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OO WASHINGTON DESKBY 201600Z

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FM F C O 201515Z FEB 84

TO IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON

TELEGRAM NUMBER 337 OF 20 FEBRUARY

AND TO MOSCOW

INFO IMMEDIATE BAGHDAD, TEHRAN, UKMIS NEW YORK

IRAN/IRAQ

1. YESTERDAY'S AND TODAY'S UK NEWSPAPERS CARRY PROMINENT REPORTS THAT IRANIAN FORCES HAVE BEEN PUT ON MAXIMUM ALERT TO PREVENT THE PASSAGE OF HOSTILE FORCES THROUGH THE STRAITS OF HORMUZ, AND THAT THE US NAVAL TASK FORCE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN HAS MOVED INTO THE GULF OF OMAN. WE HAVE NO (NO) INDICATIONS OF ANY ABNORMAL ACTIVITY BY THE IRANIANS, AND NOTE THAT THE AMERICANS SHARE OUR ASSESSMENT THAT REPORTS OF THE IRANIAN LAND OFFENSIVE HAVE BEEN EXAGGERATED (YOUR TELNO 586 - NOT TO ALL). WE ALSO UNDERSTAND THAT THE DISPOSITION OF THE US TASK FORCE IS UNCHANGED.
2. YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT THE PRIME MINISTER MAY BE PRESSED IN THE HOUSE ON US INTENTIONS AND ON WHETHER THE US HAVE COME TO AN UNDERSTANDING WITH THE RUSSIANS ABOUT MILITARY ACTIVITY IN THE GULF. FOR YOUR OWN INFORMATION, DENIS HEALEY HAS RAISED THIS WITH THE PRIME MINISTER AND HAS SUGGESTED THAT THE US GOVERNMENT SHOULD LET THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT KNOW THAT IF WESTERN MILITARY INTERVENTION IN THE GULF BECAME NECESSARY IT WOULD BE STRICTLY LIMITED AND CONSTITUTE NO THREAT TO THE SOVIET UNION. WE SHALL NEED TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF THIS IN BRIEFING THE PRIME MINISTER FOR QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE TOMORROW.
3. WE IMAGINE THAT THERE MAY WELL HAVE BEEN SOME EXCHANGES BET-

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WEEN THE AMERICANS AND RUSSIANS ON THIS PROBLEM ON THE DOBRYNIN CHANNEL FOLLOWING FROM THE CARTER STATEMENT OF 1980. UNLESS YOU ALREADY KNOW HOW MATTERS STAND BETWEEN THEM ON THIS SUBJECT, GRATEFUL IF YOU COULD GO OVER THE GROUND WITH THE STATE DEPARTMENT. MINISTERS WILL WISH TO BE ABLE TO SAY IN THE HOUSE IF ASKED THAT THE US ARE AWARE OF OUR VIEWS ON THE NEED FOR SOME CONTACT BETWEEN THE US AND SOVIET GOVERNMENTS IN THIS SUBJECT. GRATEFUL THEREFORE FOR REPORT DESKBY 210900Z.

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ADDITIONAL DISTRIBUTION

IRAN/IRAQ

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