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By EW NARA Date 5-31-02



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ACTION:

to remain and anxious for U.S. commitment to do so as soon as possible. Also aware British have for some time been awaiting response as to what U.K. facilities MIDEASTFOR may wish to take over if British Navy withdraws completely from Bahrain and MIDEASTFOR remains. Department now proceeding with DOD and Department of Navy to determine legal and logistic requirements for continued MIDEASTFOR presence in Bahrain after independence, in events of either complete or partial withdrawal of British Naval presence.

As President's decision

2. ~~As expressed in the report of 1950~~ indicates, however, continued presence MIDEASTFOR is considered sensitive matter with friendly Gulf littoral states, particularly Iran. It therefore imperative that confidential notification to them be carefully orchestrated prior to our making any approach to either Bahrainis or to British Naval Command in Bahrain.

4. Asst Sec'y Sisco scheduled for discussions with British next week on Middle East, including Persian Gulf. Hopefully, this meeting may provide clearer picture British plans re future its own naval forces in Bahrain. We plan to use

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that occasion to notify them, confidentially, that we will be discussing continued presence MIDEASTFOR with Bahrainis after notifying friendly littoral powers. If Shah's reaction, and that of Kuwaiti and Saudi leaders ~~may~~ constitute ~~positive~~ acquiescence, we would then proceed quickly to initiate through Consul General Dhahran discussion with Bahrainis re our desire maintain MIDEASTFOR presence. If, however, three littoral states indicate strong negative reaction to MIDEASTFOR's remaining, we shall be required to bring this problem to attention of President with recommendations of how to proceed.

5. Would appreciate ~~the~~ Tehran, Jidda, and Kuwait views on timing and substance of notification to host governments. Primary problem is, of course, Iranian sensibilities, although we suspect that neither SAG nor GOK will be enthusiastic about MIDEASTFOR's remaining. Department's thinking is that we should not seek approval of littoral states but merely inform them that we plan to discuss with Bahrain MIDEASTFOR's continued use of facilities on island. We visualize

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

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first notifying Iran and, barring strenuous objection from
Shah, shortly thereafter simultaneously notifying Saudi
Arabia and Kuwait.

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END

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