

DB 1510302 Draw

PS  
 PS/SIR I GILMOUR  
 PS/MR HURD  
 PS/PUS  
 SIR J GRAHAM  
 MR J C MOBERLY  
 LORD BRIDGES  
 LORD N G LENNOX  
 MR EVANS  
 MISS BROWN  
 HD/LED  
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 HD/UND (2)  
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 SIR R ARMSTRONG )  
 ASSESSMENTS STAFF ) CABINET  
 MR R WADE GERY ) OFFICE  
 MR LE CHEMINANT )  
 MR W N WENBAN SMITH )  
 DIO )

MR R WILLIAMS CRE5 DOT  
<sup>J. CAINE</sup>  
 MR W KNIGHTON DEPT OF TRADE  
 MR C BENJAMIN DOI  
 MR D LE B JONES ) DEPT OF  
 MR C LUCAS ) ENERGY

GR 725

CONFIDENTIAL

DESKBY 151030Z

FM BRIT INT SECT TEHRAN 150700Z JUN

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 235 OF 15 JUNE 81

INFO IMMEDIATE CABINET OFFICE

INFO ROUTINE WASHINGTON AND BAGHDAD.

IRAN : INTERNAL.

1. THE LAST FEW WEEKS HAVE SEEN AN ACCELERATED EROSION OF BANI SADR'S POSITION. IRP DOMINANCE IN THE MAJLES AND JUDICIARY HAS BEEN USED TO STRIP BANI SADR OF VARIOUS POWERS. IN WHAT IS PRESENTED AS A CONSTITUTIONAL MANNER. FIGURES PREVIOUSLY CONSIDERED FAIRLY IMPARTIAL SUCH AS THE MINISTER OF INTERIOR, MAHDABI-KANI, AND THE MINISTER OF ECONOMY AND FINANCE, NAMAZI, HAVE SIDED AGAINST HIM. THEY WERE NO DOUBT GIVING WAY TO INCREASED PRESSURE. KHOMEINI'S ROLE, IN SUPPORTING THE MAJLES AND THE JUDICIARY AND IMPLICITLY THE GOVERNMENT AGAINST BANI SADR AND IN DISMISSING HIM AS SUPREME

COMMANDER OF THE ARMED FORCES, HAS BEEN CRUCIAL. IT SEEMS THAT BANI SADR'S INCREASED IDENTIFICATION WITH LIBERAL AND LEFTIST GROUPS AND HIS DISOBEDIENCE CONCERNING KHOMEINI'S TEN-POINT EDICT CAUSED KHOMEINI TO LOSE PATIENCE WITH HIM. KHOMEINI CAN ALSO BE SAID TO BE REVERTING TO TYPE AS A MAN FOR WHOM ISLAM AND THE CLERGY COME FIRST. IT IS OF SOME SIGNIFICANCE THAT THE "MILITANT CLERGY" GROUP WHICH SUPPORTED BANI SADR IN THE PRESENTIAL ELECTIONS HAVE COME OUT AGAINST HIM TOO. BANI SADR'S TACTICAL JUDGMENT HAS AGAIN BEEN FOUND WANTING.

2. THE LACK OF COHESION AND DECISIVE LEADERSHIP WHICH CHARACTERISE BANI SADR'S CAMP, TOGETHER WITH THE OPPOSITION'S DIFFICULTY IN OPPOSING MOVES THAT CAN BE PRESENTED AS CONSTITUTIONAL, HAS MEANT THAT REACTIONS HAVE SO FAR BEEN EASILY CONTAINED BY THE REGIME. ALTHOUGH THERE HAVE BEEN SCATTERED DEMONSTRATIONS IN TEHRAN AND REPORTS OF INCREASED TROUBLE IN THE PROVINCES, PARTICULARLY AZERBAIJAN AND SHIRAZ, THERE IS NO SIGNE OF OPPOSITION TO THE IRP COMING TOGETHER EFFECTIVELY. THE MOJAHEDIN-E KHALQ (MOK), THE LARGEST OPPOSITION GROUP, HAVE DECLARED THEIR SUPPORT FOR BANI SADR BUT HAVE SO FAR DONE LITTLE MORE THAN MOUNT OR JOIN SMALL-SCALE DEMONSTRATIONS. THERE ARE RUMOURS OF THE MOK COMING TOGETHER WITH THE TUDEH TO OPPOSE THE REGIME BUT IT IS UNLIKELY THAT THE TUDEH WILL CONSIDER THE TIME RIPE TO OPPOSE THE IRP. THE BIGGEST QUESTION MARK LIES OVER THE ARMED FORCES. WE HAVE HAD REPORTS OF AIR FORCE PERSONNEL JOINING IN PRO-BANI SADR DEMONSTRATIONS, OF ARMY UNITS PASSING DECLARATIONS OF SUPPORT FOR HIM AS SUPREME COMMANDER, AND OF ARMY PERSONNEL DISTRIBUTING LEAFLETS IN HIS CAUSE. BUT BECAUSE OF THE WAR AND THE OVERALL POLITICAL BALANCE IT IS UNLIKELY THE ARMED FORCES WILL NOW ACT DECISIVELY IN BANI SADR'S FAVOUR. GENERAL FALLAHI AND COLONEL FAKURI HAVE BOTH MADE STATEMENTS OBEDIENT TO KHOMEINI.

3. BANI SADR'S FUTURE IS NOW IN THE BALANCE. 120 MEMBERS OF THE MAJLES HAVE ASKED FOR A DEBATE TO CONSIDER HIS IMPEACHMENT, WHICH COULD LEAD TO HIS DISMISSAL BY KHOMEINI. BUT RAFSANJANI SEEMS TO BE TRYING TO PREVENT OR POSTPONE THIS. NO DOUBT THERE ARE DIFFERENT COUNSELS WITHIN THE IRP. WHETHER BANI SADR REMAINS OR NOT, THE GRIP OF THE IRP ON GOVERNMENT WILL TIGHTEN. WITH MODERATE ISLAMIC ELEMENTS SILENCED, THE IRP WILL BE IN A STRONGER POSITION TO ENFORCE THEIR BRAND OF THOUGH CONTROL.

4. THERE HAVE BEEN VARIOUS REPORTS OF INCIDENTS AT BANI SADR'S OFFICE SINCE HE RETURNED TO TEHRAN. SOME HEZBULLAHIS EITHER

4. THERE HAVE BEEN VARIOUS REPORTS OF INCIDENTS AT BANI SADR'S OFFICE SINCE HE RETURNED TO TEHRAN. SOME HEZBULLAHIS EITHER BROKE INTO IT OR STAGED A SIT-IN ON 12 JUNE BUT WERE LATER THROWN OUT. WE HAVE HEARD FROM EYE-WITNESSES THAT ALL WAS NORMAL OUTSIDE THE OFFICE ON 13 JUNE, THOUGH THERE WERE CLASHES IN VARIOUS PARTS OF TEHRAN THAT DAY, WITH AT LEAST ONE DEATH. THERE ARE RUMOURS THAT THE DEATH TOLL IN TEHRAN IN THE LAST WEEK HAS BEEN BETWEEN 12 AND 23. THE REVOLUTIONARY GUARDS HAVE ISSUED A STATEMENT AGAINST THE UNAUTHORIZED OCCUPATION OF OFFICIAL PREMISES. TO WHAT EXTENT BANI SADR HAS BECOME A VIRTUAL PRISONER IS NOT CLEAR; HE HAS NOT APPEARED IN PUBLIC FOR THE LAST FEW DAYS. HIS PRINCIPAL ADVISERS HAVE GONE TO GROUND.

5. ONE OF THE BIGGEST TESTS FOR THE OPPOSITION COMES TODAY (15 JUNE) WHEN THE NATIONAL FRONT INTEND TO HOLD AN ILLEGAL RALLY AT 1600 LOCAL TIME. OTHER GROUPS MAY WELL JOIN THEM. IF THE DAY PASSES WITHOUT SERIOUS TROUBLE IT WILL BE FAIRLY SAFE TO SAY THAT THE IRP HAVE WON BOTH SET AND MATCH.

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