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Shah
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MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

ACTION
Outside System
No number

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June 7, 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR: DR. KISSINGER
FROM: HAROLD H. SAUNDERS
SUBJECT: Message from Shah on Kurds

Dick Helms is the channel for the following message to you from the Shah on the basis of his talk with you in Tehran on the Kurdish situation:

The Shah believes you should talk personally with two Kurdish representatives of Mullah Mustafah Barzani who will be travelling to the US shortly. After you study their problem, the Shah 'expects' you to share with him your views on the discussion. Given current Iraqi policies, the Shah believes the Kurds should be protected from Communist influence and prevented from following the same policies as those of the Iraqi government. [Helms' memo relaying this message is at Tab A.]

The two emissaries will be [REDACTED]

The issue in your seeing these fellows is the possibility that they will use their call on you to claim US support. Even if we were to decide to help them, I would assume we would want our hand to be hidden.

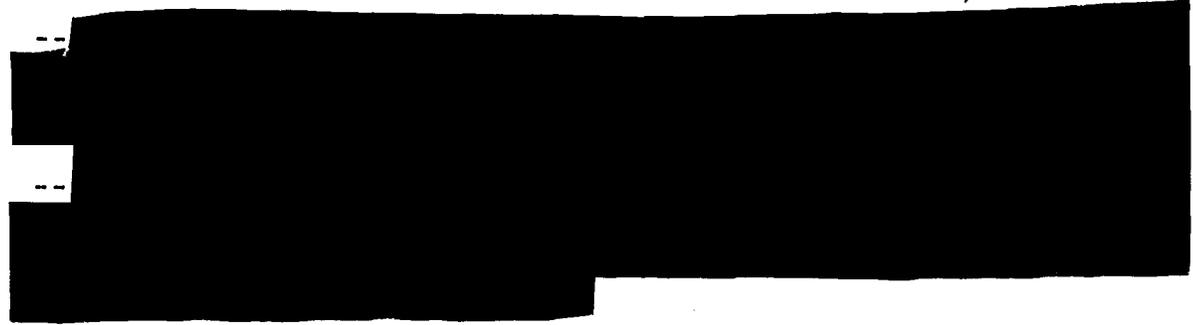
The balance is fairly fine on the question of whether we should support the Kurds.

The principal arguments for supporting them are:

- To permit or encourage them to remain a source of instability in Iraq, thwarting the Soviet effort to promote a national unity government as a sounder base for the Soviet position.
- The Iranians, Jordanians and the Israelis have intermittently over time supported the Kurds as a means of tying down Iraqi forces at home, and their security is our interest. In addition, there is now the prospect of active Iraqi meddling down the Gulf which domestic

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instability would help weaken.

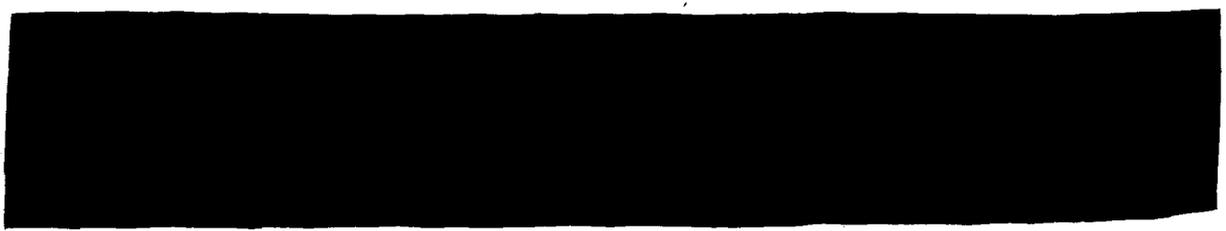


The principal arguments against our supporting the Kurds are:

--We would be committing ourselves to a guerrilla effort, the greatest success of which could be a standoff with the government in Baghdad and preservation of Kurdish autonomy. If the battle turned against the Kurds, we would have neither the assets nor the interest to provide decisive support.

--The financial resources are really available in Saudi Arabia and Iran. This is one case where the US should consult with the regional countries which it is already supporting in a variety of ways and tell them straightforwardly that we feel this should be a regional effort rather than one for which we would provide direct support.

--One would have to consider the implications of supporting the Kurds in the context of the Moscow summit talks. Since the Soviets have made an effort recently to persuade the Kurds to join the Ba'ath Party in a national unity government in Baghdad, support for the Kurds would be a direct counter-Soviet move.



US policy for some time has been to avoid involvement in Kurdish affairs. The latest approaches were made to [redacted] and to [redacted] during the President's visit to Tehran. The response was to reiterate the line that we are not involved. State's practice has been to receive travelling Kurds at the desk level.

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CIA does not have a proposal for action now, so the issue is only whether you are to see the Kurdish emissaries as the Shah requests. This depends heavily, of course, on how committed you feel to the Shah on this particular point. My own feeling is that it would be better not to involve you personally at this stage since that comes so close to involving the President at least by implication. I think you could tell the Shah this straightforwardly and say that you will have me give them a full hearing and report. Meanwhile Helms will have talked with them too.

The Shah has asked for a reply before he leaves for Europe Monday.

A recent study of the Kurdish rebellion is at Tab B.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the following reply be sent to the Shah: "I am concerned that my receiving the Kurdish emissaries could mislead them into excessive expectations of direct US support which, as you know, there has been no decision to provide. I will, however, ask my senior assistant on Middle East Affairs to give them a full hearing and report to me. I will send you my views after that. "

Approve _____ Other _____

2. [SAVAK reports your having told the Shah that some support for the Kurds has already been provided through "Kurdish representatives in Washington." CIA would like to set the record straight.] That CIA be authorized to say that reports of your saying that US support has already been provided are not correct.

Approve _____ Other _____

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

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

6 June 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR: Assistant to the President
For National Security Affairs

SUBJECT: The Shah's 5 June 1972 Messages on the
Kurdish Situation

1. On 5 June 1972 [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] wished an immediate meeting. At the meeting [REDACTED] said that he had recently come from an audience with the Shah who had several messages he wished transmitted [REDACTED]

The Shah wished Mr. Helms to convey the following message to Dr. Kissinger: Referring to the Shah's recent talk with Dr. Kissinger on the Kurdish situation, the Shah believes that Kurdish representatives of Mullah Mustafah Barzani who will be travelling to the United States should be received personally by Dr. Kissinger. The Shah believes that Dr. Kissinger should listen to what these representatives have to say and study their problem. Following his talks with them, the Shah "expects" Dr. Kissinger to share with the Shah his views regarding these discussions. Given the current policies of the Government of Iraq, he believes that the Kurds should be protected and prevented from following the same policies as those of the Government of Iraq. They should also be protected from Communist influence.

The Shah wished the following message to be passed to Mr. Helms: Please receive the Kurdish representatives, listen to them, study what they have to say and share with me your views on their presentation.

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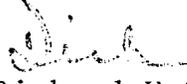
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The Shah's third message was directed to [REDACTED]. The Shah expects to receive an answer via [REDACTED] to the above messages prior to his 12 June departure for a European vacation. Asked for a precise interpretation of what answer the Shah expects in this time frame, [REDACTED] said that the Shah wishes to know whether or not Dr. Kissinger and Mr. Helms are willing to meet the Kurdish representatives and to convey their impressions to the Shah after those meetings. (Identities and timing of Kurds not yet known).

2. Ambassador Farland has been briefed on this information.

3. BACKGROUND. In the past few years, the Government of Iran has raised periodically the subject of United States support to Barzani. In November 1971, [REDACTED] raised [REDACTED] the possibility of United States aid to Barzani, relating the question to the developing national front government in Iraq. Based on guidance provided from Washington, [REDACTED] was told that United States policy was to refrain from intervention in Kurdish affairs. In March 1972 [REDACTED] proposed covert United States support to Barzani. [REDACTED] Again the United States policy of non-intervention was confirmed. Later in March, Barzani sent a special representative, [REDACTED], to London and Washington to speak with prominent Iraqi exiles and with the British and United States governments. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] During this trip, [REDACTED] also spoke with officials of the Department of State at the country desk level [REDACTED]. In April 1972 Barzani sent another special representative, [REDACTED], to the United States to solicit official and private support for the Kurds. In May, [REDACTED] proposed that [REDACTED] meet with you or with Secretary of State Rogers during the President's visit to Iran. This proposal was turned down on the grounds of insufficient time. [REDACTED]


Richard Helms
Director

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