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FROM TEHRAN 051330Z DEC 79

DESKBY 051530Z DEC)

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 1294 OF 05 DECEMBER

IMMEDIATE CABINET OFFICE (DIO) MODUK (DI4) MODUK (DS11)
CRE 5, WASHINGTON, UKMIS NEW YORK, BAHRAIN,
ABU DHABI, ANKARA, BAGHDAD, DOHA, TOKYO, DUBAI, ISLAMABAD,
JEDDA, KABUL, KUWAIT, MOSCOW, MUSCAT, NEW DELHI, EEC POSTS

MY TELNO 1266: SITUATION IN IRAN.

1. THE RESULTS OF THE REFERENDUM ON THE DRAFT CONSTITUTION (MY TUR) WILL NOT BE ANNOUNCED OFFICIALLY UNTIL THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR HAS INVESTIGATED ANY COMPLAINTS ABOUT VOTING PROCEDURES. THE RADIO AND NEWSPAPERS ARE ALREADY CLAIMING THE 99.6 PERCENT OF THOSE WHO VOTED WERE IN FAVOUR. THE SUPERVISOR OF THE MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR, RAFSANJANI, HAS SAID THAT THE TURNOUT WAS HIGH WITHOUT GIVEN ANY ESTIMATE OF THE PERCENTAGE, SO THAT IT IS TOO EARLY TO JUDGE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE BOYCOTT ANNOUNCED BY A NUMBER OF POLITICAL AND ETHNIC GROUPS. THERE WERE CERTAINLY INCIDENTS AT POLLING STATIONS IN BALUCHESTAN AND KURDESTAN, AND IN TABRIZ LARGE DEMONSTRATIONS TOOK PLACE AGAINST THE DRAFT CONSTITUTION AND IN REACTION TO A RUMOUR THAT AYATOLLAH SHARIAT MADARI, WHO HAD SUGGESTED THAT THE PRESENT DRAFT WAS UNSATISFACTORY WITHOUT SPECIFICALLY CALLING ON HIS FOLLOWERS TO VOTE AGAINST IT (MY TELNO 1280) HAD BEEN ARRESTED. THERE ARE RUMOURS THAT THE BAZAAR THERE WILL CLOSE FOR THE DAY TOMORROW AS A FURTHER PROTEST AGAINST THE DRAFT. THE OFFICIAL NEWSAGENCY HAS DENIED BBC REPORTS THAT THE TURKOMEN IN GONBADE-KAVOUS WERE BOYCOTTING THE REFERENDUM.

2. THE NEXT STEPS ARE THE ELECTION OF A PRESIDENT AND OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. RAFSANJANI HAS SAID THAT THESE WILL BE HELD ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE REVOLUTION (FEB 10/11). MEANWHILE, ACCORDING TO HABIBI, (SPOKESMAN FOR THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL) THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL WILL GOVERN THE COUNTRY " CONTINUING THE DUTIES SET BY THE LEADER OF THE REVOLUTION." ON 3 DECEMBER IT HAD A MEETING WITH 12 NON-MEMBER MINISTERS TO DECIDE POLICY ON ECONOMIC AND OTHER QUESTIONS.

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3. THE RADIO THIS MORNING CARRIED REPORTS OF AN INTERVIEW WITH FIGARO BY QOTBZADEH, IN WHICH HE SAID THAT THE HOSTAGES WOULD DEFINITELY BE TRIED. HE IS ALSO REPORTED TO HAVE SAID THAT THE GROUP OCCUPYING THE EMBASSY WOULD CONDUCT THE TRIAL (THOUGH IT IS NOT IMPLIED THAT ANY DECISIONS HAVE BEEN TAKEN NOT TO PROCEED WITH THE TRIALS) AND THAT IRAN HAD DONE ALL IT COULD TO DEFUSE THE CRISIS AND IT WAS NOT UP TO PRESIDENT CARTER TO BREAK THE STALEMATE BY RETURNING THE SHAH OR AT LEAST INSTITUTING AN INVESTIGATION INTO HIS WEALTH. THE "STUDENTS" IN THE EMBASSY HAVE REACTED ANGRILY TO QOTBZADEH'S REFERENCE TO THE TRIAL, INSISTING THAT AN ISLAMIC REVOLUTIONARY COURT, AND NOT THEY, WILL HOLD IT.

4. THERE WAS LITTLE REACTION ON THE RADIO AND IN THE MORNING PRESS TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION EXCEPT FOR THE QUOTING OF AGENCY REPORTS AND A COMMENT THAT THE SECURITY COUNCIL WAS MAKING A RECOMMENDATION RATHER THAN PRESENTING A DEMAND AND THAT THE RESOLUTION IN NO WAY CONDEMNED IRAN. THE AFTERNOON PAPERS, HOWEVER, REPORTED THAT "THE SECURITY COUNCIL HAS CONDEMNED IRAN" AND QUOTED RAFSANJANI AS SAYING THAT, AS FAR AS IRAN WAS CONCERNED, THE SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION WAS WORTHLESS. THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS IS REPORTED TO HAVE STATED THAT THE U S COMPLAINT TO THE INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE HAS BEEN OFFICIALLY CONVEYED TO THE IRANIAN GOVERNMENT IS BEING DISCUSSED AT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, WHICH WILL ANNOUNCE ITS VIEWS IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS.

5. SENATOR KENNEDY'S REMARKS ABOUT IRAN HAVE BEEN REPORTED WIDELY AND IN DETAIL HERE, AND WILL UNDOUBTEDLY HAVE ENCOURAGED THOSE WISHING TO ARGUE THAT PRESIDENT CARTER'S POLICY OVER THE SHAH'S RETURN DOES NOT REFLECT THE WISHES OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE. CRITICISM OF THE INTERNATIONAL MEDIA'S REPORTING OF THE SITUATION HERE IS ALSO GROWING. I SHALL BE REPORTING SEPARATELY (NOT TO ALL) ON A RECENT FIERCE ATTACK IN "ISLAMIC REPUBLIC" ON U S AND BRITISH HOSTILITY TO THE REVOLUTION WHICH INCLUDES STRONG CRITICISM OF THE BBC PERSIAN SERVICE.

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6. WHILE THERE CONTINUES TO BE A MULTITUDE OF STATEMENTS, ALL OF THESE ARE CARRIED BY THE WIRE SERVICES AND WILL BE AVAILABLE TO YOU AND THE STATE DEPARTMENT. I PROPOSE THEREFORE TO REDUCE THE FREQUENCY OF THESE SITREPS TO EVERY OTHER DAY. WE SHALL OF COURSE REPORT SPECIFICALLY ON ANY PARTICULARLY SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT.

GRAHAM

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