

CONFIDENTIAL

IRAN

1250

P S TO P M NO10 DOWNING ST

CONFIDENTIAL

TEHRAN 101145Z MAY 79

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 584 OF 10 MAY

INFO IMMEDIATE CABINET OFFICE (DIO) MODUK (DI4, DS11), CRE5,
WASHINGTON

INFO PRIORITY ABU DHABI, ANKARA, BAGHDAD, BONN, BAHRAIN, CAIRO,
DOHA, DUBAI, ISLAMABAD, JEDDA, KABUL, KUWAIT, MOSCOW, NEW DELHI,
CAPE TOWN, TEL AVIV, PARIS, AMMAN.

INFO SAVING DAMASCUS, ROME, THE HAGUE.

MIPT: IRAN INTERNAL SITUATION

1. THE EVENTS OF THE LAST FEW WEEKS HAVE LED TO A CONFUSED PICTURE, IN WHICH FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS ARE HARDER THAT EVER TO PREDICT.
2. THE CLEAREST FEATURE HAS BEEN THE APPARANT REASSERTION OF ITS INFLUENCE BY THE HARD-LINE ISLAMIC ELEMENT IN THE KHOMEINI ENTOURAGE. MORE IS BEING HEARD OF RELIGIOUS LEADERS LIKE RAFSANJANI (WHOSE SPEECH AT MOTAHARI'S FUNERAL IN QOM, HIGHLY CRITICAL OF THE LEFT, RECEIVED WIDE PUBLICITY), HEHESHTI, LAHOUTI AND MOFATTEH AND IT IS BEING HINTED THAT THESE FIGURES ARE GAINING INFLUENCE AT THE EXPENSE OF THE WESTERNISED RETURNED EXILES (YAZDI, QOTBZADEH AND CO). THE RENEWED IMPETUS GIVEN TO THE FORMATION OF THE REVOLUTIONARY GUARD, THE VIGOROUS MOBILISATION OF THE MASSES BY THE ISLAMIC REPUBLICAN PARTY IN ORDER TO UPSTAGE THE LEFTISTS ON MAY DAY, THE CONTINUED ACTIVITY OF THE REVOLUTIONARY COURSTS (21 EXECUTIONS ON 8 MAY AND MORE DURING THE WEEK) ARE ALL EVIDENCE OF THIS TREND.
3. IF THIS IS SO, IT IS PROBABLY DUE TO THE ISLAMIC REVOLUTIONARY LEADERSHIP'S FEAR THAT THE REVOLUTION COULD BE TAKEN OVER BY MARXISTS, OR DEGENERATE INTO ANARCHY (WITH THE SAME RESULT). THE GROWING CRITICISM BY LIBERALS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY TRIALS AND THE ARBITRARY BEHAVIOUR OF THE KOMITEHS, COUPLED WITH THE DISSATISFACTION OF THE CHERIKHA AND SIMILAR REVOLUTIONARY GROUPS AT THEIR EXCLUSION FROM INFLUENCE, HAS DRAWN THESE TWO UNLIKELY ALLIES TOGETHER IN OPPOSITION TO THE LEADERSHIP.

CONFIDENTIAL

/ THE FORGHAN

THE FORGHAN ASSASSINATIONS AND THE STRENGTH OF THE LEFTIST TURN OUT ON MAY DAY, MUST HAVE ADDED TO THESE FEARS. THE RELIGIOUS LEADERSHIP IS BELIEVED TO WANT CONSOLIDATION OF THE ISLAMIC REVOLUTION WHICH HAS BEEN ACHIEVED AND IS NOT NECESSARILY IN FAVOUR OF RADICAL SOCIAL CHANGE ONCE THE PREVIOUS REGIME'S APPARATUS HAS BEEN DESTROYED. KHOMEINI IS KNOWN TO HAVE BEEN ANGRY THAT THE ARMY'S DISINTEGRATION IN FEBRUARY ALLOWED ARMS TO FALL INTO THE HANDS OF THE PUBLIC, AND IS PRESUMED TO HAVE LITTLE SYMPATHY FOR THE EXTENSION OF THE REVOLUTION AS DEMANDED BY THE CHERIKHA AND THE MOJAHEDDIN.

4. ON THE LEFT, THERE APPEARS TO BE DISSATISFACTION AT THE LACK OF OPEN GOVERNMENT AMONGST THE YOUNG REVOLUTIONARIES WHO FOUGHT THE ARMY IN FEBRUARY. THE IDENTITY OF THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL REMAINS SECRET AND THE NON-APPEARANCE OF THE LONG-HERALDED DRAFT CONSTITUTION CONTINUES TO FRUSTRATE PUBLIC DEBATE ABOUT THE COUNTRY'S FUTURE (AND THE LEAKED VERSION WITH ITS EMPHASIS ON A UNITARY STATE HAS ALARMED THE KURDS, TURKS AND OTHERS). THE RE-IMPOSITION OF CENSORSHIP, DETENTIONS WITHOUT CHARGE, THE SECRET REVOLUTIONARY TRIBUNALS ALL RECALL THE WORST ASPECTS OF THE PREVIOUS REGIME. THIS IS LEADING TO A RAPPROCHEMENT BETWEEN THE CHERIKHA AND THE MOJAHEDDIN-E KHALQ, TO THE PROLIFERATION OF NEW POLITICAL GROUPINGS (AND NEW PUBLICATIONS, BOTH DAILY AND WEEKLY), AND TO THE GROWING DISSATISFACTION OF ESTABLISHED GROUPS LIKE THE NATIONAL FRONT. BUT NONE OF THESE GROUPINGS AS YET CARRY MUCH WEIGHT IN THE FACE OF THE MASSES ARE STILL READY TO PACK THE STREETS AT THE CALL OF KHOMEINI AND THE ISLAMIC LEADERSHIP.

5. AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND, TURBULENCE SURROUNDS CERTAIN PROMINENT PERSONALITIES. QOTBZADEH, AMBITIOUS, RADICAL AND WIDELY SUSPECTED OF LEFTIST SYMPATHIES IS NOW UNDER HEAVY ATTACK DESPITE HIS REPUTED CLOSENESS TO KHOMEINI. (HIS CRITICS HAVE EVEN INCLUDED KHOMEINI'S GRANDSON.) TALEGHANI, IDOL OF THE MOJAHEDDIN AND WIDELY REGARDED AS THE RELIGIOUS FIGURE WITH THE GREATEST SYMPATHY FOR LIBERAL/PROGRESSIVE POLITICS, CLASHED WITH KHOMEINI OVER THE KOMITEH SYSTEM FOLLOWING THE ARREST BY THE KOMITEHS OF HIS TWO SONS. THEIR RECONCILIATION HAS BEEN VARIOUSLY INTERPRETED. ONE THEORY IS THAT KHOMEINI THEREBY AGREED TO PAY LESS ATTENTION TO

RADICALS LIKE QOTBZADEH AND YAZDI AND TO AGREE TO THE TRANSFER OF POWER FROM THE KOMITEHS TO ELECTED COUNCILS IN WHICH THE LEFT MIGHT BE EXPECTED TO SECURE REPRESENTATION. BUT IT CAN EQUALLY BE ARGUED THAT IT WAS TALEGHANI WHO CONCEDED, IN PRACTICE, THAT IF ORGANISATIONS LIKE THE CHERIKHA AND THE MOJAHEDDIN PREVAILED AGAINST THE KOMITEHS, THIS COULD DESTROY THE ISLAMIC REVOLUTION. SIMILARLY, SHARIAT-MADARI (WHO HAS BEEN MILDLY CRITICAL IN PUBLIC OF THE REVOLUTIONARY TRIBUNALS) AND THE OTHER QOM AYATOLLAHS WHO HAVE TRADITIONALLY BEEN SUSPICIOUS OF KHOMEINI'S DEMAGOGY, SEEM TO BE REFRAINING FROM ROCKING THE BOAT TOO STRONGLY - WHILE AT THE SAME TIME RETAINING THEIR INDEPENDENCE.

6. WHERE DOES ALL THIS LEAVE BAZARGAN'S PREDOMINANTLY LIBERAL AND COMPROMISE GOVERNMENT? THERE ARE CONTINUED RUMOURS OF HIS WANTING TO RESIGN, AND CONTINUED CRITICISM OF THE GOVERNMENT'S INEFFECTIVENESS. THE GOVERNMENT IS LOOKING INCREASINGLY LIKE AN EXECUTIVE PANEL, WHILE THE REAL DECISIONS ARE TAKEN BY THE KHOMEINI ENTOURAGE (THE NEBULOUS REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL). THE GOVERNMENT HAS TWO MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS TO ITS CREDIT: THE SUCCESSFUL HOLDING OF THE REFERENDUM AND THE RESUMPTION OF OIL EXPORTS. SOME PAYMENTS ARE BEING MADE AND IN SOME AREAS ECONOMIC ACTIVITY IS BEGINNING TO REVIVE. PROVIDED BAZARGAN CAN BE PERSUADED TO SOLDIER ON THEREFORE, THIS GOVERNMENT LOOKS MORE DURABLE THAN IT DID A FEW WEEKS AGO. BUT IT HAS NOT MADE MUCH PROGRESS ON THE POLICIES TO WHICH IT IS OSTENSIBLY COMMITTED. IT HAS NOT YET SECURED THE PUBLICATION OF THE DRAFT CONSTITUTION, NOR MADE ANY OTHER PROGRESS ON DEFINING THE COUNTRY'S FUTURE REGIME (THE INITIATIVE ON REGIONAL COUNCILS (MY LETTER OF 26 APRIL TO MUNRO) WAS TAKEN OVER ITS HEAD). THE PROMISED AMNESTY SEEMS LIKELY TO BE A VERY LIMITED ONE. NOR HAS IT YET SUCCEEDED IN RE-ESTABLISHING THE ARMED FORCES (THOUGH SOME PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE), OR THERE IS A LOT TO DO BEFORE THE ECONOMY CAN BE DESCRIBED AS REALLY CONVALESCENT. IT REMAINS A GROUP OF HONOURABLE, WELL-MEANING MEN WHO HAVE ACCEPTED THE OBLIGATION TO TACKLE THE COUNTRY'S DAUNTING MATERIAL AND TECHNICAL PROBLEMS BUT LACK THE AUTHORITY OR THE TEMPERAMENT EITHER TO DO THAT EFFECTIVELY OR TO DEFINE A LONG TERM POLITICAL STRATEGY.

7. HOWEVER, PROVIDED OIL EXPORTS AND REVENUES HOLD UP, THE REGIME (IE LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNMENT TOGETHER) MAY WELL BE ABLE IN THE SHORT TERM TO BUY OFF DISCONTENT ARISING FROM SUCH PROBLEMS, AND THUS GAIN FOR ITSELF TIME TO DEAL WITH THE MAJOR QUESTIONS OF THE FUTURE POLITICAL SHAPE OF THE COUNTRY. WHETHER BAZARGAN IS ABLE TO ADULTERATE SUFFICIENTLY THE FUNDAMENTALISM OF THE ISLAMIC LEADERSHIP, OR, IF NOT, WHETHER THE PUBLIC WILL LONG BE SATISFIED WITH THEIR ISLAMIC PRESCRIPTIONS REMAINS HIGHLY DOUBTFUL. BUT FOR THE TIME BEING KHOMEINI REMAINS VIRTUALLY UNDISPUTED AS THE LEADER OF THE REVOLUTION, AND THE ISLAMIC LEADERSHIP APPEARS TO HAVE RE-ASSERTED ITSELF SUCCESSFULLY.

GRAHAM

DEPARTMENTAL DISTRIBUTION

MED	TRED
CONS D	NAD
CONS EM UNIT	NEWS D
EESD	OID
ES & SD	IPD
EID	MAED
NENAD	EMERGENCY STAFF
SAD	
SED	

ADDITIONAL DISTRIBUTION

TEHRAN SPECIAL