

SECRET

UK EYES ALPHA

FM UKHIS NEW YORK

TO IMMEDIATE FOO

TELNO 584

OF 170035Z MAY 93

INFO PRIORITY WASHINGTON

MY TELNO 577 : HOSTAGES AND LETANON

SUMMARY

1. SECRETARY-GENERAL HAS RECEIVED REPORTS THAT WAITE IS ALIVE AND WELL. GOES ON TO HINT THE AMERICANS MAY NOT BE PLAYING STRAIGHT.

DETAIL

2. DURING A PRIVATE MEETING WITH THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON 16 MAY I MENTIONED THE QUESTION OF HOSTAGES. HAD HE ANY NEWS? AS HE WOULD REALISE WE WERE UNDER CONSIDERABLE DOMESTIC PRESSURE FOLLOWING THE RECENT RELEASE OF THE TWO U S HOSTAGES.

3. PEREZ DE CUELLAR SAID HE WELL UNDERSTOOD OUR CONCERNS. HE COULD ASSURE ME THAT HIS INVARIABLE POSITION WAS TO INSIST THAT HIS RESPONSIBILITY EXTENDED TO ALL HOSTAGES, NOT ONLY THE AMERICAN ONES. HE HAD MADE THIS POINT VIGOROUSLY AT HIS LAST MEETING WITH THE IRANIAN FOREIGN MINISTER, VELAYATI HAD A HABIT OF SPEAKING ABOUT U S HOSTAGES, NO DOUBT BECAUSE HIS GOVERNMENT WANTED TO GET AT FROZEN IRANIAN ASSETS IN THE UNITED STATES, BUT HE INVARIABLY CORRECTED HIM.

4. PEREZ DE CUELLAR ADDED THAT WHEN IN EUROPE EARLIER THIS MONTH HE HAD HEARD THAT TERRY WAITE WAS ALIVE AND WELL. NO DOUBT WE HAD HAD THE SAME NEWS. IT WAS THE BEST HE HAD HEARD FOR SOME TIME.

5. I SAID IT WOULD BE USEFUL IF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL COULD ASK THOSE CONCERNED IN THE SECRETARIAT WHETHER THERE WAS ANYTHING MORE TO TELL US. PEREZ DE CUELLAR UNDERTOOK TO DO SO. WE THEN DISCUSSED THE AMERICANS' POSITION. PEREZ DE CUELLAR SAID THAT AS WE NO DOUBT KNEW, THE UNITED STATES HAD A PRIVATE CONTACT WITH THE IRANIANS IN THE HAGUE; THEY ALSO EXCHANGED MESSAGES WITH THE IRANIANS THROUGH THE SECRETARIAT.

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6. I UNDERLINED THAT WE HAD ALWAYS PLAYED THIS GAME STRAIGHT: OUR PUBLIC POSITION WAS WELL KNOWN: THE AMERICANS SAID THEIR POSITION WAS THE SAME. AT THIS POINT PEREZ DE CUELLAR MURMURED WITH SOME EMBARRASSMENT: "WHO KNOWS? WHO KNOWS?". HE FELT THAT SOMETHING WAS GOING ON BUT DID NOT ALWAYS KNOW EXACTLY WHAT. HE ADDED THAT THE SIGNALS WERE CONFUSING. HE SOMETIMES WONDERED IF THE DIFFERENT COMPONENTS OF THE U S ADMINISTRATION KNEW WHAT EACH OTHER WAS DOING.

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