

PS
 PS/SIR I GILMOUR
 B/MR HURD
 PS/PUS
 SIR A DUFF *J. GRAHAM*
~~SIR I PARSONS~~ *MR RUSSELL*
 MR J C MOBERLY
~~MR DEATHY~~
 HD/MED
 HD/NENAD
 HD/UND (2)
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~~RESIDENT CLERK~~

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 SIR J HUNT)
 ASSESSMENTS STAFF) CABINET
 MR LE CHEMINANT) OFFICE
 DR J THOMPSON)
 CABINET OFFICE DIO
 MR F R BARRATT TREASURY

HA/POD (2)
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HA/COO
HA/ASD Apollo House

CONFIDENTIAL
 FROM TEHRAN 061035Z NOV 79
 TO IMMEDIATE FCO
 TELEGRAM NUMBER 1082 OF 06 NOVEMBER

Prmie Amiker

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Purl

6.11.79

TO MODUK SIC AZB/UZA/UZG .
 INFO CABINET OFFICE (CIO) . PUSD. MODUK (DS14) . MODUK (DS10)

MY TELEGRAM NO 1081: OCCUPATION OF THE EMBASSY

1. AS REPORTED TO THE DEPARTMENT BY TELEPHONE, THE EMBASSY COMPOUND WAS ATTACKED AT 1740 LAST NIGHT. ARMED INTRUDERS CAME OVER THE WALL IN SEVERAL PLACES AND RAPIDLY OCCUPIED THE HOUSES OF THE STAFF. THEY FORCED THEIR WAY INTO THE CHANCERY BUILDING THROUGH A FIRST FLOOR WINDOW AND TOOK POSSESSION OF THE BUILDING.

2. THE INTRUDERS WERE A COMPOSITE GROUP OF " MOSLEM STUDENTS FOLLOWING THE LEADERSHIP OF THE IMAM " (THE BODY CURRENTLY OCCUPYING THE AMERICAN EMBASSY), REVOLUTIONARY GUARDS AND KOMITEH GUARDS WHO CLAIMED TO BE OCCUPYING IT FOR OUR PROTECTION. THE ATTACK WAS WELL CONCERTED. MANY OF THE KOMITEH GUARDS INVOLVED HAD BEEN ASSISTING THE POLICE WHO WERE GUARDING US DURING THE DAY.

3. THE INTRUDERS DEMANDED ACCESS TO THE SECURE ZONE, SAYING THAT THEY WISHED TO SCRUTINIZE OUR DOCUMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM. AFTER THEY HAD ESTABLISHED THAT THERE WERE NO PLOTS

3. THE INTRUDERS DEMANDED ACCESS TO THE SECURE ZONE, SAYING THAT THEY WISHED TO SCRUTINIZE OUR DOCUMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM. AFTER THEY HAD ESTABLISHED THAT THERE WERE NO PLOTS BEING MOUNTED FROM THE EMBASSY (GP UNDEC), WE SHOULD NO DOUBT BE ALLOWED TO GO FREE. THEY CLAIMED THAT THIS WAS IN CONFORMITY WITH THE LINE LAID DOWN BY THE IMAM. AFTER PROLONGED NEGOTIATIONS, DURING WHICH THE TWO MEMBERS OF THE STAFF WHO WERE INSIDE THE SECURE ZONE AND INSTRUCTED THEM TO COME OUT AFTER CARRYING OUT THE NECESSARY DESTRUCTION OF OUR CYPHERS. THE DEFENCE SECTION WAS NOT ENTERED. WE THEN ALLOWED THE INTRUDERS TO INSPECT THE COMMUNICATIONS OFFICES, THE CHANCERY REGISTRY, AND THE STRONG ROOM, ALTHOUGH WE SUCCEEDED IN RE- LOCKING THE STRONG ROOM IMMEDIATE AFTER THE VISUAL INSPECTION. THE SUB-REGISTRY WAS NOT ENTERED. THUS NO SERIOUS BREACH OF SECURITY OCCURRED. THE CONFIDENTIAL AREA WAS THEN COMPLETELY EVACUATED AND WE WENT UNDER ESCORT TO MY HOUSE. THE WIVES AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE STAFF HAD BEEN PERMITTED TO CONGREGATE THERE AT OUR REQUEST UNDER SUPERVISION OF THE INTRUDERS. THE INTRUDERS TRIED TO PREVENT US USING TELEPHONES DURING THIS PERIOD BUT WE MANAGED TO GET CERTAIN MESSAGES OUT TO GOLHAK AND TO JOURNALISTS AND OTHERS WHO HAD BEEN ALLOWED INTO THE FERDOWSI COMPOUND.

4. THE FIRST SECRETARY (COMMERCIAL) AT GOLHAK SUCCEEDED IN DELIVERING A TELEPHONED PROTEST TO THE DUTY OFFICER IN THE

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS IN THE GENERAL TERMS OF THE COREU TELEGRAM REPORTED BY TELEPHONE FROM THE DEPARTMENT.

ALSO THE STAFF IN GOLHAK REMAINED IN ACTIVE COMMUNICATION WITH OTHER EMBASSIES ABOUT METHODS OF NEGOTIATING OUR RELEASE.

OFFERS OF HELP OVER COMMUNICATIONS WERE MADE BY THE NEW ZEALAND DANISH AND AUSTRALIAN EMBASSIES. THE GERMAN AMBASSADOR REPORTED THAT HE HAD SPOKEN TO TABATABAIE (DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN) WHO HAD SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS POWERLESS TO HELP. A MEMBER OF THE STAFF, WHO WAS LATER CONFINED IN FERDOWSI, ALSO MANAGED, BEFORE ENTERING THE COMPOUND, TO CONTACT AYATOLLAH NOURI AND THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE.

5. AT ABOUT 2230, WHILE WE WERE TRYING TO NEGOTIATE THE RETURN OF THE STAFF TO THEIR HOUSES (THE INTRUDERS HAD MADE A LIST OF THE STAFF AND WERE AT ONE STAGE INTENDING NOT TO ALLOW ANYONE OUT OF MY HOUSE), WE THEN CONDUCTED A JOINT INSPECTION OF THE BUILDING, AFTER WHICH THEY ASKED US TO AGREE A JOINT STATEMENT (TEXT BY BAG), WHICH CONFIRMED THAT THE EMBASSY HAD BEEN HANDED BACK AND THAT THE STAFF WERE WELL, WHILE ALSO MENTIONING THE ALLEGED MOTIVES OF THE INTRUDERS. (IN FACT, THEY LEFT BY BUS IMMEDIATELY AFTER EVACUATING THE OFFICES THOUGH THEY SAID THEY

ALLEGED MOTIVES OF THE INTRUDERS. (IN FACT, THEY LEFT BY BUS IMMEDIATELY AFTER EVACUATING THE OFFICES THOUGH THEY SAID THEY WERE PATROLLING OUTSIDE THE COMPOUND WALL).

6. THE INTRUDERS WERE IN FREQUENT DISPUTE AMONG THEMSELVES ABOUT THE LINE TO BE FOLLOWED. ONE GROUP CLEARLY WANTED TO STEAL OUR FILES, PHOTOGRAPH OUR COMMUNICATIONS AND ESTABLISH NEFARIOUS MOTIVES FOR OUR ACTIVITY HERE. EQUALLY, IT WAS CONTINUALLY REITERATED THAT THE INTRUDERS WERE PROTECTING US AGAINST COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARIES AND/OR LEFTISTS. THIS, AND THE EVIDENTLY CONCERTED NATURE OF THE ATTACK, HAS LED US TO SPECULATE THAT FOLLOWING THE ACTION OF THE MOSLEM STUDENT GROUP AGAINST THE US EMBASSY (THIS ELEMENT WAS THE MOST HOSTILE AMONGST OUR INTRUDERS), THE REVOLUTIONARY GUARDS INSISTED ON A JOINT OPERATION HERE. THE MOTIVE FOR WITHDRAWAL IS UNCLEAR. IT WAS VERY HARD TO GET THE INTRUDERS TO DISCUSS THEIR RESPECTIVE ROLES AND MOTIVES. IT IS LIKELY THAT THE RELIGIOUS LEADERSHIP DECIDED THAT IT WAS GOING TOO FAR TO OCCUPY OUR EMBASSY GIVEN THE PROBLEMS THAT THE SEIZURE OF THE US EMBASSY IS NOW CAUSING (AND THERE WAS NO REASON FOR TAKING BRITISH HOSTAGES). THIS AND THE STATEMENT BY AHMAD KHOMEINI (MY TUR) MAY HAVE LED TO ORDERS TO THE REVOLUTIONARY GUARDS TO HAND BACK THE PREMISES AND EASE OUT THE MOSLEM STUDENTS - THEY MAY HAVE BEEN INTENDING THE LATTER IN ANY CASE AFTER THE AGREED FORCING AND INSPECTION OF OUR PREMISES.

AN IRANIAN JOURNALIST ASKED THE ' ' STUDENTS' ' TO SHOW THIER STUDENT'S IDENTITY CARDS BUT THEY COULD NOT PRODUCE EVEN ONE EXCLAMATION MARK.

7. I AM DELIVERING A PROTEST NOTE TO THE MFA AT 12.30 TODAY.

8. THROUGHOUT THE EPISODE, ALTHOUGH THERE WERE THREATS TO USE FORCE TO OBLIGE US TO OPEN DOORS, NO PERSONAL VIOLENCE WAS OFFERED TO ANY MEMBERS OF THE STAFF AND THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN WERE GIVEN DUE COURTESY. UNFORTUNATELY, THEFTS OF INDIVIDUALS' PROPERTY ARE NOW COMING TO LIGHT FROM CERTAIN OF THE HOUSES. WE ARE PURSUING THIS

WYATT

IMMEDIATE