

IMMEDIATE

IRAN: ADVANCE COPIES

X 32

PS
PS/SIR I GILMOUR
PS/MR HURD
PS/PUS
MR J C MOBERLY
HD/MED
HD/FRD
HD/NENAD
HD/UND (2)
HD/OID (2)
HD/DEF DEPT
HD/KAED
HD/ES & SD (2)
HD/CONS D
MISS BROWN
PUSD (2)
NEWS D
RESIDENT CLERK

PS No 10 DOWNING ST
SIR R ARMSTRONG)
ASSESSMENTS STAFF) CABINET
MR LE CHEMINANT) OFFICE
CABINET OFFICE DIO
MR F R BARRATT TREASURY

IMMEDIATE

GR 650

RESTRICTED

FROM TEHRAN 251755Z NOV 79

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 1231 OF 25 NOVEMBER

TO IMMEDIATE CABINET OFFICE (DIO) MODUK (DIA) MODUK (DS11)

CRE5, WASHINGTON, UKMIS NEW YORK

PRIORITY ABUD DHABI, ANKARA, BAGHDAD, BAHRAIN, DOHA, DUBAI,

ISLAMABAD, JEDDA, KABUL, KUWAIT, MOSCOW, TOKYO MUSCAT

NEW DELHI. EEC POSTS.

MY TELNO 1229: SITUATION IN IRAN

1. THERE WAS AN IMPRESSIVE MARCH AT 4 PM TODAY BY THE
CHERIKHAYE FEDAI FROM THE UNIVERSITY TO THE U S EMBASSY.
THEIR APPROACH WAS BLOCKED HOWEVER BY RIVAL MARCHERS MOBILISED
AT 3 PM BY THE CLERGY. THERE WERE NO CLASHES, THOUGH A LEADING
EXTREMIST MULLAH WHO WAS DUE TO ADDRESS THE CROWDS OUTSIDE THE
EMBASSY WAS JOSTLED WHEN HE AND HIS ENTOURAGE TRIED TO PASS THOUGH
THE TIGHTLY-ORGANISED CORDON OF MARSHALS ROUND THE CHERIKHAYE
FEDAI. THE ELMIEH THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL IN QOM HAS CALLED FOR A
FURTHER MARCH TOMORROW, TO MARK THE 7TH DAY OF THE ATTACK ON THE
GRAND MOSQUE IN MECCA, WHICH HAS BEEN ENDORSED BY SEVERAL
OTHER GROUPS INCLUDING THAT OCCUPYING THE U S EMBASSY 2 WHICH
PERSISTS IN ATTRIBUTING THE ATTACK TO 'AMERICAN ELEMENTS'

2. CONGRESSMAN HANSEN SAW THE HOSTAGES THIS MORNING AFTER 2 AND HALF
HOURS NEGOTIATING AT THE EMBASSY GATE (ALTHOUGH HE HAD THOUGHT

HOURS NEGOTIATING AT THE EMBASSY GATE (ALTHOUGH HE HAD THOUGHT ALL ARRANGEMENTS HAD BEEN MADE) AT A PRESS CONFERENCE AFTERWARDS HE SAID HE HAD SPOKEN TO A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF THE HOSTAGES WHOM HE DESCRIBED AS "RELATIVELY COMFORTABLE" ALTHOUGH STILL BOUND, WITHOUT A CHANGE OF CLOTHES, AND BADLY IN NEED OF A BATH. HE SAID HE WOULD NOW RETURN TO THE USA TO MEET FELLOW CONGRESSMEN.

3. SHARIAT-MADARI IS ALLEGED TO HAVE TOLD A SPANISH JOURNALIST THAT IF HE WERE KHOMEINI HE WOULD TELL THE OCCUPIERS TO LEAVE THE EMBASSY AND FREE THE HOSTAGES.

4. THIS MORNING'S LOCAL PAPER CARRIED A REPORT THAT THE NETHERLANDS AMBASSADOR IN TEHRAN HAD CALLED ON HIS NATIONALS TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY IF THEIR PRESENCE WAS NOT ESSEQQQNTIAL. THIS CORRECTLY REFLECTS CURRENT DUTCH ADVICE, THOUGH NO FRESH WARNING HAS BEEN ISSUED. ACCORDING TO THE GERMAN AMBASSADOR, HIS NATIONALS ARE CURRENTLY LEAVING AT THE RATE OF 80 - 100 A DAY.

5. KAYHAN PRINTED A SMALL BUT PROMINENT HEADLINE "THE BRITISH EMBASSY IN TEHRAN REDUCES ITS STAFF BY HALF" THE MAIN TEXT OF THE ARTICLE (ON PAGE 3) READS "THE BRITISH EMBASSY IN TEHRAN HAS DECIDED TO SEND HALF ITS STAFF BACK TO ENGLAND. AN EMBASSY SPOKESMAN HAS SAID THAT THERE IS NO POLITICAL REASON BEHIND THIS, BUT THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN IRAN AND BRITIAN HAVE DROPPED CONSIDERABLY COMPARED WITH LAST YEAR. THE VOLUME OF IRANIAN IMPORTS FROM BRITAIN HAS BEEN REDUCED BY 75 PERCENT AGAINST THE FIGURE OF 1.5 MILLIARD DOLLARS LAST YEAR, AND THE NUMBER OF BRITONS IN IRAN HAS GONE FROM 14,000 TO 300" THIS REFLECTS BRIEFING GIVEN YESTERDAY TO AP, WITH THE WORD "COMMERCIAL" OMITTED BEFORE "RELATIONS" THERE WAS NO ADDITIONAL COMMENT.

6. THE FLOW OF IRANIANS ABROAD CONTINUES. THE CONSULATE IS NOW MAKING APPOINTMENTS FOR 4 JANUARY.

7. HABIBI, THE REVOLUTIKARY COUNCIL SPOKESMAN, LAST NIGHT ANNOUNCED THAT AYATOLLAH KHAMENE'I, THE COUNCIL'S REPRESENTATIVE AT THE DECENCE MINISTRY, WILL ALSO SUPERVISE THE REVOLUTIONARY GUARDS IN PLACE OF LAHOUTI, WHO RESIGNED LAST WEEK. AYATOLLAH MAHDAVI, KANI WILL BE HEAD OF THE ISLAMIC REVOLUTIONARY COURTS.

GRAHAM

CN PARA 4 READ NOT ESSENTIAL.

BT