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FM BEIRUT 29 NPT

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 347 OF 29 JUNE

INFO DAMASCUS AMMAN TEL AVIV JEDDA UKMIS NEW YORK AND WASHINGTON  
INFO SAVING OTHER MIDDLE EAST POSTS

MY TELNO 345 OF 29 JUNE: LEBANON

1. WHEN I SAW BASHIR QBAYBES ON 29 JUNE HE SAID ARAFAT WAS IRRESPONSIBLY PLAYING FOR TIME. ARAFAT WOULD HAVE MANY LIVES ON HIS CONSCIENCE.

2. BASHIR WENT ON TO SAY FRANKLY HE ONLY WANTED THE AMERICANS, FRENCH AND OURSELVES TO LEAVE THEM IN PEACE. THEY WOULD FINISH THE JOB QUICKLY. AFTERWARDS WE MIGHT WELL HAVE AN EXPLICIT ROLE TO PLAY IN UNITING THE VARIOUS GROUPS OF LEBANESE SINCE HE FEARED THE ACTION THEY WOULD HAVE TO TAKE OVER THE PALESTINIANS WOULD SHOCK AND DIVIDE THE COUNTRY.

3. WHEN I SAW HIM LATER THE SAME DAY HABIB SOMEWHAT DISCOUNTED THE REMARKS OF BASHIR. HE SAID THAT IT COULD BE A FORM OF PRESS-URISING THE AMERICANS AND THAT BASHIR WAS HOPING I WOULD PASS ON HIS REMARKS TO THEM.

4. HABIB ALSO SAID, HOWEVER THAT THEY COULD NOT GO ON LIKE THIS INDEFINITELY. THE PALESTINIANS IMAGINE THAT THEY COULD BARGAIN BUT DID NOT HAVE ANY CARDS IN THEIR HANDS. NEVERTHELESS HE WAS NOT GIVING UP AT LEAST UNTIL THE PRESENT ROUND OF NEGOTIATIONS WERE COMPLETE. HE HAD GOT TO THE STAGE OF GETTING THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT TO PROMISE TO STATE THEIR CASE CLEARLY TO PALESTINE AND HAD ARRANGED A MEETING BETWEEN WAZZAN (WHO IS STILL PRIME MINISTER) AND THE PALESTINIANS.

5. (THE U.S. AMBASSADOR COMMENTED SEPARATELY THAT THE TROUBLE WAS THAT WHEN THE LEBANESE ACTUALLY MET THE PALESTINIANS THEY ALWAYS SAID THAT IT WAS THE AMERICANS NOT THEMSELVES WHO WERE SETTING OUT CONDITIONS).

6. I DO NOT LIKE THE LOOK OF THE SITUATION AT ALL. BASHIR IS OBVIOUSLY IN ISRAEL'S CONFIDENCE.

7. FCO PLEASE PASS ALL ADDRESSEES.

ROBERTS

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