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FM FCO 081545Z JAN 80
TO IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON
TELEGRAM NUMBER 54 OF 8 JANUARY
INFO IMMEDIATE UKMIS NEW YORK, TEHRAN, BONN, PARIS, UKREP
BRUSSELS
UKMIS TEL NO 50: US/IRAN

1. I AM PERTURBED BY THE POSSIBLE COURSE ON WHICH THE AMERICANS MAY BE HEADING AND EXPECTING THEIR ALLIES TO FOLLOW, IF THE SECOND STAGE SANCTIONS RESOLUTION FAILS.

2. THE OVERRIDING OBJECTIVE REMAINS, AS I SEE IT, TO SECURE THE RELEASE OF THE HOSTAGES. SINCE AN ENTEBBE-STYLE OPERATION IS NOT POSSIBLE, THEIR RELEASE CAN ONLY BE ACHIEVED WHEN SOMEONE WITH THE NECESSARY AUTHORITY IN IRAN ORDERS THEIR RELEASE. ANY ACTION UNDERTAKEN ON BEHALF OF THE HOSTAGES MUST THEREFORE BE JUDGED ACCORDING TO ITS POSSIBLE CONTRIBUTION TO THIS END.

3. IF, AFTER THE DEFEAT OF THE RESOLUTION, THE AMERICANS WERE TO GO FOR ANY BUT THE MOST LIMITED FORM OF MILITARY REPRISAL, THE CONSEQUENCES COULD BE DISASTROUS. A LARGE BODY OF WORLD OPINION WOULD DRAW A COMPARISON WITH THE RUSSIAN MILITARY ACTION IN AFGHANISTAN. MANY COUNTRIES, PARTICULARLY IN THE GULF, WOULD CONSIDER MILITARY MEASURES PREMATURE AND EXCESSIVE AND WOULD NO LONGER BE ABLE TO SUPPORT THE AMERICAN CASE. OPINION IN IRAN WOULD TEND TO RALLY ROUND THE EXTREMISTS AND THE HOSTAGES THEMSELVES MIGHT WELL BE ENDANGERED.
ENDANGERED.

4. IF ON THE OTHER HAND THE AMERICANS ASKED THEIR ALLIES TO APPLY THE MEASURES IN THE RESOLUTION VOLUNTARILY IN STEAD OF MANDATORILY THEN IT WOULD BE HARD, IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE, FOR US TO DO MUCH BEYOND WHAT WE ARE ALREADY DOING ON A VOLUNTARY BASIS. MOREOVER WE SHOULD NEED TO CONSULT CLOSELY WITH THE NINE ON ANY SUCH PROPOSALS, PARTICULARLY A CIVIL TRADE BOYCOTT.

5. YOU SHOULD THEREFORE NOW MAKE A FURTHER APPROACH TO FIND OUT

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HOW AMERICAN THINKING IS DEVELOPING. IF THEY ARE DETERMINED TO PUSH FOR A VOTE ON FRIDAY, THEY HAVE PRESUMABLY CONSIDERED WHAT THEY ARE GOING TO DO IF THE RESOLUTION FAILS. YOU SHOULD DRAW ON THE ABOVE TO EXPLAIN WHY WE FEAR THAT A MILITARY RESPONSE WOULD NOT BE EFFECTIVE OVER RELEASING THE HOSTAGES, AND REPEAT OUR DIFFICULTIES OVER VOLUNTARY AS OPPOSED TO MANDATORY APPLICATION OF SANCTIONS. YOU SHOULD SAY THAT WE SHOULD LIKE TO BE CONSULTED BEFORE THE AMERICANS MOVE ON TO EITHER OF THE ALTERNATIVES ABOVE. FOR INSTANCE, SERIOUS CONSIDERATION SHOULD PERHAPS BE GIVEN TO WHETHER AN AMERICAN EMBARGO ON FOOD EXPORTS (LY TEL NO 1990) MIGHT NOT BE EFFECTIVE. THIS WOULD NOT HAVE A DRAMATIC EFFECT IN TEHRAN (THE IRANIANS HAVE BEEN EXPECTING IT) BUT IT MIGHT BE EFFECTIVE IN GRADUALLY INTENSIFYING THE PRESSURE ON IRAN, PARTICULARLY IF THE US MEASURES ALREADY ANNOUNCED AGAINST THE SOVIET UNION MAKE IT HARD FOR IRAN TO GET HELP FROM THAT QUARTER. THERE ARE ALSO THE VARIOUS SUGGESTIONS MADE BY THE EEC AMBASSADORS IN TEHRAN AND BY SIR J CRAHAM PERSONALLY.

CARRINGTON

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