

IMMEDIATE

PS
 PS/SIR I GILMOUR
 PS/MR HURD
 PS/PUS
 MR J C MOBERLY
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 SIR R ARMSTRONG)
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 ASSESSMENTS STAFF) CABINET
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 MR LE CHEMINANT)
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 CABINET OFFICE DIO
 MR F R BARRATT TREASURY

FM TEHRAN 231020Z NOV 79
 TO IMMEDIATE FCO
 TELEGRAM NUMBER 1216 OF 23 NOVEMBER
 INFO IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON

Prime Minister
[Signature]

WASHINGTON TELNO 3872: IRAN: HOSTAGES

1. PARA 4 POSES THE QUESTION WHETHER THE DEPARTURE OF THE SHAH FROM THE US WOULD BE LIKELY TO DEFUSE OR INFLAME THE SITUATION.
2. MY JUDGEMENT IS THAT AT THE STAGE NOW REACHED, THE IMMEDIATE REACTION HERE TO THE SHAH'S DEPARTURE IS LIKELY TO BE ONE OF ANGER, WITH THE RISK, BUT NOT I THINK A HIGH ONE, THAT THE TREATMENT OF THE HOSTAGES WOULD BECOME HARSHER AND/OR RATHER MORE PROBABLE, THAT SOME MIGHT BE PUT ON TRIAL. AS TUR NOTE, 29/30 NOV ARE TASSU'A AND ASHURA, WHEN EMOTIONS ARE AT THEIR HEIGHT.
3. ON THE OTHER HAND AS LONG AS THE SHAH REMAINS IN THE US, WITHOUT A GENERAL SETTLEMENT IN THE LINES BEING DISCUSSED IN NEW YORK, THE RISK OF IRAN TRYING TO INCREASE PRESSURE ON THE US THROUGH THE HOSTAGES, INCLUDING THROUGH TRIAL, EXISTS.
4. IDEALLY THEREFORE THE DEPARTURE OF THE SHAH OUGHT TO FORM PART OF OR COINCIDE WITH ANY PACKAGE WORKED OUT IN NEW YORK.

GRAHAM