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T) FLASH ROME

TELEGRAM NO 169 OF 26 MARCH

AND TO FLASH PARIS, BONN,

INFO IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON, TOKYO, OTTAWA, PRIORITY UKMIS NEW YORK,
UKREP BRUSSELS, UKDEL NATO.

MY TELS NOS 586 AND 587 TO WASHINGTON: IRAN

1. PLEASE TELL THE GOVERNMENT TO WHICH YOU ARE ACCREDITED AT A SUITABLE LEVEL (E.G., POLITICAL DIRECTOR), THAT I BELIEVE THAT A EUROPEAN REPLY SHOULD BE CO-ORDINATED IN RESPONSE TO THIS LATEST AMERICAN MESSAGE. I FEAR THAT THE VIRTUAL ULTIMATUM WHICH THE AMERICANS HAVE DELIVERED TO THE IRANIANS, EVEN IF THEY HAVE NOT MENTIONED THE SPECIFIC MEASURES WHICH THEY WILL TAKE, WILL HAVE THE EFFECT OF DRIVING THE MODERATES INTO THE ARMS OF THE EXTREMISTS IN IRAN INSTEAD OF STRENGTHENING BANI SADR AND HIS COLLEAGUES IN THEIR ATTEMPT TO ISOLATE THE STUDENTS. I THEREFORE SUGGEST THAT THE JOINT RESPONSE TO THE AMERICANS MIGHT TAKE THE FORM OF THE COMMUNITY AGREEING TO TRY TO ORGANISE MESSAGES TO BANI SADR FROM AS MANY HEADS OF GOVERNMENT/STATE AS POSSIBLE (AS RECOMMENDED BY THE AMBASSADORS OF THE NINE) DRAWING ATTENTION TO THE SERIOUS SITUATION NOW REACHED AND TO THE UNPREDICTABLE CONSEQUENCES OF THE HOSTAGES PROBLEM NOT BEING RESOLVED. BUT THE COMMUNITY COUNTRIES WOULD NOT (NOT) THREATEN TO BREAK OFF RELATIONS IN MID-MAY IF THERE WERE NO PROGRESS. WE WOULD NOT IN ANY CASE WISH TO TAKE THE FORMAL STEP OF BREAKING OFF RELATIONS RATHER THAN WITHDRAWING STAFF UNILATERALLY (WHICH WAS WHAT THE AMBASSADORS OF THE NINE RECOMMENDED) . BUT AT THIS STAGE WE THINK IT PREFERABLE NOT TO SPECIFY AT ALL WHAT ACTION THE COMMUNITY COUNTRIES INTEND TO TAKE IF THE HOSTAGES ARE NOT FREED BY MID-MAY.

2. ROME SHOULD SUGGEST THAT THE PRESIDENCY SHOULD INFORM THE REST OF THE NINE ABOUT THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE ADDRESSED TO THE FOUR AND SET UP ARRANGEMENTS FOR CO-ORDINATING THE RESPONSE. WE, FOR OUR PART, WOULD BE GLAD TO ATTEND A MEETING AT POLITICAL DIRECTOR OR EXPERT LEVEL - OR INDEED TO FALL IN WITH WHATEVER PROCEDURAL ARRANGEMENTS THE PRESIDENCY DECIDED UPON. PARIS AND BONN SHOULD INFORM THE FRENCH AND GERMANS OF OUR VIEW.

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3. ACTION ADDRESSEES SHOULD ALSO HAND OVER THE TEXT IN MY IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING TELEGRAM WHICH CONTAINS A DRAFT ON WHICH WE SUGGEST THE NINE'S REPLY TO THE AMERICANS MIGHT BE BASED.

4. FOR BONN: GENSCHER TELEPHONED ME EARLIER THIS AFTERNOON. I TOLD HIM THAT THE AMERICANS HAD ALREADY TAKEN ACTION WITH THE IRANIANS. HE TOLD ME THAT SCHMIDT INTENDED TO SEND A MESSAGE TO CARTER THIS EVENING. BUT WE ARE ASKING RUHFUS TO SUGGEST THAT HE SHOULD HOLD HIS HAND.

CARRINGTON

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