

MR POWELL

THE GULF - JORDANIAN MILITARY MOVEMENTS

Sir Percy is out of the office, but Gordon Barrass spoke to me on the telephone at 11 a.m. this morning Washington time. He offered the following three points about the Tel Aviv telegram:

1. We don't know on what material the claim about unusual activity in para. 1 was based. However, both Jordan and Israel increased their alerts on 9 December, but since then have lowered them.
2. Both the Jordanians and the Israelis are edgy. The Israelis fear that Jordanian activity could be a prelude to an Iraqi attack. We don't believe this because we don't think the Iraqis would share such thoughts with the Jordanians. The most likely explanation is that the Israelis and Jordanians are over-reacting to each other's activities.
3. The MOD are in touch with the appropriate people in Washington, first of all on the question of fact, and secondly asking what the Americans are doing about it.

Finally, Gordon Barrass commented that although it seems that this could be 'a daisy chain' of a story - all getting a little blown up - until we find out what is really happening on the ground he wouldn't want to be too categorical.



Duty Clerk

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