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12 June 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence
VIA: Acting Deputy Director for Plans
SUBJECT: Background to Current Efforts by
Kurdish Leader Barzani to Gain U.S.
Support

1. The following is for your background information in connection with the forthcoming meeting which you and General Haig will have with representatives of the Kurdish leader, Mulla Mustafa Barzani. An edited version of this is being prepared for General Haig.

The Kurdish Situation in Brief

2. The increasingly close relationship between the Soviet Union and the Ba'thist Government of Iraq, and concomitant pressure by the Soviets and the Ba'thists to induce the Iraqi Kurds to join a national unity government in Baghdad, has given rise to Kurdish claims that without financial aid from some source to pay Barzani's Kurdish forces, the Pish Mirga, plus western, particularly U.S., "moral" support to counter Soviet backing of the Iraqi Ba'th, the Iraqi Kurds may be forced into an accommodation with their adversaries.

3. The Shah of Iran is concerned that Iraq is progressively falling under Soviet domination with implications for Iranian security and Iranian and western interests in the Persian Gulf. He therefore is seeking ways to minimize Soviet influence on Iran's flank and in this connection believes it desirable that Barzani remain sufficiently viable to maintain his resistance to the Ba'thist regime in Baghdad.

4. Principally because of the above factors, in recent months both Barzani and SAVAK, on behalf of the Shah, have intensified their efforts to obtain western support, particularly U.S. and British moral backing as a counterweight to the Soviet support of the Ba'thists.

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Although Mulla Mustafa claims he will keep secret any commitment of U.S. moral support, such a commitment would be of little use to him if he could not exploit it to gain backing, and this would mean letting it become known.

5. The Kurdish desire for financial support has practical foundations. The subsidy granted by the Baghdad Government after the civil war ended in 1970 has been terminated recently and the [redacted] Iranian subsidies provided Barzani prior to the end of that war were greatly reduced when the Ba'thist subsidy took effect. As a result, in recent months, Barzani has had to reduce sharply the salaries of his forces and many have faded away. We estimate Barzani needs about \$7,200,000 annually just to pay the current force of 15,000 soldiers he claims to have. He has proposed to increase his troops to 50,000 men, for which salary support would run about \$24,000,000 per year. Material and arms would, of course, be extra.

Summary of Recent Approaches to the U.S.,
our Responses and Related Developments

6. In November 1971, [redacted] of [redacted] reviewed [redacted] the possibility of U.S. aid to Barzani, relating the question to the developing national front government in Iraq. Based on guidance from the Department of State, [redacted] was told that U.S. policy was to refrain from intervention in Kurdish affairs. In March 1972 [redacted] proposed covert U.S. assistance to Barzani. [redacted] Again the U.S. policy of non-interference was confirmed, not only by the State Department but by Dr. Kissinger's office as well. Later, in March, Barzani sent a special representative, [redacted], to [redacted] and Washington to speak with the [redacted] and U.S. Governments.

7. While in Washington, [redacted] asked [redacted], [redacted] to use his influence to obtain a covert expression of U.S. support for Barzani. During your meeting with [redacted], he mentioned the situation in Iraq and the two dissident groups he was in touch with. You replied that in general you shared his views of the Iraq situation. You noted, however, that the U.S. could not involve itself directly. [redacted]

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[REDACTED]

8. [REDACTED], as well as reporting [REDACTED], have indicated that Barzani and the Shah have hope that U.S. assistance might be forthcoming. [REDACTED]

9. During his trip in April, [REDACTED] also met with Department of State officials [REDACTED]. Additionally, in April Barzani sent another special representative, [REDACTED], to the U.S. to solicit official and private support for the Kurds. [REDACTED] has been in touch with Senator Gravel's office most recently. In May, [REDACTED] proposed that Barzani's [REDACTED]

meet with Secretary of State Rogers or Dr. Kissinger during the President's visit to Iran. This proposal was turned down on the grounds of insufficient time. Subsequently, the Shah through [REDACTED] requested that Dr. Kissinger and yourself receive representatives from Barzani. The Shah also asked for Dr. Kissinger's and your reaction to such a meeting. A message has been sent to the Shah stating that you and General Haig will together receive the Barzani representatives if they come to Washington.

10. [REDACTED]

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John H. Waller

JOHN H. WALLER
Chief, Near East and
South Asia Division

Attachments - 2

cc: DDCI w/att

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