MEMORANDUM FOR: Ambassador Helms (EYES ONLY)

FROM: [Redacted]

SUBJECT: Your Memorandum Relaying Shah's Statement Concerning Barzani

1. Thank you for passing to me what the Shah advised Barzani about joining a Ba'ath-Communist coalition: "Do so if you want to commit suicide!"

2. The Kurds have reported the visit of the two Soviet Embassy officers to us and to the Iranians. We have advised them always to report all their Soviet contacts promptly and fully to the Iranians so as to lessen the possibility that the Iranians will suspect Barzani of playing a double game.

3. Attached is a summary of what they told us. We sent it to headquarters on 9 June for dissemination in order to conceal the place acquired. Normally I would have had it to you sooner but, as you noted, this has been a standard Soviet approach and the Kurdish reaction was in line with their previous responses. The report was obtained by me in Arabic and had to be translated.

Attachment:
1 Cable
1. On 2 June 73, both Victor (N. Victor Abusov A.I.B.U.K) the First Secretary, and Igor (P.E.T.R.A.K.O.V), the Second Secretary of the Soviet Embassy in Baghdad, paid a visit to the Kurdish area. They said they were acting on instructions from the Soviet Command including Brezhnev, Kosygin, and Podgorny. They said the objective of their trip was to ascertain the feelings of Mulla Mustafa Barzani and the political bureau of the KDP, and to obtain the opinions of the Kurdish movement and the Kurdish Democratic Party in general, and the opinion of Barzani in particular. Judging by their position and their comments, however, their real objective was to increase the pressure on Barzani to cooperate with and to reconcile him-
1. The Soviet officers spoke at length about the importance with which the Soviet Union views Iraq and the Kurdish question, and on the importance of solving the Kurdish problem with the present government and the Communists, within the framework of a unified and anti-imperialist Iraqi front. They expressed their readiness to assist the Kurdish people as much as possible and in various areas, after they had reached an understanding with the Iraqi government.

2. Mulla Mustafa Barzani and the Political Bureau spoke with them at length about the position of the Ba'ath and the current points of friction such as the Arabization program;
THE FAILURE TO ESTABLISH BORDERS FOR THE KURDISH AREA; THE LACK OF KURDISH PARTICIPATION IN THE GOVERNMENT; THE ASSASSINATION ATTEMPTS AGAINST BARZANI; AND OTHER ISSUES WHICH INDICATE THE ABSENCE OF ANY BA'ATH GOOD INTENTIONS. ALL THIS HAS LED TO A TOTAL LOSS OF KURDISH CONFIDENCE IN THE BA'ATH REGIME AND ITS ABILITY TO SETTLE THE KURDISH QUESTION. THE KURDISH VIEW WAS EXPONDED IN DETAIL, AND THE SOVIET EMISSARIES PROMISED TO PASS IT ON AS THEY HEARD IT TO THE SOVIET LEADERS WHO HAD SENT THEM.

4. THE SOVIET OFFICIALS DID NOT BRING ANY PRACTICAL OR SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS WITH THEM TO BE ADOPTED BY THE KURDS OR BY THE GOVERNMENT IN ORDER TO SETTLE THE KURDISH ISSUE. THEIR REMARKS CENTERED ON PRESSURING BARZANI TO AGREE TO COOPERATE WITH SADDAM HUSAYN AL-TIKRITI AND THE REGIME AND TO JOIN THE NATIONAL FRONT WITH THE BA'ATH AND THE COMMUNISTS. THE TWO DIPLOMATS CARRIED AN ORAL MESSAGE FROM THE SOVIET COMMAND FOR BARZANI; THEY ALSO CARRIED A WRITTEN OUTLINE OF THE MAJOR POINTS TO BE DISCUSSED AS OUTLINED ABOVE. THEY BOTH SAID THAT THE REGIME HAD MADE A DECISION TO GIVE THE KURDISH PEOPLE AUTONOMOUS RULE BEFORE THE 11TH OF MARCH.
THE IMQI ARMY IS TRAINING.

THE SOVIET OFFICIALS DENIED KNOWLEDGE OF THE EVIDENCE OR REPORTS ON WHICH THE KUFDIS, THE KURDISH OFFICIAL SAID THE ORGANIZATION WAS BASED. THE KURDISH OFFICIAL SAID THE INFORMATION WAS RELIABLE AND CONVINCING TO THE KURDS AND THAT HE DID NOT PROPOSE TO DISCLOSE ITS SOURCE TO THE SOVIETS. THE SOVIET UNION IS IN A POSITION TO KNOW THAT IT IS TRUE.

SOURCE COMMENT: ONE MEMBER OF THE KDP CENTRAL COMMITTEE CONFRONTED THE SOVIET OFFICIALS WITH THE CHARGE THAT THE IRAQI ARMY IS TRAINING TO USE THE POISON GAS WHICH THE SOVIET UNION HAS SUPPLIED TO IRAQ, FOR GENOCIDE AGAINST THE KURDS. THE SOVIET OFFICIALS DENIED KNOWLEDGE OF THIS AND ASKED FOR THE EVIDENCE OR REPORTS ON WHICH THE KURDISH INFORMATION WAS BASED. THE KURDISH OFFICIAL SAID THE INFORMATION WAS RELIABLE AND CONVINCING TO THE KURDS AND THAT HE DID NOT PROPOSE TO DISCLOSE ITS SOURCE TO THE SOVIETS. THE SOVIET UNION IS IN A POSITION TO KNOW THAT IT IS TRUE.

SOURCE COMMENT: THE SOVIETS LEFT THE BARZANI AREA ON 5 JUNE. BARZANI EXPRESSED CONCERN TO SOME OF HIS SENIOR KURDISH ADVISORS THAT THE SOVIETS MAY EVENTUALLY GIVE THE IRAQI REGIME ALL-OUT SUPPORT FOR A MILITARY CAMPAIGN TO CRUSH THE KURDS. THE SOVIET VISITORS COMMENTED THAT THE IRANIANS AND IRAQI GOVERNMENTS HAD BEEN ENGAGED IN SECRET DIPLOMATIC TALKS AND WHAT DID THE KURDS THINK THIS IMPLIED FOR THEM. THE KDP LEADERS REPLIED THAT THIS WAS A MATTER
BETWEEN TWO GOVERNMENTS AND DID NOT CONCERN THEM. IN FACT, HOWEVER, THEY HAD BEEN AWARE OF THE TALKS AND HAD BEEN SOMEWHAT CONCERNED THAT IF THE IRANIANS COULD SECURE THEIR DEMANDS OVER THE SHATT-AL-ARAB THEY MIGHT CEASE OR REDUCE THEIR SUPPORT FOR BARZANI. THE RESUMPTION OF IRANIAN PROPAGANDA AGAINST IRAQ ABOUT 5 JUNE TENDED TO REASSURE THE KURDS THAT THEY WOULD NOT LOSE IRANIAN SUPPORT.