

MEMORANDUM

Thru [unclear] b
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

ACTION
(No Number)

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

March 27, 1972
*12 copies of report
discussed*

MEMORANDUM FOR:

Haig
GENERAL HAIG

FROM:

HAROLD H. SAUNDERS *Hal*

SUBJECT:

Supporting the Kurdish Rebellion

The Iranian intelligence service, SAVAK, has again [redacted] urged that we provide assistance through [redacted] to the Iraqi Kurdish leader, Mulla Mustafa al-Barzani.

Similar approaches have been made over the last ten years and have been turned down. The British have also avoided involvement. The Israelis are probably paying Barzani a sizeable monthly subsidy, and King Hussein when he comes here may support US involvement. [redacted]

According to a CIA report, the Soviets have urged Barzani and the Kurds to join a national front government in Iraq which would include Communists, Nasirists and Kurds under the Ba'th Party of Iraq. As you may know, the Kurds have been relatively quiet for the last two years or so. The purpose of any move the Iranians supported now would be to try again to overthrow the Iraqi Ba'thist government and to reduce chances of Soviet entrenchment in Iraq. There are reports that a Soviet treaty with Iraq similar to that one with Egypt is in the offing.

State Department and CIA are inclined to continue to avoid involvement. For one thing, any assistance that may be needed by Barzani is fully within the capability of Iran or Israel to provide. There is nothing absolutely needed from us except that they want to involve us. Another factor is that the odds are against the Kurds succeeding. Also, our involving ourselves for the first time at this point could be regarded by the Soviets as a move directed against them.

My instinct is to remain out of this as we have in the past, but I felt that you ought to be aware because of the Soviet angle.

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RECOMMENDATION: That I tell CIA we concur in their judgment
that we should not involve ourselves.

Approve

[Handwritten signature]

Other

Tell CIA to do us least
damage way possible -
NOTE - Foreign Summary
events to D.C.

~~SENSITIVE~~

DECLASSIFIED in Part
PA/HO, Department of State
E.O. 12958, as amended
Date: 6-21-06

SUBJECT: Iranian Approaches to U.S. Government

In late November 1971 SAVAK predicted to [REDACTED] that a national front government would be formed in Iraq "within three or four months". This government would include communists, Nasirists and Kurds subservient to the Ba'th Party of Iraq (BPI) and would represent a situation antithetical to both Iranian and U.S. interests. SAVAK [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] stated that Kurdish leader Mulla Mustafa al-BARZANI represented the only available figure around whom effective anti-BPI activity could be organized.

In early March 1972, SAVAK [REDACTED] and reviewed events which at that time had led up to increasingly close Soviet ties with Iraq and joint Iraq-Soviet pressures on al-BARZANI to reach an agreement with both the BPI and the Communist Party of Iraq. SAVAK viewed these developments as presaging further Soviet inroads with consequent difficulties for Iran and for the Gulf. At this time SAVAK again asked for U.S. assistance against the BPI, assistance which would include financial aid, military equipment and political action, all involving al-BARZANI.

Concurrently, [REDACTED] reporting on the Soviet pressures, and also reported that al-BARZANI was planning to send a letter to Secretary of State Rogers requesting U.S. support against the BPI. All of these developments have been reported to the Department of State via Memorandum, [REDACTED].

On 15 March 1971, SAVAK [REDACTED] and said that al-BARZANI had asked SAVAK to inform the USG that if the present trend continued, Iraq would assume a status similar to that of the East European satellites [REDACTED].

[REDACTED]. SAVAK again asked for USG support for al-BARZANI in order to forestall the formation of a national front government in Iraq and thereby the formation of a preponderantly

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[REDACTED]

communist government. SAVAK stated that USG assistance could be channelled secretly through [REDACTED] with only al-BARZANI being aware.

It should be noted that similar requests have been made to the USG by SAVAK on behalf of al-BARZANI over the past ten years. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

20 March 1972

Subject: Soviet Contacts with BARZANI

Following the visit of SADDAM TAQRITI to Moscow in February 1972, the Iraqi Ba'ath Government approached the Kurdish leadership asking it to sign the "National Covenant". A few days later, on 28 February, a Soviet delegation of four persons arrived at the Hqs of MULLA MUSTAPHA BARZANI. The appearance of the group was an unusual and extraordinary event and is regarded to be of significance.

The Soviets were:

(1) RUMANYTSEV, of the International Department of the CPUSSR.

(2) FIODOROV, who was presented as no. 1's assistant. A person of the same name is serving in the Soviet Embassy in BAGHDAD and the two might be identical.

(3) AZAROV, First Secretary in the BAGHDAD Embassy.

(4) KHAJIEFF, not identified.

They made the following proposals:

(1) The Kurds should sign the National Covenant and join the Popular Front, led by the Ba'ath Party. The Communists will be joining the Covenant.

(2) The Soviets will establish a liaison with the Kurds. A Soviet mission with W/T contact will be stationed at Barzani's Hqs with the task of maintaining contact and "protecting" Barzani.

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(3) Barzani was invited to visit the Soviet Union and assurances were given for his safe passage.

(4) Barzani was promised Soviet support should he go along with the above proposals.

It is possible that the Iraqi-Soviet move is of considerable geopolitical significance. Possibly the purpose of this move is to free the Iraqi forces for military-political action in the Persian Gulf, to be directed also against the oil interests in that area.