

NO 10 DOWNING STREET  
CABINET OFFICE DIO

PS  
PS/SIR I GILMOUR  
PS/MR HURD  
PS/PUS  
SIR J GRAHAM  
MR J C MOBERLY

HD/NENAD  
HD/MED  
HD/UND

PUSD (2)  
NEWS D

RESIDENT CLERK

CONFIDENTIAL

FM CAIRO 291215Z MAY 81

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 323 OF 29 MAY

IMMEDIATE INFO TEL AIV, WASHINGTON

ROUTINE INFO KHARTOUM, JEDDA, AMMAN, DAMASCUS, TUNIS, ALGIERS  
SAVING RABAT, BAGHDAD, TRIPOLI, THE HAGUE.

SADAT/BEGIN MEETING

1. IT WAS ANNOUNCED IN CAIRO LAST NIGHT THAT PRESIDENT SADAT WILL HOLD TALKS WITH MR BEGIN ON JUNE 4 AT SHARM EL SHEIKH. THIS PROPOSAL HAD BEEN CONVEYED TO THE PRESIDENT BY MR SHARON, WHO WAS VISITING EGYPT LAST WEEK AS THE GUEST OF THE EGYPTIAN MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, AND THE DETAILS WERE FINALISED WITH MR BEGIN YESTERDAY MORNING BY TELEPHONE.

2. THIS ANNOUNCEMENT HAS SURPRISED EVERYONE HERE, INCLUDING THE THE US EMBASSY, WHO WERE GIVEN NO PRIOR WARNING THOUGH THEY CANNOT SPEAK FOR WASHINGTON. WHILE ONE CAN THINK OF VARIOUS REASONS WHY A MEETING AT THIS TIME MIGHT BE DESIRABLE FOR BEGIN (IT IS RECOGNISED HERE THAT HE AND SHARON MAY WANT TO PROVE TO FLOATING VOTERS THAT THEY ARE STILL ON GOOD PERSONAL TERMS WITH EGYPTIAN LEADERS) THERE IS ON THE FACE OF IT LITTLE OR NOTHING TO BE GAINED BY PRESIDENT SADAT FROM SUCH A MEETING. THE OFFICIAL PURPOSE OF THE SUMMIT AS SET OUT IN AL AHAM IS TO DISCUSS:

(I) DETERMINATION OF FUTURE PEACE STEPS ACCORDING TO THE CAMP DAVID ACCORDS.,

(II) DEVELOPMENTS IN THE LEBANON.,

(III) CURRENT DEVELOPMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST REGION., AND

(IV) BILATERAL RELATIONS BETWEEN EGYPT AND ISRAEL.

BUT OTHER NEWSPAPERS TOOK DIFFERENT LINES SUGGESTING NO COORDINATED BRIEFING AND PERHAPS THAT SADAT HIMSELF, WITH WHOM

IMMEDIATE

ADVANCE COPY

Middle East

MF

COORDINATED BRIEFING AND PERHAPS THAT SADAT HIMSELF, WITH MOST  
THE MAIN EDITORS ARE USUALLY IN TOUCH PERSONALLY ON SUCH OCCASIONS.  
HAS NOT YET THOUGHT HIS REASONS THROUGH.

3. ALTHOUGH THIS WEEK'S TRIPARTITE TALKS ON THE MULTI-NATIONAL  
FORCE, WHICH I SHALL BE REPORTING SEPARA

LY, DID NOT REACH THE  
STAGE OF A SIGNED AGREEMENT, WITH SEVERAL DETAILS AND DRAFTING  
POINTS WHICH WILL NEED TO BE SORTED OUT AT ANOTHER MEETING IN TEN  
DAYS TIME, THE VIEW OF SENIOR EGYPTIANS AND AMERICANS INVOLVED IS  
THAT THERE IS NO ISSUE HERE WHICH WOULD REQUIRE DECISIONS AT THE  
TOP LEVEL. SIMILARLY WE ARE AWARE OF NO OTHER MAJOR ISSUES IN  
CONNECTION WITH THE CAMP DAVID AGREEMENTS WHICH WOULD REQUIRE  
DECISIONS AT A BILATERAL SUMMIT, THOUGH SADAT MAY POSSIBLY HOPE  
FOR EARLY ISRAELI PHASED WITHDRAWAL FROM THE REMAINING SECTOR OF  
SINAI. SADAT HAD ALWAYS TAKEN THE VIEW THAT THE TIME FOR THE  
MEETING WITH ISRAELI LEADERS WOULD BE AFTER THE ELECTIONS, IN  
PARTICULAR THAT THERE WOULD BE NO POINT IN DISCUSSING THE AUTONOMY  
TALKS FURTHER UNTIL THEN.

4. AS FOR THE LEBANON, WHICH SOME EGYPTIAN PAPERS QUOTED AS MR  
BEGIN'S MAIN REASON FOR WANTING THE MEETING, FEW PEOPLE SERIOUSLY  
CONSIDER THAT THE EGYPTIANS HAVE MUCH OF A ROLE TO PLAY, SINCE  
THEY HAVE NO MEANS OF PUTTING PRESSURE ON THE ISRAELIS WITHOUT  
JEOPARDISING THE SINAI WITHDRAWAL. IT SEEM UNLIKELY THAT PRESIDENT  
SADAT THINKS THAT HE COULD PERSUADE MR BEGIN TO REDUCE TENSION OVER  
THE LEBANON., MORE LIKELY HE WOULD BE EMBARRASSED AT THE TIME OF  
THE MEETING BY SOME FURTHER ISRAELI ATTACKS.

5. SADAT MUST BE AWARE THAT BY AGREEING TO THIS MEETING HE MAY BE  
HELPING BEGIN'S ELECTORAL CHANCES, AND ACCUSED OF DOING SO. BUT  
HE MAY FEEL THAT IN ANY CASE BEGIN MIGHT WIN AND THAT HE SHOULD  
THEREFORE NOT DAMAGE HIS RELATIONS WITH HIM. SADAT MUST ALSO BE  
AWARE OF THE DAMAGE A MEETING WITH BEGIN AT THIS TIME COULD DO TO  
HIS MARGINALLY IMPROVED RELATIONS WITH THE OTHER ARABS, INCLUDING  
THE SUDANESE SHO SHORTLY AFTER HIS VISIT TO KHARTOUM.

6. I AM INCLINED TO THINK THAT, FACED WITH BEGIN'S PROPOSAL,  
SADAT DID NOT WANT TO APPEAR IN EITHER ISRAELI OR AMERICAN EYES  
AS OBSTRUCTIVE OR UNHELPFUL. AS USUAL HE WILL SEE THESE DEVELOP-  
MENTS AS PART OF THE BROAD SWEEP OF HISTORY AND BE DISMISSIVE OF  
DETAIL, CAUSING ANXIETY AMONGST HIS MINISTERS AND OFFICIALS  
THAT HE WILL GIVE AWAY POINTS WON BY THEM IN HARD NEGOTIATIONS.  
THE CONCEPT MAY ALSO HAVE ATTRACTED HIS SENSE OF THEATRE.

FCO PSE PASS TO ALL SAVING ADDRESSEES.