG in every political matter, to implement U.S. policy, and to sweep anti-U.S. elements from his area of influence.

In conclusion, said Uthman, if the USG should consider these points worthy of discussion, Barzani would be honored to receive official U. S. representatives at his headquarters in Kurdistan or to send his son, Idris, and Zayid Uthman to Washington for meetings with U.S. officials.

Background

In response to questions, Uthman provided the following background to Barzani's proposal.

Barzani is in full control of the mountainous strip from the Iranian border west to Ruwanduz. Although the major cities of Kurdistan are in government hands, they are closely surrounded

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by Barzani's forces in the mountains.

Under the GOI-Barzani agreement of March 1970, the Kurds dissolved their Revolutionary Council and Executive Committee. However, the administrative machinery required to govern their area is still operative. Barzani is paying each man in his standing army five dinars every two months. To meet the continuing expenses of maintaining his regime and his army, he needs financial assistance. Any such assistance from the U.S. Government could be provided indirectly -- via Saudia Arabia, Jordan, or Iran. In the past, Barzani received subsidies from Iran but in return Iran insisted on maintaining such heavy-handed control over Kurdish activities -- including the designation of the Prime Minister in the projected government -- that it caused the failure of the whole revolutionary effort. Uthman mentioned glumly that Iran was deeply involved in the all-Arab conspiracy against the Baghdad regime whose failure led to the hanging of some 50 conspirators in 1970. Uthman seemed to feel that, for Iran, the outcome was par for the course.

In any event, Barzani would like to establish secret relations with the U.S. Government, from which he would like to obtain "advice" about how to proceed in his revolutionary action against the Iraqi regime. One possibility would be for an American representative to visit Barzani's headquarters -- a "mud hut" in Haj 'Umaran, which is three kilometers from the Iranian border and 2½ hours by car from the Iranian city of Rida'iye (phonetic), which can be reached by plane from Tehran. Obviously the Iranian government would know of any such visit, but it could be kept secret from the government of Iraq.

If the USG chose to receive a Barzani deputation in Washington, it would be headed by Idris, age 27, the ablest of Barzani's six sons. Idris does not speak much English, but he would be accompanied by Uthman.

Insurrection Plans

Uthman expressed the view that Baathist control is too strong to permit a successful coup d'etat in the capital. The army is generally unhappy with the situation but no one dares to act

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against the regime. Consequently, the only hope lies in insurrection, starting from the area controlled by the Kurds in the north. Barzani hopes to convince the USG that it should support such an insurrection. He is now 68. If he dies before Iraq is liberated, Uthman said, there is great danger that the Kurdish liberation movement will be taken over by radical elements and the larger Kurdish community in Turkey will be infected by this same radicalism.

Uthman is now actively engaged in seeking assistance for the insurrection. He has authority from Barzani to go anywhere -- to Washington or to the United Nations, for example. Iran has already promised to help if and when the fighting starts. Uthman visited King Feisal several months ago. Feisal gave him a friendly reception and endorsed the idea of an Iraqi revolt in principle, but asked for further elaboration before giving a reply.

Uthman said that he was leaving Beirut shortly for London to meet his family, who were flying in from Baghdad. His wife's sister has rented an apartment for them at 44 Adam and Eve Mews, W.8, London (telephone: WES-5999).

Toward the end of July, Uthman plans to return to Beirut and may call at the Embassy to see if there is any new development in the U.S. position. He may also call on Kings Hussein and Feisal.

Biographic Note:

Zayid Uthman, about 47, studied at the University of Cairo (before the revolution) and then practiced law in Baghdad. In 1966 he helped draft the Kurdish-Iraqi agreement with Prime Minister Bazzaz. He says that he has been jailed in Baghdad for political reasons five times during his political career.

The fall of Bazzaz and the subsequent rift between Barzani and the GOI in 1968 forced Uthman to flee from Baghdad with a price

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on his head. Since that time, he has been living at Barzani's headquarters, often carrying out missions outside Iraq. Uthman did not rejoin his family in Baghdad after the March 1970 agreement between Barzani and the GOI because he has no confidence in the sincerity of the Baathist regime.

Uthman is modest about his proficiency in English but he is actually quite competent in that language. He has a quiet, convincing manner of speaking. He professes a belief in the democratic way of life as practiced in the United States.

U.S. Position

The reporting officer thanked Uthman for his exposition of the Iraqi situation. He stressed that the U.S. is following a policy of non-intervention in the internal affairs of foreign countries. Therefore, he saw no action that the USG could take in the present circumstances. However, the conversation would be reported.

BUFFUM

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