EDA

DIN 88-92-94

BT

CONTROLS

SERIAL: DIADIN 22-9A

BODY

SUBJ: CHINA-Iran: arms update. (U)

DOI: 26 Jan 88 (as of 0850 EST)

TEXT: 1. CHINESE ARMS SHIPMENTS ARE ARRIVING IN IRAN.

2. CHINESE FREIGHTER WAS RECENTLY UNLOADING ARTILLERY AND PIECES ONTO FLATBED TRUCKS.

4. IN OTHER ARMS-RELATED DEVELOPMENTS, THE IRANIAN
REVOLUTIONARY GUARD CORPS (IRGC) RECENTLY CLAIMED IT WAS BUILDING ITS OWN WARPLANES, POSSIBLY THE CHINESE-PRODUCED F-7/FISHER. THE IRGC MAINTAINS THAT IT WILL DISPLAY AND FLY THIS NEW PLANE IN FEBRUARY AND MARCH.

5. COMMENT: ALL INDICATORS POINT TO AN INCREASING ARMS RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHINA AND IRAN IN 1988. THE VOLUME OF WEAPONS, INCLUDING SILK WORM MISSILES THAT HAVE LEFT CHINA BOUND FOR THE MIDDLE EAST, INDICATES BEIJING REMAINS COMMITTED TO HONORING EXISTING CONTRACTS. IF THE SILK WORMS ARE DELIVERED IN PAKISTAN FOR TRANSSHIPMENT TO IRAN OR ARE DELIVERED DIRECTLY TO IRAN, THAT FACT WOULD ARGUE AGAINST ALL EARLIER REPORTS OF AN ARMS SUSPENSION ON DELIVERIES TO IRAN. MEANWHILE, BEIJING CONTINUES TO NEGOTIATE NEW ARMS CONTRACTS.

6. THE IRANIANS ARE TO BE ASSEMBLING F-7 FIGHTERS FROM CHINA RATHER THAN BUILDING THEIR OWN. CHINA HAS TRAINED IRANIAN PILOTS ON THE F-7 AND MAY BE TRAINING ENGINEERS AND TECHNICIANS.