

S E C R E T

SECRET
FM F C O 271954Z DEC 79
TO FLASH WASHINGTON
TELEGRAM NO 1990 OF 27 DECEMBER
AND TO FLASH UKHIS NEW YORK
INFO FLASH TEHRAN IMMEDIATE PARIS

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Pms

IRAN

1. THE PRIME MINISTER AND I HAVE CONSIDERED THE SITUATION TODAY IN THE LIGHT OF THE LATEST REPORTS. PLEASE APPROACH THE STATE DEPARTMENT AND WHITE HOUSE TODAY AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL YOU CAN REACH AND CONVEY TO THEM THE POINTS IN PARAGRAPHS 2 TO 3 BELOW. SIR R HIBBERT MAY GIVE THE GENERAL LINE ON OUR THINKING TO THE FRENCH THIS HAS BEEN DONE TODAY THROUGH THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR HERE, WHO IS CALLING ON ME AT HIS OWN REQUEST EARLY TOMORROW.

2. WE STAND ABSOLUTELY BY THE UNDERTAKING GIVEN BY THE PRIME MINISTER IN WASHINGTON TO SUPPORT THE AMERICANS IN AN APPROACH TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL FOR ACTION UNDER CHAPTER 7 OF THE CHARTER. BUT THE PRIME MINISTER MADE IT CLEAR IN INTERVIEWS IN WASHINGTON THAT ANY SUCH ACTION MUST BE RELATED TO THE OBJECTIVE OF SECURING THE RELEASE OF THE HOSTAGES. MEASURED BY THIS TEST THE DRAFT IN UKHIS NEW YORK TELEGRAM NUMBER 1952 AND THE PROPOSED AMERICAN TACTICS CAUSE THE FOLLOWING MISGIVINGS:-

- (A) WE WONDER WHETHER IT WILL BE SO EASY TO OBTAIN SUFFICIENT VOTES FOR A RESOLUTION IN THESE TERMS TO BE ADOPTED: IF A RESOLUTION WERE TABLED BY THE UNITED STATES AND SUPPORTED BY HER WESTERN ALLIES BUT THEN DEFEATED, THE CONSEQUENCES COULD BE VERY BAD FOR ALL OF US.
- (B) IF A RESOLUTION IN THESE TERMS IS PASSED BY THE SECURITY COUNCIL, IS IT LIKELY TO SECURE THE RELEASE OF THE HOSTAGES? WE MUST HONESTLY SAY THAT WE SEE A GRAVE RISK OF IT PROVOKING THE IRANIANS INTO TAKING MORE HOSTAGES FROM OTHER EMBASSIES INCLUDING OUR OWN.

3. THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE WHOLE EXERCISE ARE SO SERIOUS AND THE RISKS OF MISHANDLING IT SO GREAT THAT WE SHOULD VERY MUCH PREFER TO TACKLE THE PROBLEM IN SLOWER TIME, GIVING MORE THOUGHT TO THE BEST APPROACH FROM THE POINTS OF VIEW OF NEW YORK AND TEHRAN. THE AMERICANS ARE AWARE OF OUR CONCERN LEST MOVES FOR SANCTIONS AGAINST IRAN SHOULD BUILD UP PRESSURE FOR SANCTIONS AGAINST

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/ SOUTH AFRICA.

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SOUTH AFRICA. WE WONDER HOW IMPORTANT IS THE DEADLINE OF 31 DECEMBER, GIVEN THAT APART FROM CUBA THE NEW MEMBERS OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL LOOK EITHER NO WORSE THAN THEIR PREDECESSORS AND IN SOME CASES PERHAPS EVEN BETTER. A MORE MEASURED APPROACH WOULD ALSO GIVE THE AMERICANS TIME TO CONSIDER FURTHER UNILATERAL MOVES WHICH MAY BE OPEN TO THEM, WHETHER ON THE LINES SUGGESTED BY THE HEAD OF MISSION OF THE COMMUNITY IN TEHRAN OR IN OTHER FIELDS. COULD WE NOT ENVISAGE A STEP BY STEP APPROACH IN WHICH THE FIRST STAGE WOULD BE A RESOLUTION BY THE SECURITY COUNCIL FINDING THAT THERE IS A THREAT TO THE PEACE UNDER ARTICLE 39, CALLING UPON IRAN TO COMPLY WITH THE RULING OF THE INTERNATIONAL COURT AND THE UNANIMOUS RESOLUTION OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL ITSELF, RESOLVING TO REMAIN SEIZED OF THE PROBLEM AND TO MEET AGAIN AFTER A SPECIFIED INTERVAL TO CONSIDER ACTION UNDER ARTICLE 41 UNLESS THE HOSTAGES HAVE BY THEN BEEN RELEASED?

4. IT IS MOST DESIRABLE TO ESTABLISH WHAT REALLY ARE THE AMERICAN MOTIVES. ONE READING OF THEIR TACTICS IN NEW YORK IS THAT THEY ARE DETERMINED TO TABLE A WHOLE-HOG RESOLUTION WHETHER OR NOT IT IS GOING TO BE PASSED. THE PURPOSE OF THIS, AS SIR ANTHONY PARSONS HAS SUGGESTED, COULD BE TO FREE THE AMERICAN HANDS FOR SOME KIND OF UNILATERAL ACTION. THE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS FOR BRITAIN AND THE WEST IN THE ENTIRE MIDDLE EAST ARE TOO SERIOUS TO NEED STATING. ANY LIGHT YOU CAN SHED ON THIS QUESTION WOULD BE MOST WELCOME.

5. AS THE AMERICANS KNOW, WE HAD A NUMBER OF COMMENTS ON POINTS OF DETAIL IN THE DRAFT RESOLUTION AND WE MAY HAVE MORE. MOST OF THESE ARE OF A MINOR AND TECHNICAL NATURE, BUT FOR THEIR OWN INFORMATION ONLY WE ARE CONCERNED AT THE THOUGHT THAT EXPORT OF CHRYSLER/TALBOT CAR KITS TO IRAN WOULD BE BANNED, LEADING TO SERIOUS LOCAL UNEMPLOYMENT IN BRITAIN. THIS MIGHT BE MORE SERIOUS THAN THE DAMAGE TO ANY OTHER COUNTRY. IT COULD EVEN LOOK TO SOME IN THIS COUNTRY AS IF THE AMERICANS WERE OBLIGING THEIR ALLIES TO CUT OFF VALUABLE EXPORTS WHILE AT THE SAME TIME PROTECTING THE INTERESTS OF THEIR OWN FARMERS IN CONTINUING TO SELL FOOD TO IRAN.

CARRINGTON

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