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FM WASHINGTON 052325Z NOV 79

TO IMMEDIATE F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 3551 OF 5 NOVEMBER 1979

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Rumi Amster

SJP Duty Clerk
H MODRA
6.11.79

MY TELNO 3548

TEHRAN EMBASSIES

1. FOLLOWING FURTHER POINTS CAME UP IN TALK WITH NEWSOM WHO SAID THAT WARREN CHRISTOPHER HAD ASKED HIM TO GO OVER THE GROUND WITH US AND TO MAINTAIN CLOSE CONTACT.
2. HE SAID THAT LAINGEN HAD REFRAINED FROM PRESSURIZING YAZDI TODAY, HAVING FOUND THAT BY THE END OF YESTERDAY YAZDI WAS GETTING TESTY. THERE HAD ONLY BEEN TWO MEETINGS TODAY. YAZDI HAD SOUGHT TO REASSURE LAINGEN ABOUT THE ULTIMATE SATISFACTORY OUTCOME, BUT THE AMERICAN IMPRESSION WAS THAT THE INCIDENT HAD PRECIPITATED AN EVEN GREATER STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE DIFFERENT CENTRES OF AUTHORITY WITHIN IRAN. YAZDI AND BARZAGAN APPEARED TO BE IN NO POSITION TO DO ANYTHING AND THIS IMPRESSION HAD BEEN CONFIRMED WHEN THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAD SUMMONED THE IRANIAN CHARGE D'AFFAIRES HERE WHOSE WHOLE MESSAGE HAD BEEN THAT THE AMERICANS SHOULD SEEK WAYS OF STRENGTHENING YAZDI'S HAND WITH QOM. YAZDI HAD BEEN ARMED WITH ONE OFFICIAL MESSAGE FROM VANCE (ALSO TELEPHONED TO LAINGEN) TO THE EFFECT THAT THE AMERICANS WERE AWARE THAT KHOMEINI'S SON WAS IN THE U S COMPOUND AND THAT LAINGEN WOULD BE WILLING TO SPEAK TO HIM IF IT WOULD HELP.
3. DESPITE THE REASONABLY POSITIVE RESPONSES THEY HAD RECEIVED FROM OTHER GOVERNMENTS THEY HAD APPROACHED ABOUT CONCERTED DIPLOMATIC ACTION, THE AMERICANS HAD CONCLUDED THAT AS FAR AS THEIR PROBLEM WAS CONCERNED NOT MUCH HEADWAY COULD BE MADE UNTIL THEY WERE ABLE TO CONTACT THE RELIGIOUS AUTHORITIES IN QOM. HENCE THE PROPOSAL TO THE PRESIDENT (MY TELEGRAM UNDER REFERENCE). NEWSOM MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE AMERICANS HAVE NOT BEEN PRESENTED WITH ANY FORMAL REQUEST TO HAND OVER THE SHAH, WHICH COULD NOT BE DISCUSSED SINCE THERE WAS NO EXTRADITION TREATY.
4. A BULLETIN ON THE SHAH'S HEALTH WAS TO BE ISSUED BY THE NEW YORK HOSPITAL TODAY WHICH WOULD MAKE IT CLEAR THAT HE WOULD NEED TO REMAIN IN HOSPITAL FOR AT LEAST 4 TO 5 WEEKS. (HE IS APPARENTLY SUFFERING FROM A DIFFICULT GALL BLADDER PROBLEM AS WELL AS A CANCEROUS CONDITION IN THE NECK - IT IS NOT NECESSARILY TERMINAL BUT IS CERTAINLY SERIOUS).

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5. ROBINSON GAVE NEWSOM THE INFORMATION IN FCC TELNO 461 TO BONN, ADDING THAT FOR THE MOMENT OUR COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE EMBASSY WERE CUT BUT THAT IF THEY WERE RESTORED, WE WOULD BE HAPPY TO PASS CONFIDENTIAL MESSAGES FOR THE AMERICANS IF THEY CONSIDERED IT USEFUL.

6. NEWSOM SAID THAT THE AMERICANS HAD IDENTIFIED A NUMBER OF SUBJECTS WHICH THEY KNEW TO BE TROUBLING THE IRANIANS IN THEIR RELATIONS WITH THE U S WHICH WOULD HAVE TO BE ADDRESSED:

(I) THE PRESENCE OF THE SHAH. HERE THE AMERICANS COULD ONLY SEEK TO CONVINCE THE IRANIANS OF THE GENUINE NATURE OF THE SHAH'S MEDICAL PROBLEM WITHOUT GIVING ANY COMMITMENT ABOUT THE LENGTH OF HIS PROJECTED STAY IN THE U S. A FURTHER ASPECT WAS THAT THE IRANIANS FIRMLY BELIEVED THAT THE SHAH HAD A NUMBER OF ASSETS IN THE U S & THE AMERICANS HAD NO INFORMATION ON THIS AND U S BANKERS HAD ADVISED THAT, EVEN IF IT WERE TRUE, THE REGISTRATION OF ANY SUCH ASSETS WOULD BE AT LEAST TWO OR THREE TIMES REMOVED FROM THE SHAH'S OWN NAME.

(II) U S INVOLVEMENT IN KURDUSTAN. HERE THE AMERICANS COULD GIVE THE IRANIANS CATEGORICAL ASSURANCE.

(III) U S MEDIA TREATMENT OF THE IRANIAN REVOLUTION. ON THIS THE AMERICANS COULD ONLY HOPE TO CONTINUE THE SLOW EDUCATION OF THE IRANIANS ABOUT THEIR LACK OF CONTROL OVER THE U S MEDIA.

(IV) SOME LINGERING MYTHS ABOUT OUTSTANDING PROBLEMS IN THE MILITARY RELATIONSHIP. HERE THE PROBLEM WAS THAT SUSPICIONS AND MISUNDERSTANDINGS SURVIVED AT HIGH LEVEL EVEN WHEN THEY HAD BEEN RESOLVED AT WORKING LEVEL. THE AMERICANS COULD CONTINUE TO WORK ON IT.

7. ROBINSON ASKED WHAT LONGER TERM THOUGHT THE AMERICANS HAD GIVEN TO MAINTAINING THEIR EMBASSY IN TEHRAN. NEWSOM SAID THAT AT A MEETING TODAY ATTENDED BY BROWN, BRZEZINSKI, CHRISTOPHER, AND ADMIRAL TURNER, IT HAD BEEN CONCLUDED THAT THE AMERICANS SHOULD MAINTAIN AN EMBASSY POSSIBLY WITH REDUCED STAFF. IRAN WAS STILL STILL SO IMPORTANT A COUNTRY THAT IF THE GOVERNMENT THERE MAINTAINED SOME KIND OF WRIT AND COOPERATION WAS STILL POSSIBLE, THE EMBASSY SHOULD REMAIN WHILE RECOGNISING THAT SO LONG AS THE SHAH REMAINED IN THE U S NORMAL RELATIONS WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT.

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8. FINALLY NEWSOM ASKED WHAT WE HAD BEEN DOING WITH BAKHTIAR WHICH COULD HAVE PROVOKED SUCH A VIOLENT REACTION AGAINST US. CLEMENT (IRAN COUNTRY OFFICER IN THE STATE DEPARTMENT) WHO WAS PRESENT SAID THAT THE AMERICANS HAD INFORMATION THAT BAKHTIAR HAD BEEN IN LONDON THOUGH NOT RECENTLY. ROBINSON DREW ATTENTION TO THE EMBASSY'S DENIAL THAT BAKHTIAR WAS IN THE UK AND SAID THAT HE HAD NO KNOWLEDGE OF OTHER CONTACTS BETWEEN HMG AND BAKHTIAR.

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TO IMMEDIATE F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 3548 OF 5 NOVEMBER 1979

Prime Minister ②

57P Duty Clerk

H MODRA

6.11.79

TEHRAN EMBASSIES

1. NEWSOM, STATE DEPARTMENT, ASKED ROBINSON TO CALL THIS AFTERNOON. ON ARRIVAL HE SAID THAT AFP HAD JUST REPORTED THE HANDING BACK OF THE BRITISH EMBASSY.
2. THE U S CHARGE WAS STILL IN THE IRANIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY WITH TWO MEMBERS OF HIS STAFF, AND TOGETHER THEY WERE MAINTAINING A 24 HOUR TELEPHONE CONTACT WITH THE STATE DEPARTMENT. NEWSOM SAID THAT IF THERE WAS ANY MESSAGE WHICH WE WANTED PASSED THROUGH THIS CHANNEL THE AMERICANS WOULD BE HAPPY TO DO SO. NEWSOM SAID THAT HE THOUGHT IT OTHERWISE WISER THAT, EVEN IF OUR PEOPLE IN TEHRAN WERE FREE AND ABLE TO DO SO, WE SHOULD NOT MAKE CONTACT WITH THE U S CHARGE IN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, SINCE THIS MIGHT BE OPEN TO MIS-INTERPRETATION BY THE IRANIANS. THE DANISH AMBASSADOR HAD BROUGHT SUPPLIES TO THE U S CHARGE AND HIS COLLEAGUES, AND COULD BE A LOW PROFILE CONTACT IF ONE WAS NEEDED. CONTACTS BETWEEN THE AMERICANS AND OURSELVES WERE BEST CONTINUED OUTSIDE TEHRAN FOR THE MOMENT.
3. TO THE CAPITALS APPROACHED DURING THE NIGHT BY THE AMERICANS (MY TELNO 3534) THE AMERICANS HAD ADDED MADRID AND TOKYO. ALL HAD REPLIED POSITIVELY BUT WITH VARIOUS QUALIFICATIONS. THE TURKISH AMBASSADOR MIGHT BE ABLE TO GET THROUGH TO THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS IN QOM.
4. A RECOMMENDATION HAD BEEN SUBMITTED TO PRESIDENT CARTER THAT HE SHOULD APPROACH TWO PROMINENT AMERICAN CITIZENS, WHO HAD SHOWN THEMSELVES SYMPATHETIC IN THE PAST WITH THE IRANIAN REVOLUTION, WITH A VIEW TO THEIR BEING SENT AS EMISSARIES TO QOM TO SEE THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS NOTABLY BEHESHTI. IT WAS HOPED THAT IF CARTER APPROVED OF THIS OPERATION, IT COULD BE PRESENTED TO YAZDI AS REASONABLE GROUNDS FOR HIM INSISTING ON THE REMOVAL OF THE STUDENT OCCUPANTS OF THE EMBASSY. NEWSOM TOLD US THIS IN CONFIDENCE, IN CASE WE WERE CONTEMPLATING SOME SIMILAR OPERATION, SO THAT WE DID NOT CROSS WIRES. THE AMERICAN WOULD OFFER A CONTINUING DIALOGUE ARISING OUT

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OF THE VISIT OF THE TWO EMISSARIES, BUT IT HAD BEEN MADE CLEAR BOTH TO YAZDI AND TO THE IRANIAN CHARGE HERE THAT THERE COULD BE NO QUESTION OF A DIALOGUE ABOUT IMPROVING RELATIONS SO LONG AS THERE WERE AMERICAN HOSTAGES: AND THAT U S POLICY OF ADMITTING PEOPLE INTO THE COUNTRY FOR HUMANITARIAN PURPOSES AND THE RETURN OF THE SHAH TO IRAN WERE NOT ISSUES THEY WERE PREPARED TO DISCUSS.

5. IT WOULD BE HELPFUL IF WE COULD TELL THE AMERICANS IF/WHEN WE HAVE SECURE COMMUNICATIONS WITH TEHRAN, IN CASE THEY NEVERTHELESS WISH TO GET A CLASSIFIED MESSAGE TO THEIR CHARGE.

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