

IRAN: ADVANCE COPIES *cc 31 +*

*Read in full.* **4A**

PS  
 PS/SIR I GILMOUR  
 PS/MR HURD  
 PS/PUS  
 SIR D MAITLAND  
 MR J C MOBERLY  
 LORD BRIDGES  
~~LORD W G LENNOX~~  
 MR EVANS  
 MISS BROWN  
 HD/MED  
 HD/FRD  
 HD/NENAD  
 HD/UND  
 HD/OID  
 HD/DEF DEPT  
 HD/~~NAD~~  
 HD/ES & SD  
 HD/PUSD  
 HD/NEWS DEPT  
 HD/COD  
 HD/CONS DEPT  
~~RESIDENT CLERK~~

PS NO 10 DOWNING ST  
 SIR R ARMSTRONG )  
 ASSESSMENTS STAFF )  
 MR R WADE GERY ) CABINET  
 MR LE CHEMINANT ) OFFICE  
 MR W N WENBAN SMITH )  
 DIO )  
~~PS/CHANCELLOR )  
 MR F R BARRATT ) TREASURY  
 MR R G LAVELLE )  
 MR C W McMAHON ) BANK OF  
 MR P H EDGLEY ) ENGLAND  
 MR R WILLIAMS CRE5 DOT  
 MR W WINGTON DEPT OF TRADE  
 MR C BENJAMIN DOI  
 MR D LE B JONES ) DEPT OF  
 MR C LUCAS ) ENERGY~~

(2) *Wj.*

GR 530  
 SECRET  
 FM TEHRAN 191320Z MAR 80  
 TO IMMEDIATE FCO  
 TELEGRAM NUMBER 294 OF 19 MARCH  
 INFO IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON AND UKMIS NEW YORK

**IMMEDIATE**  
**ADVANCE COPY**

WASHINGTON TELN 1077 (PARA 2): **US/IRAN.**

1. OBVIOUSLY SEVERAL OF US HERE HAVE CONSIDERED THE POSSIBILITY OF A RESCUE. THERE WOULD SEEM TO BE TWO WAYS OF MOUNTING ONE: AN OVERT BUT SURPRISE MILITARY OPERATION AT NIGHT TO CAPTURE MEHRABAD OR DOSHAN TEPPEH AIRPORT AND TO MOVE FROM THERE BY HELICOPTER (FLOWN IN) OR VEHICLE TO THE US EMBASSY PICKING UP LAINGEN AND CO ON THE WAY THERE OR BACK; AND A COVERT OPERATION BY AN INFILTRATED AND DISGUISED STRIKE GROUP, COMBINED WITH A TAKE-OVER OF MEHRABAD TIMED TO COLLECT THE GROUP FOR EVACUATION. IT IS NOT FOR ME TO ASSESS THE ODDS ON SUCCESS. THE FIRST COURSE COULD DEVELOP INTO QUITE A STREET BATTLE, BUT THE SECOND I SHOULD JUDGE, MIGHT BE FEASIBLE ALBEIT AT CONSIDERABLE RISK TO THE HOSTAGES, SOME OF WHOM WOULD ALMOST

AT CONSIDERABLE RISK TO THE HOSTAGES, SOME OF WHOM WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY BE KILLED. THE AMERICANS MAY HAVE REACHED THE POINT WHEN THEY ARE PREPARED TO FACE THAT.

2. ANY RESCUE OPERATION WOULD ENSURE THAT RELATIONS WITH IRAN WOULD NOT RECOVER FOR A VERY LONG TIME. IT WOULD ENTER INTO THE MYTHOLOGY. SINCE I BELIEVE US RELATIONS WITH IRAN WILL BE BAD OR NON-EXISTENT IN ANY CASE FOR SOME CONSIDERABLE TIME, THIS MAY NOT MATTER. IN THE REGION, THE OPERATION WOULD NO DOUBT BE CRITICISED PUBLICLY, BUT IF IT WAS SUCCESSFUL, EVEN AT SOME COST IN LIVES, I BELIEVE THERE WOULD BE PRIVATE UNDERSTANDING AND SOME RELIEF THAT THE US HAD SHOWN ITSELF A PROPER SUPER-POWER AFTER ALL. NO DOUBT THE SOVIET UNION WOULD MAKE A PUBLIC FUSS AND PRIVATELY BE RELIEVED AT THE DISTRACTION FROM AFGHANISTAN. FAILURE OF COURSE WOULD BE <sup>DIS</sup>TRUSTOUS BOTH POLITICALLY AND FOR THE HOSTAGES.

3. THE ISSUE TURNS ON THE JUDGEMENT OF WHETHER BANI SADR MEANS WHAT HE SAYS AND WILL BE ABLE TO MAKE IT GOOD. THE LATTER IN TURN DEPENDS ON THE NATURE AND CLARITY OF THE ENDORSEMENT WHICH KHOMEINI IS EXPECTED TO GIVE HIM AT NOW RUZ, AS FORECAST IN SPEECHES BY BANI SADR HIMSELF AND ALSO PRIVATELY BY ZUHAIR YAMIN. THE LATTER REMAINS OPTIMISTIC AND IS CONFIDENT THAT SOMEHOW NOW RUZ MAY PRODUCE A CHANGE IN THE STATUS OF THE AMERICANS (E.G. A TRANSFER TO DIRECT GOVERNMENT CONTROL) AND THAT BANI SADR WILL THEN EFFECT THEIR RELEASE BEFORE THE ASSEMBLY CONVENES (WHICH ON PRESENT FORM AND TO JUDGE BY STATEMENTS FROM E.G. QOTBZADEH, MAHDAVI-KANI AND OTHERS MAY WELL NOW NOT BE BEFORE MAY, WITH VOTING IN THE SECOND ROUND OF THE ELECTIONS POSTPONED TILL 11 APRIL). FOR MY PART, WHILE I ACCEPT BANI SADR'S SINCERITY, I AM COMING INCREASINGLY TO THE VIEW THAT HE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO EFFECT THE RELEASE OF THE HOSTAGES IN ANY ACCEPTABLE TIME-SCALE, UNLESS KHOMEINI'S EXPECTED NOW RUZ MESSAGE CONTAINS AN UNEQUIVOCAL DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY TO HIM.

4. MY EC COLLEAGUES AND I HAVE AGREED A JOINT PAPER (MY TELNO 267), PUTTING FORWARD THE ALTERNATIVE IDEA OF MESSAGES FROM A NUMBER OF HEADS OF STATE OR GOVERNMENTS, TO BE FOLLOWED BY THE CLOSURE OF EMBASSIES. I BELIEVE SUCH A GESTURE WOULD HAVE AN IMPACT HERE, AND MIGHT STRENGTHEN BANI SADR'S HAND. BUT IT WOULD WORK SLOWLY AT BEST AND WE SHOULD HAVE LOST ANY POSSIBILITY OF INFLUENCING EVENTS HERE, HOWEVER SMALL THAT IS AT THE MOMENT. IT IS A BAFFLING AND APPALLING DILEMMA.

GRAHAM