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RR UKMIS NEW YORK
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FM FCO 101230Z
TO PRIORITY WASHINGTON
TELEGRAM NUMBER 1095 OF 10 JUNE
INFO PRIORITY BONN, PARIS AND ROME,
ROUTINE THE HAGUE, BRUSSELS, COPENHAGEN, DUBLIN, LUXEMBOURG,
TEL AVIV, CAIRO, UKMIS NEW YORK
SAVING TO UKDEL NATO AND UKREP BRUSSELS

ARAB/ISRAEL

THE UNITED STATES AMBASSADOR CALLED ON ME THIS MORNING TO ASK WHAT I EXPECTED TO BE THE OUTCOME OF THE FORTHCOMING EUROPEAN COUNCIL'S DISCUSSIONS ON THE MIDDLE EAST.

I TOLD BREWSTER THAT I THOUGHT IT A PITY THAT THERE HAD BEEN SO MUCH CONCERN EXPRESSED IN THE UNITED STATES ABOUT WHAT THE EUROPEANS MIGHT BE SEEKING TO DO. THE FACT WAS THAT NO ONE IN EUROPE WANTED TO DO ANYTHING UNHELPFUL TO THE UNITED STATES, OR TO THE CAMP DAVID PROCESS. NONETHELESS THERE WAS A DIFFERENCE OF PERCEPTION BETWEEN EUROPE AND THE UNITED STATES OVER THE DANGERS INVOLVED. EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS DOUBTED WHETHER THE AUTONOMY TALKS WOULD BE LIKELY ON THEIR OWN TO PRODUCE TANGIBLE RESULTS AND SAW A RISK THAT MODERATE ARAB OPINION WOULD BE MORE AND MORE ALIENATED FROM THE WEST. THE REACTION OF MANY ARAB AND ISLAMIC COUNTRIES TO THE SOVIET INVASION OF AFGHAN-ISTAN AND TO THE DETENTION OF THE AMERICAN HOSTAGES IN IRAN WAS TEMPERED BY WHAT THEY CONSIDERED TO BE A PARALLEL BETWEEN THESE EVENTS AND THE ISRAELI OCCUPATION OF ARAB LANDS. MOREOVER THE SITUATION ON THE WEST BANK WAS GETTING MORE EXPLOSIVE. IT WAS NECESSARY THEREFORE TO TRY TO HOLD THE SITUATION DURING THE PERIOD WHEN THE AMERICANS WOULD BE UNABLE FOR UNDERSTANDABLE ELECTORAL REASONS TO TAKE ANY NEW INITIATIVE THEMSELVES. ALL THE EUROPEANS WERE IN EFFECT SEEKING TO DO WAS TO PLAY FOR TIME UNTIL THE AMERICANS WERE BACK IN BUSINESS. THE EUROPEANS KNEW THEY COULD

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NOT SOLVE THE MIDDLE EAST PROBLEM THEMSELVES: ONLY THE AMERICANS COULD DO SO.

TALK OF AN 'INITIATIVE' BY THE EUROPEANS WAS THEREFORE MISLEADING. THERE WAS NO DISPOSITION TO THINK IN TERMS OF A NEW SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION. ALL THAT WAS ENVISAGED WAS A STATEMENT DEALING IN AN EVEN-HANDED WAY WITH THE RIGHT OF ISRAEL TO EXIST WITHIN SECURE AND RECOGNISED FRONTIERS AND THE RIGHT OF THE PALESTINIANS TO SELF-DETERMINATION. THIS COULD BE FOLLOWED BY SOUNDINGS OF ALL THE PARTIES INVOLVED, INCLUDING THE PLO AS WELL AS OTHER PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATIVES. I DID NOT HOWEVER ENVISAGE ANY BRITISH INVOLVEMENT, AT ANY RATE AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL, IN TALKS WITH THE PLO.

BREWSTER SAID THAT HE PERSONALLY SAW NO PROBLEM WITH ALL THIS, AND HIS GUESS WAS THAT THE ADMINISTRATION WOULD NOT REACT CRITICALLY TO SOMETHING ALONG THESE LINES. THERE WAS, PARTICULARLY IN AN ELECTION YEAR, AN INEVITABLE TENDENCY TO COMPARTMENTALIZE IN THE AMERICAN BUREAUCRACY AND THE INTER-ACTION BETWEEN AFGHANISTAN, IRAN AND THE ARAB/ ISRAEL DISPUTE WAS NOT UNIVERSALLY RECOGNISED IN WASHINGTON. BOTH PRESIDENT CARTER AND MR MUSKIE HAD BEEN OBLIGED IN THEIR RECENT STATEMENTS TO LOOK PARTLY TOWARDS THE US DOMESTIC AUDIENCE. MR BEGIN WOULD LIKE NOTHING BETTER THAN TO MAKE SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL A MAJOR ISSUE IN THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN. THE PROBLEM FOR THE AMERICANS WAS HOW TO APPLY SUFFICIENT PRESSURE TO UNSETTLE HIM WITHOUT SOLIDIFYING ISRAELI OPINION BEHIND HIM. BREWSTER HOPED THEREFORE THAT ANY STATEMENT WHICH WAS ISSUED AT VENICE WOULD BE EVEN-HANDED AS BETWEEN ISRAEL'S SECURITY AND THE PALESTINIANS RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION AND WOULD ALSO CONTAIN, AGAIN IN EVEN-HANDED TERMS, A CONDEMNATION OF TERRORISM.

I TOLD BREWSTER THAT I HOPED THAT THE AMERICAN CONCERN WITH THIS ISSUE WOULD NOT LEAD EITHER PRESIDENT CARTER OR MR REAGAN TO TAKE UP HARDER POSITIONS IN THEIR ELECTION CAMPAIGN THAN THEY MIGHT OTHERWISE HAVE DONE. I SAID ALSO THAT THE AMERICANS SHOULD REALISE THAT FOR THE EUROPEANS NOW TO SAY NOTHING AT VENICE ON THE MIDDLE EAST, GIVEN THE BUILD-UP WHICH

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THERE HAD BEEN, WOULD BE DISASTROUS: THE EUROPEANS WOULD LOSE ALL CREDIBILITY IN ARAB EYES. WHAT WAS BEING CONTEMPLATED WAS A VERY MINIMAL GESTURE: IT WOULD HARDLY BE POSSIBLE FOR THE EUROPEANS TO DO LESS.

CARRINGTON

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~~MR ALEXANDER, NO. 10 D.S.~~

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