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TO IMMEDIATE FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

TELEGRAM NUMBER 182 OF 21 FEBRUARY

INFO IMMEDIATE BAGHDAD, TEHRAN

INFO PRIORITY GULF POSTS, WASHINGTON, PARIS, STOCKHOLM, AMMAN
MOSCOW, CAIRO, UKDEL NATO, THE HAGUE, MODUK (D14).

MY TELNO 179 AND TELECON EGERTON/GORE-BOOTH: IRAN / IRAQ.

1. THE HEAD OF CHANCERY TOUCHED BASE WITH UNDER SECRETARY GENERAL CORDOVEZ THIS EVENING TO SEE WHETHER HE THOUGHT THERE WAS ANYTHING TO BE SALVAGED FROM THE COLLAPSE OF HIS PROPOSED MISSION TO TEHRAN AND BAGHDAD.
2. CORDOVEZ WAS NOT OPTIMISTIC. HE THOUGHT THAT THERE WAS NOTHING FURTHER THAT THE UN WOULD BE ABLE TO DO FOR THE MOMENT UNLESS EITHER THE IRAQIS DROPPED THEIR INSISTENCE ON A TWO-PRONGED MISSION AND SETTLED FOR A MISSION TO INSPECT CIVILIAN DAMAGE ONLY OR A CHANGE FOR THE WORSE IN THEIR SITUATION ON THE GROUND PERSUADED THE IRANIAN TO ACCEPT A POLITICAL PRONG. PUBLICLY HE IS TAKING THE LINE THAT THE MISSION HAS BEEN POSTPONED BUT PRIVATELY HE BELIEVES THAT THERE IS NO EARLY CHANCE OF RESUSCITATING IT. HE QUOTED KING FAHD OF SAUDI ARABIA AS TELLING MR PALME IN CANNES RECENTLY THAT 'NOW IS NOT THE TIME' (CF CHATTI'S COMMENTS REPORTED IN JEDDA TELNO 95)
3. ALTHOUGH HE RECOGNISES THAT THE IRANIANS HAVE NOW LOST THE GROUND THEY WON WITH THEIR FIRST LETTER CORDOVEZ FEELS THAT THE IRAQIS DID NOT PLAY THEIR HAND VERY WELL. IN PARTICULAR HE THINKS THEY WERE MISTAKEN IN MENTIONING THE 'SEVEN POINTS' IN THEIR REPLY AND THEN INSISTING THAT IT BE MADE PUBLIC. THE MENTION OF AN AGENDA WAS BOUND TO BE RED RAG TO THE IRANIAN BULL.

MARGETSON

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