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NEAR EAST - AFRICA

7. Iraq-Kuwait

Baghdad radio on 28 December broadcast the text of an Iraqi memorandum to be submitted to the Security Council protesting Britain's "provocative" action in sending warships to the Persian Gulf. It charged that "the British Government is threatening anew the area's peace in general and Iraq's security in particular, as it had done earlier, in June." The Egyptian press and radio also attacked the British move, claiming that "imperialist intrigues" were responsible for any tension existing in the Middle East. The Egyptian radio said that according to the Kuwaiti ambassador in Cairo, Kuwaiti independence is not in danger, the Ruler of Kuwait has not requested British aid, and Kuwaiti and Arab League forces are capable of defending Kuwaiti independence.

The 2,200-man Arab League force in Kuwait consists of 1,190 Saudi Arabian troops, 900 Jordanians, and 110 Sudanese. The British doubt that this force would put up effective resistance against an Iraqi attack and feel that the 1,600-man Kuwaiti army needs another year of training and build-up.

The acting secretary general of the Arab League has announced to the press in Cairo that Arab League forces will be pulled out in the event British troops return to Kuwait.

At this stage, it appears unlikely that a British force will be sent back in. If that should happen and the threat of an Iraqi invasion should appear imminent, the governments of Jordan and Saudi Arabia might decide to keep their troops in Kuwait, despite Arab League pressure for their withdrawal and despite the propaganda attacks Husayn and Saud would be inviting from Cairo and Baghdad to the effect that they were collaborating with "British imperialism."

There is still no firm evidence of any Iraqi preparations for an imminent invasion. [redacted]

Withheld under statutory authority of the Central Intelligence Agency Act of 1949 (50 U.S.C., section 403g)

Sources: CONS ADEN 59, 27 Dec 61 (Secret); EMB KUWAIT A-59, 18 Dec 61 (Conf); CIA/FBIS BAGHDAD and CAIRO, 28 Dec 61 (OUO).

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