After several days of editorial silence, prestigious "Etela'at January 13 and Tehran Journal: January 15: carried long editorial expressing surprise at and objection to agreement "under which US Middle East Fleet will be able to use part of old British naval base in Persian Gulf." Editorial reviews arrangements by which US Navy established presence in Gulf; questions right Bahrain to permit foreign military presence in Gulf and urges US to reconsider this arrangement and leave the Gulf. Following points made in editorial:

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

TELEGRAM

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 TEHRAN 00279 151117Z

ACTION: NEA-11

INFO: OCT-01 EUR-20 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-06 NSAE-00 P-03
RSC-01 USIA-12 PRS-01 PM-06 SA-03 RSR-01 (NSCE-00)
NSC-10, JW

P: R 151037Z: JAN 72
FM: AMBASSAD TEHRAN
TO: SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7096
INFO: AMCONSUL DHAHRAN
AMBASSAD JIDDA
AMBASSAD KUWAIT
AMBASSAD LONDON
SNCLEUR
COMEASTFOR

DEPT: PLEASE PASS MANAMA

SUBJECT: PRESS REACTION TOUS/Bahrain NAVAL ARRANGEMENT

REF: A: TEHRAN 170
(B): TEHRAN 165

1: AFTER SEVERAL DAYS OF EDITORIAL SILENCE PRESTIGIOUS
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long editorial expressing surprise at and objection to
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DECLASSIFIED
PA/IO Department of State
E.O. 12958, as amended
June 21, 2006
[A] "RATHER STRANGE" AFTER ALL EFFORT TO GET SOUTHERN COAST OF PERSIAN GULF FREE FROM BRITISH AND TO RESTORE NAVAL LEADERSHIP TO REGIONAL POWERS AND WHEN, AFTER CENTURIES, COLONIALISM FINALLY ENDING, THAT ANOTHER OUTSIDE POWER SHOULD BE PERMITTED REPLACE BRITAIN."

[B] THIS MORE SURPRISING IN VIEW IRAN'S OFT-REPEATED POSITION GULF STATES THEMSELVES MUST ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY FOR AREA WITH NO OUTSIDE COUNTRIES "PERMITTED" REPLACE BRITAIN.

[C] "UNDER AGREEMENT WITH BRITAIN" THREE US WARSHIPS ARRIVED IN BAHRAIN 12 YEARS AGO "ON PRETEXT OF REPAIRS AND REFUELING" AND HAVE REMAINED THERE SINCE. IT IS SURPRISING THAT DURING THIS NEW CHAPTER OF HISTORY AMERICANS STAY ON AND ONE MUST WONDER "TO WHAT PURPOSES THEY HAVE SIGNED AGREEMENT WITH BAHRAIN TO CONTINUE THEIR PRESENCE HERE." DESPITE BIFMUBARAK'S STATEMENT THAT BAHRAIN HAS NO SECRET AGREEMENT WITH US, PRESENCE OF THREE WARSHIPS, EVEN FOR REPAIRS AND REFUELING, "CANNOT BUT BE ACCEPTED WITH MISGIVINGS."

[D] "SINCE THIS DEVELOPMENT "RELATES TO SECURITY OF ALL PEOPLES OF THE REGION NO LITTORAL STATE HAS THE RIGHT TO GRANT PERMISSION TO FOREIGN COUNTRY, LARGE OR SMALL, TO MAINTAIN MILITARY PRESENCE IN GULF EVEN FOR REPAIRS AND REFUELING PURPOSES BECAUSE THERE IS ALWAYS THE POSSIBILITY THAT SUCH ACTION MAY LEAD TO ENDANGERING SECURITY OF OTHER NATIONS." CONDUCT OF US "WHICH HAS ALWAYS PROFESSED IT WAS SUPPORTER OF LIBERTY AND FREEDOM OF OTHERS IS SURPRISING," AND US SHOULD UNDERSTAND THIS ACTION IS LIKELY TO "CREATE MISUNDERSTANDINGS IN THE REGION."

[E] SOVIETS AND OTHERS ARE FULLY JUSTIFIED IN PROTESTING STATIONING OF THREE AMERICAN WARSHIPS IN THE REGION. IRAN HAS "EVEN GREATER RIGHT TO PROTEST THIS UNWISE ACTION WHICH CERTAINLY IS AGAINST INTERESTS OF REGIONAL SECURITY EDG JRLDEM# AND THAT US SHOULD REVIEW ITS WRONG POLICY, TO SAY THE LEAST, AND LEAVE THE PERSIAN GULF AS SOON AS POSSIBLE." ALL COUNTRIES SHOULD KNOW "THAT THE PERSIAN GULF IS NOT OPEN TO IMPERIALIST DESIGNS BY OUTSIDE POWERS AND REGIONAL..."

DECLASSIFIED
PA/HO Department of State
E.O. 12958, as amended
June 21, 2006
POWERS SHALL COMBAT WITH ALL MEANS AT THEIR DISPOSAL ATTEMPTS BY FOREIGN POWERS, IRRESPECTIVE OF SIZE, TO INFILTRATE GULF.

2. COMMENT: AS REPORTED IN REFTELS, GOI HAS UP UNTIL NOW REFRAINED FROM ADVERSE COMMENT ON COMIDEASTFOR ARRANGEMENTS WITH BAHRAIN, AND FONMIN KHALATBARI HAS ATTEMPTED DAMPEN DOWN PRESS INTEREST IN THIS MATTER. WE RELIABLY INFORMED THAT ETELAAT EDITORIAL WAS WRITTEN UNDER INSTRUCTION (WE DO NOT KNOW WHOSE) WITH PAPER TOLD EXPLICITLY WHAT POINTS TO MAKE BY MINISTRY OF INFORMATION. THIS MINISTRY WOULD NOT IN TURN HAVE TAKEN THIS LINE UNLESS IT HAD HIGH-LEVEL INSTRUCTIONS. AMBASSADOR IS SEEING ALAM LATER TODAY AND WILL SEEK CLARIFY APPARENT CHANGE IN IRANIAN ATTITUDE TOWARDS COMIDEASTFOR. OUR VERY TENTATIVE REACTION IS THIS EDITORIAL DOES NOT REPRESENT CHANGE IN GOI POSITION OF ACQUIESCENCE IN PRESENCE OF COMIDEASTFOR IN GULF BUT RATHER DESIRE (A) TO PLACE IRAN ON RECORD AGAINST EXTERNAL PRESENCE IN GULF AND THUS ASSOCIATE ITSELF WITH OTHER COUNTRIES OF REGION ON THIS ISSUE, AND (B) TO BE IN A POSITION TO CRITICIZE AND OBJECT TO ANY EFFORTS BY SOVIETS TO ESTABLISH PRESENCE IN GULF OR STEP UP THEIR ACTIVITIES THERE. GP-3.

MACARTHUR

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED MANAMA.
NOTE BY OC/T: WAS RECEIVED.