

MIDDLE EAST: ADVANCE COPIES

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Middle East

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FM WASHINGTON 172335Z DEC 81
TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELEGRAM NUMBER 3841 OF 17 DECEMBER

INFO IMMEDIATE UKMIS NEW YORK
PRIORITY TEL AVIV
ROUTINE CAIRO DAMASCUS BEIRUT AMMAN JEDDA PARIS BONN

YOUR TELNO 1939 (NOT TO ALL): GOLAN

1. I SPOKE TO VELIOTES THIS MORNING TO UNDERLINE YOUR CONCERN THAT THE AMERICANS SHOULD TAKE SOME PRACTICAL ACTION TO DEMONSTRATE TO THE ISRAELIS THAT THEY CANNOT ACT AS THEY HAVE OVER THE GOLAN WITH IMPUNITY. I ASKED HIM WHAT STEPS THE AMERICANS HAD IN MIND.

2. VELIOTES SAID THAT HE HAD SPOKEN TO THE ISRAELI AMBASSADOR YESTERDAY ON HAIG'S INSTRUCTIONS TO EXPRESS GRAVE CONCERN ABOUT THE MILITARY BUILD-UP IN NORTHERN ISRAEL. A REPLY FROM SHAMIR HAD JUST BEEN DELIVERED: IT CONTAINED ASSURANCES THAT ISRAEL HAD NO OFFENSIVE INTENTIONS AND WOULD ONLY REACT IF ATTACKED, AND THAT IT WOULD CARRY OUT ALL ITS COMMITMENTS UNDER THE EGYPT/ISRAEL PEACE TREATY.

3. VELIOTES SAID THAT THE AMERICANS WERE CONSIDERING FURTHER ACTION. FINAL DECISIONS HAD NOT YET BEEN TAKEN BUT HE THOUGHT [unclear] WITHIN THE NEXT FORTY-EIGHT

3. VELIOTES SAID THAT THE AMERICANS WERE CONSIDERING FURTHER ACTION. FINAL DECISIONS HAD NOT YET BEEN TAKEN BUT HE THOUGHT THAT A PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT MIGHT BE MADE WITHIN THE NEXT FORTY-EIGHT HOURS. THE MEASURES UNDER CONSIDERATION WERE SIGNIFICANT AND WOULD BE IN THE CONTEXT OF BILATERAL RELATIONS. HE DECLINED TO GIVE DETAILS BUT IMPLIED IN ANSWER TO A QUESTION THAT SUSPENSION OF MILITARY SUPPLIES OR ECONOMIC AID WAS UNLIKELY, NOT LEAST BECAUSE OF THE PROBLEM OF WHEN SUCH A BAN COULD BE LIFTED. IT IS, HOWEVER, DIFFICULT TO SEE WHAT OTHER BILATERAL MEASURES WOULD HAVE ANY EFFECT ON THE ISRAELIS. A MEMBER OF HIS STAFF CONFIDED TO ME LATER THAT HE THOUGHT WE WOULD BE PLEASED WITH THE FURTHER MEASURES AGAINST ISRAEL THAT HAD BEEN DECIDED UPON. (COMMENT: WE WILL CONTINUE TO PRESS FOR DETAILS EMPHASISING THE ADVANTAGES OF PRIOR NOTICE.)

4. VELIOTES REITERATED THAT THE AMERICANS HAD HAD NO PRIOR KNOWLEDGE OF THE ISRAELI ACTION AND HAD CERTAINLY NOT BEEN ALERTED TO IT BY PERES AS THE FRENCH HAVE APPARENTLY SUGGESTED. THEY WERE NOW TRYING TO TURN THE EPISODE TO SOME ADVANTAGE BY SECURING THE INCLUSION IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION OF REFERENCES TO RESOLUTIONS 242, 338 AND 358. THIS WOULD SECURE INTERNATIONAL REAFFIRMATION OF THE BASIC ELEMENTS OF THE PEACE PROCESS AND REASSURE THE SYRIANS THAT THEY APPLIED TO THE GOLAN. ELIOTES ALSO HOPED TO SECURE SOME RECONFIRMATION FROM THE ISRAELIS THAT THEY REMAIN PREPARED TO NEGOTIATE PEACE WITH ALL THEIR NEIGHBOURS ON THE BASIS OF THE UN RESOLUTIONS.

5. VELIOTES COMMENTED THAT THE SYRIANS WERE SO FAR BEING VERY CAREFUL AND RESTRAINED. THE SAUDIS HAD BEEN IN TOUCH WITH THEM AND HAD ASSURED THE AMERICANS THAT THEY COULD OBTAIN MORE TIME IF THIS WAS REQUIRED. THE AMERICANS HAD MADE IT CLEAR TO THE SYRIANS THAT THEY WOULD VETO MANDATORY SANCTIONS AGAINST ISRAEL AND THE SYRIANS SEEMED TO ACCEPT THIS.

6. VELIOTES OBSERVED THAT ISRAELI ACTIONS APPEARED TO SERVE ASAD'S PURPOSES. IT WOULD NOW BE FAR MORE DIFFICULT TO SECURE ANY SYRIAN MILITARY WITHDRAWAL FROM LEBANON OR CONCESSIONS OVER THE SAMS: SYRIA HAD BEEN BROUGHT OUT OF ITS ISOLATION AND THE SAUDIS BROUGHT TO RESUME FINANCIAL AID TO SYRIA WHICH THEY HAD BEEN READY TO SUSPEND AFTER THE FEZ SUMMIT. HE NOTED GLOOMILY THAT BEGIN'S NEXT STEP WOULD PROBABLY BE TO MOVE HIS OFFICE TO EAST JERUSALEM BEFORE APRIL AS A FURTHER TEST OF THE EGYPTIAN ATTITUDE.

(COMMENT: IT LOOKS AS THOUGH BEGIN MAY BE READY TO USE QUOTE TESTING THE EGYPTIANS UNQUOTE AS COVER FOR GETTING

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(COMMENT: IT LOOKS AS THOUGH BEGIN MAY BE READY TO USE QUOTE
TESTING THE EGYPTIANS UNQUOTE AS COVER FOR GETTING
AWAY WITH WHATEVER HE CAN WHILST HE STILL HOLDS THE SINAI
TRUMP).

7. I ASKED ABOUT THE EFFECT OF THE ANNEXATION OF THE GOLAN ON
THE AUTONOMY TALKS. VELIOTES ADMITTED THAT IT MADE THINGS
MUCH MORE DIFFICULT FOR THE EGYPTIANS. A MAJOR US EFFORT
TO COME TO GRIPS WITH ISSUES OF SUBSTANCE WOULD BE NEEDED.
THE TALKS AT WORKING LEVEL HAD SUCCEEDED IN DEFINING THE
POSITIONS OF THE TWO PARTIES ON THE KEY ISSUES, AN ESSENTIAL
PRELIMINARY. THE AMERICANS WERE ABOUT TO REASSESS IN DETAIL HOW THEY
COULD ENGAGE MORE INTENSIVELY IN THE PROCESS. HIGH LEVEL POLITICAL
DECISIONS WOULD BE REQUIRED BEFORE THE AMERICANS EMBARKED ON ANY
EFFORT TO BRIDGE THE GAPS. MUBARAK'S VISIT TO THE US,
NOW ARRANGED FOR 3-4 FEBRUARY, WOULD OFFER AN OPPORTUNITY FOR
DISCUSSION. THE AMERICANS HAD NO INTENTION OF DRAGGING OUT THE
AUTONOMY TALKS BUT VELIOTES THOUGHT THAT THEY WERE LIKELY
TO CONTINUE WELL BEYOND APRIL, IF ONLY BECAUSE THE EGYPTIANS
WOULD NOT WISH TO BE ACCUSED OF MAKING CONCESSIONS AT THE
EXPENSE OF THE PALESTINIANS IN ORDER TO SECURE ISRAELI
WITHDRAWAL FROM SINAI.

HENDERSON

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