

GR 295

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FM BRIT INT SECT TEHRAN 300955Z APR  
TO PRIORITY FCO  
TELEGRAM NUMBER 153 OF 30 APRIL 81  
INFO STOCKHOLM.

UK/IRAN.

1. BUNDY HAS TOLD ME OF A CONVERSATION HE HAD A COUPLE OF DAYS AGO WITH THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL IN THE MFA, DURING THE COURSE OF WHICH ABAN BROUGHT UP THE TRIAL OF THE TWO IRANIANS IN LONDON AND SUGGESTED THAT THEY COULD BE REPATRIATED AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE TRIAL. BUNDY EXPLAINED THAT THIS WOULD DEPEND ON WHETHER THE COURT FOUND THEM GUILTY OR NOT AND ON WHAT SENTENCE WAS IMPOSED. HE EXPLAINED THAT HE COULD NOT EXPRESS A VIEW ON THE POSSIBILITY OF REMISSION WHILE ANY SENTENCE WAS BEING SERVED.

2. ABAN REPLIED THAT IN THIS CASE IT WOULD BE TOO LATE: RELEASE NOW WOULD MAKE NORMALISATION OF RELATIONS EASIER BUT A SENTENCE WOULD BE A BURDEN THAT WOULD MAKE OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS MORE DIFFICULT.

3. BUNDY TOLD HIM IN STRONG TERMS THAT THIS SORT OF REASONING WAS UNACCEPTABLE. NO-ONE COULD UNDERSTAND THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES SHOULD BE MADE DEPENDENT ON A SENTENCE GIVEN TO A CRIMINAL FOUND GUILTY BY PROPER JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS. IT WAS ABAN'S DUTY TO EXPLAIN THESE MATTERS CLEARLY TO HIS SUPERIORS. ABAN PROFESSED TO UNDERSTAND BUT HINTED THAT THOSE GOVERNING IRAN AND HIS OWN SUPERIORS WOULD NOT.

4. BUNDY AND I HAVE DISCUSSED THIS CONVERSATION. WE ARE NOT CLEAR HOW FAR THIS REPRESENTS A SHARPENING OF THE IRANIAN POSITION OR WHAT SIGNIFICANCE SHOULD BE ATTACHED TO ABAN'S REMARKS. NOR IS IT CLEAR HOW IT FITS IN WITH THE DESPATCH OF THE IRANIAN LAWYER TO LONDON. BUT IT TENDS TO CONFIRM EVIDENCE FOR CONTINUING HIGH-LEVEL IRANIAN INTEREST IN THE FATE OF THE TWO MEN.

BARRETT

IRAN STANDARD

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