

CONFIDENTIAL
FM KUWAIT
TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELNO 454
OF 210900Z AUGUST 90
INFO MODUK BAGHDAD ACTOR

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KUWAIT RESISTANCE MOVEMENT

SUMMARY

1. RESISTANCE MOVEMENT EVOLVING AN INFRASTRUCTURE - PLAYING MILITARY AND CIVILIAN ROLE. SUCCESSFUL SMALL SCALE ATTACKS ON IRAQI SOLDIERS ELICIT SIGNS OF IRAQI CONCERN. STRATEGY OF BEHIND-THE-LINES SUBVERSION IN ANTICIPATION OF EXTERNAL INTERVENTION. SABAH IMPORTANT SYMBOL BUT CANNOT WALK BACK IN AND TAKE OVER WHERE THEY LEFT OFF.

DETAIL

2. THREE WEEKS AFTER THE INVASION, THE KUWAIT RESISTENCE (KR) HAS ESTABLISHED ITSELF AS AN UNDERGROUND MOVEMENT CAPABLE OF MOUNTING ATTACKS ON IRAQI MILITARY TARGETS AND DEFENDING (AND EFFECTIVELY RUNNING) CERTAIN RESIDENTIAL AREAS.

3. THE DEGREE OF ORGANISATION AND COORDINATION IS UNCLEAR BUT REPORTS SUGGEST THAT AT LEAST A LOOSE INFRASTRUCTURE EXISTS BASED ON THE STILL FUNCTIONING DIWANIYA SYSTEM. ALTHOUGH MANY MEMBERS OF THE BIG KUWAITI MERCHANT FAMILIES HAVE FLED TO SAUDI ARABIA THEY HAVE ALL KEPT AT LEAST ONE RELATIVELY SENIOR MEMBER IN KUWAIT WHO IS ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN THE KR.

4. THE KR'S MILITARY ACTIVITIES ARE CONDUCTED MAINLY AFTER DARK AND RANGE FROM TORCHINGS OF ABANDONED VEHICLES (CIVILIAN AND MILITARY) TO SHOOTING IRAQI SOLDIERS. THERE ARE DAILY REPORTS OF NIGHT-TIME FIRE-FIGHTS AND TORCHINGS. AN UNSUCCESSFUL MORTAR ATTACK ON THE IRAQI EMBASSY EARLIER THIS WEEK RESULTED IN INCREASED FORTIFICATIONS AROUND THE EMBASSY BUILDING AND THE KR'S POLICY OF PICKING OFF SOLDIERS INDIVIDUALLY OR IN PAIRS HAS RESULTED IN SOLDIERS NOW PATROLLING IN GROUPS OF FOUR. ON THE CIVILIAN SIDE THE KR HAVE ORGANISED THEMSELVES EFFICIENTLY INTO NEIGHBOURHOOD SELF-HELP GROUPS MAINTAINING COMMUNICATION THROUGH CELLNET PHONES AND POOLING RESOURCES TO OVERCOME E.G. FOOD SHORTAGES. IN

ADDITION SOME AREAS ARE PROTECTED BY ARMED VIGILANTE GROUPS WHO HAVE MADE THE AREAS NO-GO AREAS FOR IRAQI SOLDIERS . IN MANY OF THESE (MAINLY RESIDENTIAL) AREAS KUWAITIS HAVE OFFERED REFUGE TO BRITISH AND AMERICAN CITIZENS AND THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT IRAQI SOLDIERS ARE UNWILLING TO CONDUCT HOUSE TO HOUSE SEARCHES.

5. THE KR HAS ALSO MOUNTED A PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN E.G. ISSUING BROADSHEETS, PAINTING SLOGANS AND PUTTING UP POSTERS OF THE EMIR AND CROWN PRINCE. THERE HAVE BEEN SOME ATTEMPTS BY THE IRAQIS TO PAINT OVER THE POSTERS AND GRAFFITI BUT THERE IS NO SIGN YET OF A REAL CLAMPDOWN.

6. THE IRAQI REACTION HAS BEEN UNCERTAIN. THE CITY IS NOW SULLENLY QUIET WITH LITTLE COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY OR TRAFFIC AND AN EDGY HOSTILE ATMOSPHERE. TROOPS PATROLLING THE CITY ARE WATCHFUL AND CLEARLY STILL ADJUSTING TO BEING AN UNWANTED ARMY OF OCCUPATION. THE LARGE ASIAN AND ARAB COMMUNITIES ARE FEARFUL OF THE SOLDIERS AND OFFER THEM NO PROSPECT OF FRATERNISATION . AS THE CITY DECAYS RESENTMENT

AGAINST THE IRAQIS INCREASINGLY FINDS EXPRESSION IN ACTIVE OR (IN MANY OF THE BANKS FOR EXAMPLE), PASSIVE RESISTANCE.

7. IT IS TOO EARLY TO DISCERN ANY STRATEGY TO KR ACTIVITIES BUT IN GENERAL THEY APPEAR TO BE TRYING TO ESTABLISH AN EFFECTIVE BEHIND THE LINES FORCE TO COMPLIMENT THE MAJOR (EXTERNAL) FORCE BE IT ECONOMIC OR MILITARY. THE SMALL SCALE ATTACKS ON SOLDIERS AND VEHICLES ARE INTENDED AT THIS STAGE TO UNSETTLE THE OCCUPYING ARMY AND DISRUPT WHERE POSSIBLE THEIR LOGISTIC SUPPORT (MILITARY WATER TANKERS ARE FOR EXAMPLE A FAVOURITE TARGET) THERE ARE SOME REPORTS THAT THE KR HAS OCCUPIED STRATEGIC BUILDINGS (E.G. SALWA) A LITTLE WAY BACK FROM THE SEA FRONT IN ANTICIPATION OF A SEA BORNE LANDING. BEYOND THAT THERE IS NO SIGN OF STRATEGIC DEPLOYMENT.

COMMENT

8. THE LIGHT IRAQI GARRISON IN KUWAIT CITY IS NO DOUBT INTENDED TO DENY THE KR A TARGET AND PREVENT FOR THE MEANTIME A FLARE UP IN THE CITY WHICH WOULD BE AN UNWELCOME DISTRACTION FROM MILITARY DEPLOYMENT IN THE SOUTH.

9. ALTHOUGH THE SABAH ARE AN IMPORTANT SYMBOL FOR THE KR THERE

IS LESS THAN UNANIMOUS SUPPORT FOR A RETURN TO THE STATUS QUO ANTE. THE REPORTED INVOLVEMENT IN THE KR OF BASIL AL SABAH AND THE DEATH OF FAHD AL SABAH DURING THE INVASION GO SOME WAY TO REDEEMING THE SABAH'S REPUTATION BUT THE FACT THAT THEY FLED THEIR COUNTRY WHEN OTHERS WERE PREPARED TO STAY AND FIGHT AND THE MEMORY OF THE INEQUALITIES AND SOME WOULD ARGUE, INCOMPETENCE OF THEIR RULE ARE NOT FORGOTTEN. THE MERCHANT FAMILIES (AND ESPECIALLY THE NON KUWAITIS INVOLVED IN THE KR ARE UNLIKELY TO WANT THE SABAH TO RESUME THEIR POSITION AND THEIR UNRIVALLED WEALTH IN TOTO WITHOUT SIGNIFICANTLY AMELIORATING THE POSITION OF THOSE WHO STAYED AND FOUGHT.

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