

IRAN: ADVANCE COPIES

*JR*

PS  
PS/SIR I GILMOUR  
PS/MR HURD  
PS/PUS  
MR J C MOBERLY  
LORD BRIDGES  
HD/MED  
HD/FRD  
HD/NENAD  
HD/UND (2)  
HD/OID (2)  
HD/DEF DEPT  
  
HD/ES & SD (2)

PS NO 10 DOWNING ST ✓  
SIR R ARMSTRONG )  
ASSESSMENTS STAFF ) CABINET  
MR R WADE GERY ) OFFICE  
MR LE CHEMINANT )  
MR P G FOWLER (217)  
CABINET OFFICE DIO  
MR F R BARRATT TREASURY

MISS BROWN  
PUSD (2)  
NEWS DEPT  
~~RESIDENT CLERK~~

IMMEDIATE

ADVANCE COPY

GR 670

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CONFIDENTIAL  
FM TEHRAN 201315Z DEC  
TO IMMEDIATE FCO  
TELEGRAM NUMBER 1375 OF 20 DEC 79  
INFO IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON  
INFO PRIORITY EEC POSTS.

MY TELNO 1364 : US EMBASSY, TEHRAN.

1. THERE DOES SEEM TO HAVE BEEN A CHANGE OF MOOD HERE, THOUGH IT IS DIFFICULT TO DATE IT. KHOMEINI'S PRESS INTERVIEW (MY TELNO 1361) ON SUNDAY AFTERNOON (16 DEC) WAS MARKEDLY STIFFER THAN THE STATEMENTS BEING MADE BY QOTBZADEH AT THAT TIME, THOUGH NOT INCONSISTENT WITH THEM. THE STATEMENT ISSUED BY THE "STUDENTS" ON THE MORNING OF 18 DECEMBER, HOWEVER, (PARA 5 OF MY TELNO 1355) WAS, AS I COMMENTED, MUCH HARDER IN TONE AND KHOMEINI'S STATEMENT TO THE DISABLED THAT SAME MORNING (MY TUR) SHOWED NO FLEXIBILITY, NOTABLY IN THE RENEWED INSISTENCE ON THE RETURN OF THE SHAH.

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QOTBZADEH, SPEAKING AFTER A MEETING OF THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL THE NIGHT BEFORE KHOMEINI (IE ON 17 DEC) CONTINUED TO TALK ABOUT AN ENQUIRY AS OPPOSED TO A TRIAL: AND RAFSANJANI, SUPERVISOR OF THE MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR AND A MEMBER OF THE RC, SAID IN THE COURSE OF AN INTERVIEW ON 17 DECEMBER, "WHAT IS IMPORTANT FOR US IS THE INVESTIGATION OF US CRIMES IN IRAN.... WE DO NOT WANT TO INVESTIGATE THE INDIVIDUALS' CRIMES AS SPIES BECAUSE THE ISSUE IS ON A HIGHER LEVEL. WE WILL INVITE STRONG PERSONALITIES OF THE WORLD TO COME HERE... AND UNDERSTAND WHY WE COME OUT THE US IN THIS WAY. NOW WHAT FORM THE TRIAL SHOULD TAKE WE CANNOT DETERMINE. IT IS FOR THOSE WHO HAVE TAKEN THE HOSTAGES. OF COURSE THEY CONSULT THE IMAM."

3. THE COMMUNITY AMBASSADORS DISCUSSED THIS MORNING THE POWER STRUCTURE IN IRAN. ONE EXTREME VIEW IS THAT THERE IS IN EFFECT NO GOVERNMENT AND THAT THE "STUDENTS" DETERMINE POLICY. I BELIEVE THAT THIS IS TOO STARK AND OVER-SIMPLIFIES THE POSITION. AS FAR AS THE AMERICANS HELD IN THE US EMBASSY ARE CONCERNED, THE "STUDENTS" ARE IN POSSESSION AND ABLE TO IMPOSE A VETO, SINCE THE AUTHORITIES ARE NOT PREPARED TO USE FORCE AGAINST THEM (BANI SADR SAID THIS TO THE COMMUNITY AMBASSADORS AT OUR FIRST MEETING WITH HIM IN NOVEMBER). HOWEVER IN THE LAST RESORT THE "STUDENTS" ARE PREPARED TO OBEY KHOMEINI, IF HE GIVES THEM A CLEAR LEAD OR INSTRUCTION. BUT KHOMEINI HIMSELF, PARTLY FOR TACTICAL REASONS AND PARTLY BECAUSE I BELIEVE THIS IS HOW HE SEES HIS ROLE, IS NOT PREPARED TO GIVE A CLEAR INSTRUCTION UNLESS HE IS FAIRLY SURE THAT IT REFLECTS A CONSENSUS OF HIS FOLLOWERS AND WILL BE OBEYED. THIS IS CONSISTENT WITH HIS VIEW OF THE ROLE OF RELIGION AND WITH HIS CLAIM TO BE, NOT A DECIDER OF POLICY, BUT A MOUTHPIECE OF THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE OR OF GOD, VOX POPULI, VOX DEI, WITH A VENGEANCE) WHICH, PROVIDED THE PEOPLE ARE GOOD MUSLIMS, HE COULD ARGUE ARE THE SAME. IT IS A TWO WAY STREET AND TO A LARGE EXTENT KHOMEINI REACTS TO THE PUBLIC FEELING WHICH HE CREATES.

4. THAT SAID, I AM NOT CLEAR WHY THERE HAS BEEN THIS CHANGE IN MOOD. IN PART, AND AS FAR AS THE STUDENTS ARE CONCERNED I THINK THIS IS CERTAINLY SO, THE MOVE OF THE SHAH MAY HAVE CONTRIBUTED, ALTHOUGH THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL AND KHOMEINI HIMSELF ORIGINALLY CHOSE TO REGARD IT AS A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION AND A VICTORY FOR IRAN. IN PART THE STUDENTS AND KHOMEINI ALSO SEEM TO HAVE BEEN ROUSED BY PRESIDENT CARTER'S COMMENTS OVER THE WEEKEND ABOUT A MORE HOPEFUL SITUATION DEVELOPING IN IRAN. BOTH THE STUDENTS AND KHOMEINI...



MENTS OVER THE WEEKEND ABOUT A MORE HOPEFUL SITUATION DEVELOPING IN IRAN. BOTH THE STUDENTS AND KHOMEINI IN THEIR RESPECTIVE STATEMENTS OF 18 DECEMBER EXPRESSED ANGER AT THIS INTERPRETATION. FOR EXAMPLE, WE HAVE IN THE FORMER STATEMENT, "OMINOUS SOUNDS ARE HEARD FROM THE WHITE HOUSE WHICH IMPUDENTLY ACCUSE THE IRANIAN NATION OF CHANGING ITS POSITION... HAS OUR IMAM CHANGED HIS POSITION? NEVER, NO ONE CAN EVER DARE TO SAY SUCH A BLASPHEMOUS THING". THE DEATH OF MOFATTEH MAY ALSO BE AN ELEMENT IN KHOMEINI'S ANGER. MOFATTEH WAS A PUPIL AND FRIEND, AND NOT KNOWING THE PERPETRATORS, HE HAS CHOSEN TO ATTRIBUTE THE ASSASSINATION TO THE CIA. I AM TOLD THAT HE IS TOTALLY TAKEN UP WITH THE BELIEF THAT THE US IS DEEPLY ENGAGED IN PLOTTING THE DOWNFALL OF HIMSELF AND THE FAILURE OF THE IRANIAN REVOLUTION.

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5. IN SUM, THE SITUATION IS GLOOMY AND FACED WITH THE FAILURE TO OBTAIN ANY SIGNIFICANT SUPPORT IN THE WORLD, KHOMEINI'S MOOD IS UGLY. HE MAY WELL EMBARK ON SOME NEW INITIATIVE TO BOLSTER HIS POSITION.

GRAHAM

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