

RELEASE IN PART B6

From: Sullivan, Jacob J <SullivanJJ@state.gov>
Sent: Monday, March 14, 2011 4:54 PM
To: H
Subject: Fw: Quick Bahrain read-out

Fyi

----- Original Message -----

From: Feltman, Jeffrey D
Sent: Monday, March 14, 2011 04:41 PM
To: Sanderson, Janet A; Schlicher, Ronald L; Bondy, Steven C; Sullivan, Jacob J; Burns, William J; Wells, Alice G;
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 'Lisa_D_Kenna [redacted] <Lisa_D_Kenna [redacted]> [redacted] Schrepel,
 Dawn M; Carl Yoder, Samantha A
Cc: Williams, Stephanie T; Hood, Ludovic L; Djerassi, Alexander M
Subject: Quick Bahrain read-out

A few impressions I have from Bahrain tonight:

- Security situation is worrying. We saw (Sunni) vigilantes harassing drivers. Shia demonstrators have taken over enormous sections of Manama (a "metastized Pearl Roundabout," as Stephanie called it) and shut down major roads. For those of you who know Manama, the Ritz-Carlton is no longer accessible.
- There is shooting, including by machine guns, in neighborhoods including where Embassy folks live. One Shia contact told us tonight he thought that these shootings were intended to provide the pretext for the GCC to deploy everywhere.
- Saudi (and other?) GCC troops seem to be, as of now, in barracks.
- Hamad bin Jassim and Saud al Faisal are both here, cloistered with the King and Crown Prince. I have a call in to HbJ.
- Foreign Minister Sheikh Khalid said that there will not be martial law but rather a three-month imposition of public safety rules to restore calm. After three months, continuation of this would require Parliamentary approval. He told us that the GCC is not here to engage with Bahraini citizens but to protect critical infrastructure. (Comment: we'll see. And we'll see what happens if hardline Shia engage the GCC troops.)
- Wifaq leaders (including Ali Salman) don't seem to understand the situation has fundamentally changed, with the entry of the GCC. They are still talking about what they need to take the Crown Prince up on his dialogue offer. We sat with them for two hours, and the conversation was the same we've had before.
- FM says I'll see the CP tomorrow. We've got some ideas on general principles to lower tensions we'll share with him. (E.g., limit GCC role strictly, while Wifaq pulls back demonstrations to the Pearl Roundabout, etc.). Ali Salman also intrigued by idea of a trilateral with the Crown Prince and Stephanie and me this week, which we'll explore.

I will stay in Bahrain for now rather than join S in Cairo and Tunis.
 Jeffrey Feltman

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