

PRIORITY

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FROM : B. J. S. M. WASHINGTON.
TO : MINISTRY OF DEFENCE, LONDON.

ZO 725

2nd May 1951.

Subject : Oil denial.

Please connect with Embassy Telegram No. 1306 of 28th April 1951 addressed to Foreign Office.

1. From the military point of view following amplification of certain points may be of interest.

(a) Chain of command. McGhee said the recent talks between our Cs-in-C., M. E. and Admiral Carney had made it quite clear there was a wide divergence of view between U.K. and U.S. regarding command responsibility in the Middle East. Although we knew of the differences in respect of Turkey we were surprised to learn that in his mind they covered the whole Middle East.

(b) Allocation of responsibility. U.S. are anxious to undertake planning for Kuwait, Qatar and Bahrein. Their main argument concerning Kuwait is that company employees must be used unless we can provide military and that the senior company officials with whom detailed plans must be made are U.S. They would like also to plan for Qatar as it can be grouped conveniently with the other fields for which they are responsible. They are prepared to accept the possibility of order to execute plans being given by us at Kuwait and Qatar and possibly also at Bahrein. We have some doubt on the military side regarding the division of responsibility for planning and orders for execution. We feel the principle of undivided responsibility in each field is desirable.

2. We met again on April 30th as forecast in para. 4 of Foreign Office Telegram 1306. U.S. were represented by Lewis Jones of Near East Division of State Department, Roosevelt of C.I.A., Colonel Worcester U.S.A.F. of Office of Petroleum Programmes, Department of Defence. We presented para 8 of COS(51)247 and they agreed with this classification having arrived at a very similar one themselves. They are extremely interested in counter denial measures but so far have disclosed no methods which would be feasible in Persia or Iraq unless we can get the cooperation of the Governments. They have suggested that we might try to do this if the matter is raised particularly by the Iraq Government.

3. It was suggested that we examine further the following points:-

(a) In the Basra field due to the isolation of the wells it might be possible to undertake the blocking of wells without Iraqi interference.

(b) The I.P.C. have a number of large vehicles of special type now working on the construction of pipelines which if captured by the Russians could easily be used as tank transporters. We should plan to evacuate as many of these as possible and destroy the rest.

(c) The American plans attach great importance to the destruction of all heavy drilling rigs in order to increase Russian difficulties in overcoming their counter-denial measures. They are most anxious that we should not leave such rigs untouched and therefore available for movement to their fields.

(d) Stocks of aviation and M.T. spirit at Abadan should be reduced to the minimum in the event of an emergency by drawing off as much as possible in tankers.

4. As far as heavy drilling rigs are concerned it is understood the number of such rigs in the world is comparatively small and that A.I.O.C. and I.P.C. do not have many.

5. Discussion of the actual targets in U.S. denial plans revealed certain divergences from our ideas and a further meeting is to be held on 1st May at which these will be examined in detail.

6. U.S. plans with ARAMCO have apparently reached an advanced stage including the allocation of shaped charges for each particular target in specially marked boxes stored in the fields. It is unlikely that they will wish or find it easy to change their plans and it may in some cases be necessary for us to come into line. As our demolition plans appear to be far more flexible this should be possible in most cases.

7. We have emphasised that we cannot at present enter into discussion with U.S. Oil Companies or allow U.S. Government to reveal any details of our plans to their companies without reference to us. We hope to get agreement that once the principles are agreed here remaining operational and engineer discussions should be carried out with representatives nominated by them in Cairo. They did not appear allergic to this idea. It appears likely that such representatives would be from the C.I.A. rather than the normal Embassy staff.

8. Based on their experience with ARAMCO the C.I.A. have developed a satisfactory modus operandi for this type of covert planning and are most anxious to extend their activities to cover the remaining fields.