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10. DOWNING STREET. (2COPIES).

FM ANKARA 031200Z AUGUST 82
TO PRIORITY FCO
TELEGRAM NUMBER 208 OF AUGUST.

REPEATED FOR INFO TO PRIORITY: BAGHDAD, BIS TEHRAN, WASHINGTON,
UKMIS NEWYORK, UKDEL NATO, ALGIERS.

SAVING TO ALL OTHER M.E. POSTS.

ANKARA TELNO 203: IRAN/IRAQ

1. HEAD OF CHANCERY CALLED TODAY 3 AUGUST ON OKYAYUZ, WHO HAS TAKEN OVER AS HEAD OF MIDDLE EAST DEPARTMENT AT MFA. HE ASKED ABOUT THE REPLY TO GEN. EVREN'S MESSAGE WHICH HAD BEEN DELIVERED BY THE IRAQI FOREIGN MINISTER (BAGHDAD TELNO 502).

2. OKYAYUZ SAID THAT THIS HAD STATED THE IRAQI POSITION IN FAMILIAR TERMS, I.E. THAT THEY WERE WILLING TO CONSIDER ANY CEASE-FIRE FORMULA WHICH PRESERVED IRAQI HONOUR (AND HENCE, OKYAYUZ COMMENTED, THE SADDAM HUSSAIN REGIME).

2. THE TURKS REGARD THIS AND THE IRANIAN RESPONSE TO EVREN'S MESSAGES AS ENCOURAGING ENOUGH FOR THEM TO TAKE THE TEXT STEP, WHICH WILL BE A VISIT BY THE TURKISH PRIME MINISTER AND FOREIGN MINISTER TO TEHRAN, STARTING ON 5 AUGUST. ULUSU WILL NOT (NOT) TAKE ANY PROPOSALS WITH HIM, BUT HIS PURPOSE WILL BE TO ASK THE IRANIANS, FRANKLY AND AS A BROTHER AND NEIGHBOUR, WHAT THEIR REAL NEGOTIATING DEMANDS ARE. IN PARTICULAR, HE WILL SEEK TO ESTABLISH WHETHER THE IRANIANS WILL REDUCE THEIR DEMAND FOR REPARATIONS. HE DOES NOT EXPECT TO SEE KHOMEINI.

3. THE TURKS WILL DECIDE, IN THE LIGHT OF THE IRANIAN RESPONSE, WHETHER TO PROCEED WITH A MEDIATION EFFORT. OKYAYUZ STRESSED THAT THEY ARE DETERMINED NOT TO GET THEIR FINGERS BURNT; THEIR PARTICIPATION IN THE ISLAMIC GOOD OFFICERS COMMITTEE HAD ALREADY TAUGHT THEM SOME LESSONS, PARTICULARLY ABOUT EXTREME IRANIAN SENSITIVITY TO MEDIATION EFFORTS. ULUSU'S VISIT WILL BE PURELY BILATERAL, ALTHOUGH THE TURKS ARE CONTENT (FOR COVER PURPOSES) FOR THE PRESS TO HINT THAT IT WILL BE IN THE GOOD OFFICES COMMITTEE CONTEXT. THEY BELIEVE THE COMMITTEE WILL MEET IN JEDDA IN ABOUT TWO WEEK'S TIME, BUT DO NOT EXPECT MUCH FROM THAT.

4. SHORT ASKED WHETHER THERE WAS ANY DIRECT RELATION BETWEEN TURKISH AND ALGERIAN ACTIVITIES. OKYAYUZ SAID NOT. THE ALGERIANS WERE WELL PLACED TO MEDIATE, HAVING SCORED SUCCESSES WITH THE 1975 AGREEMENT AND THE AMERICAN HOSTAGES, BUT THE IRANIANS WERE ACUTELY AWARE THAT THEY WERE SHIITE AND THE ALGERIANS SUNNI. SO WERE THE TURKS, BUT THEY WERE AT LEAST SECULAR AND NON-ARAB.

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5. THE TURKS THINK THAT NOW MIGHT BE AS GOOD A TIME AS ANY TO TRY FOR A CEASE-FIRE, SINCE SOME FORM OF MILITARY BALANCE HAS BEEN STRUCK. THEY BELIEVE THAT THE IRANIAN GENERAL STAFF MAY BE ABLE TO PERSUADE THEIR POLITICAL MASTERS TO TAKE A REALISTIC VIEW OF THE SLIM PROSPECTS OF DECISIVELY DEFEATING THE IRAQI ARMED FORCES.

6. THE US EMBASSY HAVE TOLD US THAT, SHORTLY BEFORE IRAN INVADED IRAQ, THEIR AMBASSADOR HAD ON INSTRUCTIONS URGED EVREN TO INTERVENE TO TRY TO FORESTALL THIS. THE AMERICANS HAD BEEN UNDER CONSIDERABLE PRESSURE FROM SAUDI ARABIA AND THE GULF STATES TO EXERT THEIR INFLUENCE ON TURKEY. WE CANNOT GAUGE THE EFFECT OF THE AMERICAN INTERVENTION, BUT IT IS CLEAR THAT THE TURKS HAVE CHANGED COURSE. THEY SEE THAT THERE MAY JUST BE AN OPPORTUNITY TO PROMOTE A CEASE-FIRE AND/OR SETTLEMENT, AND IF THERE IS, THEY WILL TAKE IT. BUT THEY WILL TREAD WITH EXTREME CAUTION AND DISCRETION. IN PARTICULAR, PLEASE PROTECT WHAT OKYAYUZ SAID ABOUT ULUSU'S VISIT TO TEHRAN.

FCO PLEASE PASS ALL SAVING ADDRESSEES.

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