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TO PRIORITY TEL AVIV

TELEGRAM NUMBER 75 OF 1 MAY

INFO WASHINGTON, UKMIS NEW YORK, BEIRUT,  
DAMASCUS, TUNIS, CAIRO, KUWAIT, JEDDA, EC POSTS

YOUR TEL NO.162 (NOT TO ALL): UK/ISRAELI RELATIONS AND THE  
EC INITIATIVE AND LEBANON

1. SIR JOHN GRAHAM ASKED THE ISRAELI MINISTER (IN THE TEMPORARY ABSENCE OF THE AMBASSADOR) TO CALL ON 29 APRIL, TO GIVE HIM AN ACCOUNT OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO GULF STATES AND TO REMONSTRATE ABOUT QUOTE GARBLED UNQUOTE DESCRIPTIONS OF THE VISIT IN THE ISRAELI PRESS (YOUR TEL NO.180). HE ALSO REFERRED TO SHAMIR'S RECENT SPEECH ON ISRAELI/EC RELATIONS, WHICH HE SAID MADE DEPRESSING READING, NOT LEAST BECAUSE IT SINGLED OUT BRITAIN FOR PARTICULAR CRITICISM. IF THE ISRAELIS HAD COPIES OF THE TEN'S PAPER ON THE ARAB/ISRAELI QUESTION, IT WOULD BE CLEAR TO THEM THAT IT WAS NO MORE THAN A STUDY OF A VARIETY OF POSSIBLE OPTIONS FOR AN ARAB/ISRAELI SETTLEMENT, WITH THE CENTRAL THEME THAT IT WAS UP TO THE PARTIES DIRECTLY CONCERNED TO NEGOTIATE TERMS. IF THEY DID NOT HOLD A COPY, THEN SUCH CRITICISMS WERE MADE FROM A POSITION OF IGNORANCE, AND DESPITE REPEATED ASSURANCES ABOUT THE NATURE OF THE EC PAPER.
2. BIRAN COUNTERED THAT IT WAS COMMON KNOWLEDGE WHAT KIND OF THINKING LAY BEHIND THE VENICE DECLARATION. ON THE SURFACE IT APPEARED AS A CALL FOR BALANCED MUTUAL RECOGNITION: BENEATH LAY PROPOSALS ALL OF WHICH MEANT THE DESTRUCTION OF ISRAEL'S SECURITY, WITH EACH CONCESSION FROM THE PLO ENTAILING A DISPROPORTIONATELY LARGE CONCESSION FROM ISRAEL. THE MORE ISRAEL LEARNT ABOUT THE PROPOSED EUROPEAN APPROACH, THE MORE CONCERNED THEY FELT. IT WAS A NON-STARTER AND THEY TOTALLY REJECTED IT. SIR J GRAHAM REITERATED THAT THE PAPERS HAD THE STATUS OF A STUDY. FOR THE ISRAELIS TO DESCRIBE THEM AS SOME KIND OF DICTAT WAS A DISTORTION.
3. BIRAN RAISED THE ISSUE OF UK ARMS SALES TO ARAB STATES.

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HE CONTRASTED THE BALANCED POLICY OF THE US WITH WHAT HE SAID AMOUNTED TO THE ANTI-ISRAEL POLICY OF THE UK, WHICH WAS INCOMPATIBLE WITH THE DECLARED BRITISH AIM OF HELPING A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT. HE MENTIONED TORNADO AND OUR REFUSAL TO DISCUSS RB 199 ENGINES. SIR J GRAHAM EXPLAINED THAT OUR PROPOSED SALE OF HAWK TRAINER AIRCRAFT TO THE UAE WAS INTENDED IN EFFECT TO REPLACE THE AGEING HUNTERS. A POSSIBLE SALE OF TORNADO TO SAUDI ARABIA WAS A LONG WAY DOWN THE ROAD AND THE SAUDIS ALREADY POSSESSED AMERICAN AIRCRAFT IN THE SAME GENERAL CATEGORY. HMG ALSO TOOK ACCOUNT OF THE NEED FOR BALANCE AND NO BRITISH SALE SIGNIFICANTLY AFFECTED IT.

4. ON LEBANON, SIR J GRAHAM QUESTIONED THE ISRAELI'S MOTIVES IN ESCALATING THEIR ATTACKS IN THE NORTH. IF THEIR INTENTION WAS TO GET THE SYRIANS OUT OF LEBANON, REDUCE PLO INFLUENCE AND SUPPORT THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY, THEIR SINGLE AIM SHOULD BE TO STRENGTHEN THE CENTRAL AUTHORITY OF THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT. THEIR SUPPORT FOR HADDAD, WHOSE VERY EXISTENCE WAS DESTABILISING, AND FOR THE PHALANGISTS DIRECTLY UNDERMINED THAT AUTHORITY. BIRAN SAID THERE WAS NO DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN US IN OUR WISH TO SEE A UNIFIED LEBANON, ONLY OVER THE MEANS. ISRAEL HELD THE PLO AND THE SYRIANS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE TROUBLES AND HAD A STRONG MORAL COMMITMENT TO AID THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY. RECENT SYRIAN MOVES, DESIGNED TO TAKE OVER THE CHRISTIAN AREAS, HAD JUSTIFIED ISRAELI INTERVENTION. SIR J GRAHAM UNDERLINED UK CONCERN AND URGED THE ISRAELIS TO REGARD THE STRENGTHENING OF THE CENTRAL AUTHORITY AS THE BEST MEANS TO THEIR OBJECTIVES.

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