

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NND 969046  
By VC NARA Date 5/7/02

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NEA



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

7209280

ACTION MEMORANDUM

s/s MAY 25 1972

~~SECRET~~

To: M - Mr. William B. Macomber, Jr.

From: NEA - Joseph J. Sisco

5/25/72

6/19

NEA/EX

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Establishment of a U.S. Interests Section  
in the Belgian Embassy in Baghdad

Background:

POL 17 US-Iraq

Relations with the Government of Iraq were broken in June 1967 as the result of the Six Day War. Arrangements between our governments at that time called for each government to assign a nominal number of personnel to staff Interests Sections in Baghdad and Washington. Primarily because of the low level representation proposed by the Iraqis for these Sections, we did not exercise our option to maintain an Interests Section in Baghdad. The Iraqi Government, however, has maintained an Iraqi-manned Interests Section in the Indian Embassy in Washington.

Since that time, there has been a continuing desire on the part of our Government to have better political and economic information from Iraq and we believe that the time is at hand for us to establish a US Interests Section in Baghdad staffed with American personnel. You will recall having cleared my memorandum dated April 22, 1971, in which I informed the Secretary of our intention to establish the Interests Section in Baghdad. Subsequently we discussed the matter of assignment of US Officers with the Governments of Belgium and Iraq and found both agreeable to our doing so. Accordingly, we plan to effect establishment of a US Interests Section as expeditiously as possible. Specific actions which must be taken are discussed below.

Location:

The US Interests Section will be located in Baghdad and will function as a part of the Belgian Embassy there.

NEA/EX: Andranovich

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While we do not have a completely reliable picture, we believe that there is sufficient USG furniture and equipment with the Belgians to meet our immediate operational needs. Once established, the Officer who heads up our Interests Section will submit detailed information as to requirements with his recommendations for further Bureau actions in this regard.

Staff:

We plan to staff the US Interests Section with two officers; an FSO-4 Arab Language and Area Officer who would be in charge and an FSS-4 Administrative Officer who would be accompanied by a working wife who would become the third employee handling secretarial duties. We also will require the assignment of twelve locals, all previous USG employees, to the Interests Section. These twelve employees who have been working with the Belgian Embassy since 1967 will be taken over after arrival of the American principal officer.

As you know, when Baghdad became a closed post in 1967, all American personnel left Iraq and a group of local employees moved over to the employ of the Belgian Embassy to facilitate its job of looking after our interests. The Bureau was given to understand at the time that the positions it gave up, both American and local, would be restored at such time in the future as they would be required again for Iraq. We are aware of current limitations and the tight personnel situation facing the Department and have carefully reviewed our options. It now appears that the Bureau can best meet the Baghdad requirement for American positions by transferring the three American positions needed there from Cairo. We base this judgement on the situation developing from the Egyptian Government's decision to reduce the respective Interests Sections in Cairo and Washington. While we do not as yet have any firm figure indicating how many positions we will be able to maintain nor the composition of the future staff, we are confident that we will be able to find three positions required for Baghdad within the final reduction figure applying to Cairo. Other American positions remaining to us after the staff reduction, we expect will be required for TDY

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support to the reduced Cairo operation.

Insofar as local positions are concerned we must look to you for assistance. I am not ready to contemplate a reduction in the local staff at Cairo. All local employees are engaged in key positions and a reduction in this group could further hamper our ability to operate. Looking at our present resources, we are, as you know, engaged in reducing thirty-eight administrative positions as part of the President's FY 72 reduction. In view of these circumstances we do not have these positions available for programming within the Bureau. Accordingly, we request allocation of twelve Program positions for Baghdad to accommodate the establishment of an Interests Section there.

Funds:

Since the present condition of property and equipment is not known, it is difficult to provide a precise estimate of funds which will be required to support the US Interests Section. However, we propose that funds in the amount of \$134,000, included in the FY1973 budget of the Bureau of Security and Consular Affairs (which cover present operating expenses of the post under the Belgians) be transferred to NEA. We estimate that approximately \$65,000 will be needed to provide support costs for three American positions. This funding is already provided for in the Cairo positions and will be absorbed.

Claims:

The major unresolved item in this area results from the Iraqi Government's seizure of our Chancery Compound for which adequate compensation has never been made. However, given the magnitude of the matter and the inconclusive negotiations on the subject in early 1971, the resolution of this particular issue may, in all probability, pend resumption of full diplomatic relations with the GOI.

Recommendations:

That you approve: . . .

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By NC NARA Date 5/7/02



(a) the establishment of a US Interests Section in Baghdad.

Approve WBM/yo 19 JUN 1972 Disapprove \_\_\_\_\_

(b) the transfer of funds for USINT operating expenses in FY 1973, now being administered by SCA, to NEA. *to be effective 10/1/72*

Approve WBM/yo 19 JUN 1972 Disapprove \_\_\_\_\_

(c) the allocation to the Bureau of twelve local Program positions to provide for local staffing requirements. *to be effective 10/1/72.*

Approve WBM/yo 19 JUN 1972 Disapprove \_\_\_\_\_

Attachment:

My Memorandum of April 22, 1971 to the Secretary.

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