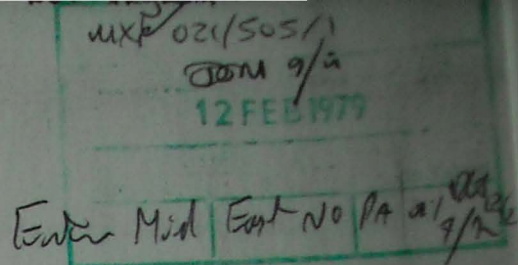


Mr J C Moberly



IRAN: THE NINE AND RECOGNITION

PROBLEM

- A 1. How should we respond to the Presidency's proposal that the Middle East Group meet in Paris on 12 February to examine the situation in Tehran and prepare instructions on recognition for their Ambassadors?

BACKGROUND

Recognition

2. Our normal criteria are that the regime to be recognised should enjoy, with a reasonable prospect of performance, effective control of the territory it claims, together with the obedience of the mass of the population. Circumstances where two regimes control separate parts of a country, are not unusual, but the co-existence of two of the population. Circumstances where two regimes control separate parts of a country are not unusual, but the co-existence of two rival governments in the same area, as is possible in Iran, would produce major political, consular and commercial difficulties. If such a situation develops, we shall have to move extremely carefully. We are fortunate in that Mr Graham has apparently established personal relations with both rival Prime Ministers without embarrassment.

Internal Situation

3. The clash between Khomeini and the Army which we feared after his return has not materialised yet. We can perhaps be more hopeful that the two professional politicians, Bakhtiar and Bazargan, who know each other well, will succeed in arranging a smooth transition from the 1906 monarchial Constitution to an Islamic Republic.

ARGUMENT

4. The possible emergence of two rival governments in Tehran - Dr Bakhtiar's "legal" one under the 1906 Constitution and the "popular" one of Ayatollah Khomeini headed by Dr Bazargan - could

B raise difficult and embarrassing problems over recognition. The Ambassadors of the Nine have agreed to present a united front and to send a minute to the Presidency suggesting that the Nine:

- (i) refrain from official acts which could prejudge recognition;
- (ii) deal as appropriate on a practical level with those controlling particular sectors;
- (iii) adopt a common approach to any government claiming recognition, based principally on the amount of effective control it exercises.

5. As the question has been remitted to the Presidency in Paris, we shall clearly have to discuss it there. The obvious advantage of involving the Nine is that the exposure of any single country is reduced, even though the need for consultation may delay recognition somewhat.

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c (10) 6. Mr Graham has proposed certain guidelines in his telno 275 for use if he is approached over recognition by representatives of Khomeini/Bazargan. These seem acceptable, although we shall if necessary have to make clear that the onus is on a new government to satisfy that it effectively controls the greater part of Iranian territory as well as the obedience of the mass of the population.

RECOMMENDATION

7. I recommend that the attached draft telegrams be despatched:

/ (i) to Paris via Coreu agreeing to the meeting on 12 February;

/ (ii) to Tehran, briefing Mr Graham and confirming that he should stick to the line proposed in his telno 275.

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