

Middle East

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TO PRIORITY FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 292 OF 17 JULY

Read in full

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MY TELS NOS 286 AND 287: BRITAIN/ISRAEL

1. BRITAIN HAS COME IN FOR A DISPROPORTIONATE SHARE OF CRITICISM IN ISRAEL ON MIDDLE EASTERN POLICY RECENTLY. THE POSITIONS WE HAVE TAKEN ARE IN COMMON WITH OUR EUROPEAN PARTNERS, AND IN MANY CASES ARE SHARED BY THE UNITED STATES AND MANY OTHERS. MOREOVER SOME FRENCH ACTIONS (NOTABLY THE SUPPLY OF NUCLEAR MATERIALS TO IRAQ) ARE MORE EVIDENTLY IN CONFLICT WITH ISRAELI INTERESTS, AND SCHMIDT (MY TEL NO 252) SEEMS TO HAVE GONE FURTHER IN SPEAKING FIRMLY TO THE ISRAELIS THAN ANYTHING FROM LONDON.

2. I THINK THAT THERE ARE THREE REASONS WHY WE HAVE BEEN GIVEN SPECIAL TREATMENT BY THE ISRAELIS:

i) ISRAEL'S PROBLEM IS HOW TO BREAK THE COMMON EUROPEAN FRONT, WHICH DEPENDS IN ESSENCE ON THE JOINT VIEWS OF BRITAIN, GERMANY AND FRANCE. THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT HAS PROBABLY CONCLUDED THAT IT HAS LITTLE CHANCE OF CHANGING FRENCH POLICY, AND THAT GERMAN WAR GUILT WILL MAKE IT DIFFICULT FOR GERMANY TO STAND OUT IF BRITAIN'S POSITION CAN BE CHANGED. SO WE BECOME THE KEY TO CHANGING EUROPE'S POLICIES.

ii) BRITAIN IS ALSO REGARDED AS AN EASIER TARGET TO WORK ON BECAUSE OF SUPPOSED DIFFERENCES IN LONDON AND BECAUSE OF OUR JEWISH COMMUNITY. FRANCE'S JEWISH COMMUNITY, THOUGH MUCH BIGGER, HAS TRADITIONALLY NOT BEEN SO RESPONSIVE POLITICALLY TO ISRAELI GOVERNMENT INSPIRATION. THE BRITISH COMMUNITY KNOW BETTER "THEIR DUTY AS JEWS" AS THE PHRASE HERE GOES.

iii) LYING BEHIND ALL THIS, NEVER FAR BELOW THE SURFACE HERE, ARE MEMORIES OF THE MANDATE. TO SAY THAT THE MANDATE LEFT A LOVE HATE RELATIONSHIP IS SUPERFICIAL BUT IT CONTAINS TRUTH. THE TROUBLE IS THAT THE HATE SIDE CAN VERY QUICKLY COME TO THE SURFACE.

ROBINSON

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