

IMMEDIATE

*(Departmental)*

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TELEGRAM NUMBER 1213 OF 22 NOVEMBER  
 INFO IMMEDIATE CABINET OFFICE (DIO), MODUK (DI4 AND DS11), CRES,  
 WASHINGTON, UKMIS NEW YORK.  
 INFO PRIORITY ABU DHABI, ANKARA, BAGHDAD, BAHRAIN, DOHA, DUBAI,  
 ISLAMABAD, JEDDA, KABUL, KUWAIT, MOSCOW, TOKYO, MUSCAT,  
 NEW DELHI, EEC POSTS.

SITUATION IN IRAN.

1. SINCE MY TELNO 1135 I HAVE NOT SENT A GENERAL ASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION. ON THE ONE HAND WE HAVE BEEN SENDING DAILY SITREPS AND IRAN IS FULLY COVERED IN THE NEWS, AND ON THE OTHER THE SITUATION REMAINS SO UNPREDICTABLE THAT I HAVE LITTLE OR NOTHING TO ADD TO MY EARLIER TELEGRAM. NEVERTHELESS I HAVE THE FEELING THAT THE SITUATION HAS WORSEMED IN THE LAST 48 HOURS AS THE RESULT OF THE SAILING OF THE KITTYHAWK, THE STATEMENT IN WASHINGTON TELEGRAM 3834 TO YOU, AS THE INCIDENT IN MECCA AND KHOMEINI'S WICKED STATEMENT ABOUT IT YESTERDAY (ONLY EXPLICABLE BY INSENSATE HOSTILITY AND THE FACT THAT THE FIRST

EXPLICABLE BY INSENSATE HOSTILITY AND THE FACT THAT THE FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE INCIDENT CAME FROM WASHINGTON). THE TOWN IS FULL OF RUMOURS OF UNCERTAIN RELIABILITY. WHILE NORMAL WORK APPEARS TO BE GOING ON BOTH IN THE MINISTRIES AND EVEN ON SOME BUILDING SITES (IN FACT MORE THERE THAN I HAVE SEEN FOR SOME TIME) WE SEEM TO BE MORE DELICATELY POISED THAN WE HAVE BEEN SO THAT ALMOST ANY UNTOWARD INCIDENT E.G. THE ARREST OF DEMONSTRATORS IN LONDON, SOME FURTHER MOVE IN THE US DICTATED BY PUBLIC FEELING THERE, OR, AS SIR A PARSONS HAD MENTIONED, A SLANGING MATCH IN THE UN, COULD TIP THE BALANCE AND PRODUCE MOB VIOLENCE EITHER AGAINST SPECIFIC TARGETS OR AGAINST FOREIGNERS IN GENERAL. AS I HAVE SAID IN ANOTHER TELEGRAM, YOU DO NOT NEED A LARGE MOB TO MAKE THING VERY DIFFICULT.

2. WE HAVE MADE THE POINT IN THE AGREED COMMUNICATION FROM THE EEC AMABSSADORS (MY TELNO 1182 NOT TO ALL) THAT THE TWO PARTIES TO THE DISPUTE, THE IRANIANS AND THE US, ARE SPEAKING TO EACH OTHER ON DIFFERENT PLANES, THE IRANIANS MOTIVATED BY EMOTION AND REVOLUTIONARY RELIGIOUS FERVOUR AND THE AMERICANS WHILE THE REST OF THE WORLD STANDS ON LEGAL GROUNDS WHICH REVOLUTIONARY IRAN DOES NOT RECOGNISE. THERE ARE SOME IN THE IRANIAN HIERARCHY AND GOVERNMENT, INCLUDING I THINK BANI SADR, WHO ARE AWARE OF THE DANGEROUS SITUATION INTO WHICH KHOMEINI AND HIS CONFIDANTS HAVE LET THE COUNTRY AND WHO ARE LOOKING FOR A WAY OUT. THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR WHO RETURNED TWO DAYS AGO, SAW BANI SADR YESTERDAY ON INSTRUCTIONS AND SPOKE VERY FIRMLY OF THE TOTAL UNACCEPTABILITY OF THE IRANIAN POSITION. HE RECEIVED THE STANDARD RESPONSE, BUT BANI SADR ADDED THAT HE RECOGNISED THAT PRESIDENT CARTER AND THE US GOVERNMENT ALSO HAD A PROBLEM WITH PUBLIC OPINION AND IF ONLY THEY COULD BRING THEMSELVES TO SAY THAT THEY RECOGNISED THAT THE SHAH WAS REGARDED AS A CRIMINAL BY THE IRANIAN PEOPLE, THOUGH HE WAS NOT EXPLICIT ON THIS, THE PROBLEM COULD BE SETTLED. THERE WAS NO MENTION OF EXTRADITION OR HANDING THE SHAH OVER.

3. MY FEAR IS THAT THINGS MAY HAVE NOW GONE TOO FAR FOR A SOLUTION ON THESE LINES, EVEN IF THE US FELT IT POSSIBLE TO MAKE A STATEMENT LIKE THAT, AND THAT IT MUST BE DOUBTFUL WHETHER BANI SADR COULD FULFIL ANY UNDERTAKING HE MIGHT GIVE. HE HAS FAILED TO ACHIEVE THE DAILY VISITS BY AMBASSADORS TO THE HOSTAGES; AND THE RELEASE OF THE WOMEN AND THE BLACKS TOOK SEVERAL DAYS TO ACHIEVE AND EVEN THEN HAS NOT BEEN COMPLETELY CARRIED OUT. YESTERDAY'S STATEMENT FROM QOM ABOUT THE MECCA INCIDENT, MOREOVER, MUST PUT IN DOUBT WHETHER KHOMEINI HAS ANY INTEREST IN A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT. WE HAVE TO RECOGNISE RATHER THAT PROBABLY FOR KHOMEINI

SETTLEMENT. WE HAVE TO RECOGNISE RATHER THAT PROBABLY FOR KHOMEINI AND CERTAINLY FOR MANY IRANIANS THE FACT THAT IRAN FINDS ITSELF AT THE CENTRE OF AN INTERNATIONAL STORM IS A CAUSE ALMOST OF PRIDE. IT WOULD BE NO EXAGGERATION TO SAY THAT, WITH THE CURRENT EMPHASIS ON MARTYRDOM, SOME IRANIAN OPINION EVEN SEEMS TO BE WELCOMING THE POSSIBILITY, OF WHICH THE LOCAL PRESS INCREASINGLY TALKS, THAT IRAN MIGHT BE THE OCCASION FOR WAR BETWEEN THE US AND THE SOVIET UNION.

4. AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND, THE COMMUNITY AMBASSADORS DISCUSSED THIS MORNING BOTH THE APPROACH TO BANI SADR, OUR MEETING WITH WHOM IS NOW FIXED FOR 11 A.M. ON SATURDAY 24 NOVEMBER, AND THE INSTRUCTIONS RECEIVED BY THE DANISH AMBASSADOR YESTERDAY TO WARN HIS COMMUNITY THAT THE SITUATION COULD GET OUT OF HAND AT ANY MOMENT, WITH OR WITHOUT WARNING, AND THAT IT WAS UNLIKELY IN THAT EVENT THAT ANY ARRANGEMENTS FOR EVACUATION WOULD BE POSSIBLE. THE DANISH AMBASSADOR FEELS BOUND BY HIS INSTRUCTIONS AND WILL SPEAK TO HIS COMMUNITY TO-DAY. THE FRG AMBASSADOR WILL SAY NO MORE TO HIS COMMUNITY, BUT BELIEVES THAT THE MESSAGE TO THE DANES WILL QUICKLY REACH THEM AND HAVE ITS EFFECT. THE DUTCH AMBASSADOR WILL SPEAK IN THE SAME TERMS AS THE DANES. THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR FEELS STRONGLY THAT ADVICE OF THIS KIND WILL NOT IMPRESS THE IRANIANS, WILL BE INEFFECTIVE FROM A SECURITY POINT OF VIEW, AND COULD PRECIPITATE THE XENOPHOBIC REACTION WHICH WE HOPE TO AVOID, BUT ACCEPTS, I THINK, THAT SOME COMMUNITIES MAY BE MORE AT RISK THAN OTHERS. HE IS RIGHT THAT AS A GESTURE, THINNING OUT IS INEFFECTIVE. I BELIEVE HOWEVER THAT SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS WARRANT A PRUDENT THINNING OUT, PREFERABLY PRESENTED IN AS ROUTINE TERMS AS POSSIBLE SO AS TO PREVENT DIFFICULTIES BEING MADE BOTH FOR THOSE WHO LEAVE AND THOSE WHO STAY.

5. OUR OWN COMMUNITY IS EFFECTIVELY DOWN TO THE HARD CORE. THERE ARE VIRTUALLY NO DEPENDANTS OUTSIDE THE EMBASSY AND THE BRITISH COUNCIL, AND I DOUBT IF ANY DECIDED TO LEAVE AFTER MY LAST MESSAGE TO THEM. A RUN-DOWN IN THE EMBASSY WILL HAVE AN EFFECT ON THEM, BUT IT IS DIFFICULT TO FORECAST HOW MUCH. I PROPOSE TO SEE THEM IN THE COURSE OF THE NEXT TWO DAYS TO TELL THEM OF THE RUN-DOWN IN SUITABLE TERMS AND TO UNDERLINE ONCE AGAIN THAT THE SITUATION IS VERY DELICATE, AND THAT SHOULD IT GO WRONG WE MIGHT WELL NOT BE ABLE TO HELP THEM, SO THAT THEY SHOULD THINK VERY SERIOUSLY ABOUT THEIR POSITION.

6. I AM GIVING THIS TELEGRAM A WIDE REPETITIONS BUT SHOULD BE GRATEFUL IF POSTS TO WHICH IT IS REPEATED WOULD

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NOT VOLUNTEER MY VIEWS TOO FREELY AND IN ANY CASE NOT QUOTE MY  
COMMENTS ON THE BRITISH COMMUNITY OR STAFFING.  
CCN..PARA 1 EVEN ON SOME BUILDING SITES..

GRAHAM

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