

Middle
East

3 TO PM NO 10 DOWNING STREET

CONFIDENTIAL

for
Rund

GRS 260

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FM FCO 101015Z JULY 81

TO IMMEDIATE BEIRUT

TELEGRAM NUMBER 166 OF 10 JULY,

AND TO IMMEDIATE ALL OTHER MIDDLE EAST POSTS,

INFO SAVING TO WASHINGTON, UKMIS NEW YORK, BONN, BRUSSELS,

COPENHAGEN, ATHENS, DUBLIN, THE HAGUE, LUXEMBOURG, PARIS,

ROME AND UKREP BRUSSELS.

PRIME MINISTER'S DINNER WITH ARAB AMBASSADORS

1. THE GUARDIAN OF 7 JULY REPORTED THAT THE ARAB AMBASSADORS IN LONDON CANCELLED A DINNER WITH THE PRIME MINISTER AFTER SHE MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE PRESENCE OF THE PLO LONDON REPRESENTATIVE WOULD BE POLITICALLY EMBARRASSING.

2. THE STORY IS SUBSTANTIALLY ACCURATE AND REFLECTS PRESS BRIEFING BY NO 10 IN RESPONSE TO ENQUIRIES. THE INVITATION TO THE PRIME MINISTER WAS MADE BY THE ARAB AMBASSADORS IN LONDON EARLY THIS YEAR AND WAS ACCEPTED. HOWEVER THE GUEST LIST SENT SUBSEQUENTLY TO NO 10 CONTAINED THE NAME OF THE LONDON PLO REPRESENTATIVE, NABIL RAMLAWI, (WHO HAS SINCE BEEN MADE 'DEAN' OF THE ARAB DIPLOMATIC CORPS IN LONDON: WE DO NOT RECOGNIZE SUCH A POSITION). IT WAS MADE CLEAR TO THE ARAB AMBASSADORS THAT THE PRIME MINISTER COULD NOT ATTEND A DINNER WITH RAMLAWI PRESENT IN VIEW OF THE GOVERNMENT'S PRACTICE THAT MINISTERS DO NOT MEET REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PLO (MY TELNO GUIDANCE 89, PARAGRAPH 12). THE AMBASSADORS FOR THEIR PART DID NOT FEEL ABLE TO WITHDRAW RAMLAWI'S INVITATION AND CANCELLED THE DINNER. THERE WAS NO ACRIMONY.

3. IF YOU ARE ASKED ABOUT THIS, YOU SHOULD DRAW ON THE ABOVE AS APPROPRIATE, STRESSING THAT THE DINNER WAS CANCELLED BY MUTUAL AGREEMENT AND THERE WAS NO QUESTION OF ILL WILL OR ILL FEELINGS ON EITHER SIDE.

CARRINGTON

MIDDLE EAST STANDARD

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