

Prime Minister

Agreement on an early response
to the Israelis appears to have
cluded us so far.

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FROM FCO 301200 DEC 81

TO IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON AND TO CAIRO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 2001 OF 30 DECEMBER

REPEATED IMMEDIATE PARIS, ROME, THE HAGUE PRIORITY TEL AVIV

UKMIS NEW YORK.

YOUR TELNO 3945: SINAI MFO

1. BULLARD DISCUSSED THIS WITH HIS COLLEAGUES FROM THE THREE IN THE MARGINS OF THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE MEETING ON POLAND ON 30 DECEMBER. HE EXPLAINED THAT WE WERE INCREASINGLY PERSUADED THAT THE LESSER OF TWO EVILS WAS TO REPLY TO SHAMIR'S LETTER NOW. IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO SAY HOW LONG IT WOULD TAKE FOR THE DUST TO SETTLE AFTER THE SECOND ROUND IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL. IF COUNCIL CONSIDERATION DRAGGED ON, AS IT MIGHT, WE COULD DRIFT INTO FEBRUARY WITHOUT AN OPPORTUNE MOMENT HAVING ARRIVED. MEANWHILE IT WAS DIFFICULT TO TAKE DISCUSSIONS ON THE PRACTICAL AND LEGAL ARRANGEMENTS VERY FAR, AND THE AMERICANS WERE PRESSING FOR AN EARLY REPLY.

2. BOTTAI (ITALY) SAID THAT HIS GOVERNMENT TOOK THE SAME VIEW. HE THOUGHT THAT THE ISRAELIS WOULD BE MORE INCLINED TO ACCEPT OUR OFFER NOW THAN LATER. THE EGYPTIANS HAD ALSO MADE CLEAR THAT THEY FAVOURED A FORTHCOMING ATTITUDE FROM THE FOUR.

REININK (NETHERLANDS)

SAID THAT VAN DER STOEL WAS CONCERNED BY THE LIKELY ARAB REACTION. THE IRAQIS HAD ALREADY MADE CLEAR BILATERALLY THAT THEY HELD STRONG VIEWS. THE DUTCH HAD NO DOUBT THAT A REPLY SHOULD BE SENT TO SHAMIR BUT DID NOT THINK THAT NOW WAS THE RIGHT MOMENT. IT WOULD BE BETTER TO WAIT UNTIL IT WAS CLEAR WHAT THE SECOND ROUND IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL COULD BRING.

ANDREANI (FRANCE) SAID THAT CHEYSSON CONTINUED TO FAVOUR DELAY. HE SAW NO ADVANTAGE IN RUSHING AND NO DISADVANTAGE IN WAITING A LITTLE LONGER. THE ABSENCE OF A REPLY FROM THE FOUR CONTRIBUTED TO THE PRESSURE ON ISRAEL OVER GOLAN, ALTHOUGH HE RECOGNISED

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THAT THIS CONTRIBUTION WAS VERY SMALL. CHEYSSON WOULD BE IN CAIRO AT THE WEEKEND. IF THE EGYPTIAN POSITION WERE STRONGLY IN FAVOUR OF A QUICK REPLY, THIS MIGHT HAVE SOME EFFECT ON CHEYSSON'S VIEWS. BUT AS THINGS STOOD HE, ANDREANI, COULD NOT AGREE TO A REPLY NOW.

IN FURTHER DISCUSSION BOTTAI ARGUED THAT A REPLY WOULD BE MORE DIFFICULT AFTER THE SECURITY COUNCIL HAD MET, NOT EASIER. THE MIDDLE EAST WOULD BE MORE POLARISED THAN BEFORE. REININK SAID THAT THE POSSIBILITY OF A CONSTRUCTIVE OUTCOME FROM THE SECURITY COUNCIL COULD NOT BE RULED OUT. IT WOULD BE BETTER TO WAIT AND SEE. TO REPLY NOW WOULD BE TO ADD INSULT TO INJURY AS FAR AS THE ARABS WERE CONCERNED.

3. IT WAS AGREED, THAT IN THE LIGHT OF THE VIEWS EXPRESSED, A DECISION ON THE TIMING OF THE REPLY TO SHAMIR COULD NOT BE TAKEN YET. THE FOUR POLITICAL DIRECTORS SHOULD REPORT TO THEIR FOREIGN MINISTERS. THE RESULT OF CHEYSSON'S VISIT TO EGYPT WOULD BE OF PARTICULAR INTEREST. BULLARD SAID THAT WE WOULD TELL THE AMERICANS WHAT HAD TRANSPIRED.

4. WE HAVE ALREADY TOLD THE US EMBASSY HERE THE POSITION. WASHINGTON SHOULD REPEAT THIS TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT, EXPLAINING THAT WHILE WE FAVOUR A REPLY NOW OUSELVES WE ARE NOT WILLING TO GO AHEAD WITHOUT THE AGREEMENT OF THE FOUR AS A WHOLE AND THAT WE HAVE NO PRESIDENCY ROLE IN THE FOUR WHICH WOULD ENABLE US TO PRESS THE FRENCH AND DUTCH HARD TO CHANGE THEIR MINDS. (see attached)

5. (FOR CAIRO) GRATEFUL FOR YOUR ASSESSMENT OF EGYPTIAN VIEWS. THE EGYPTIANS APPEAR TO HAVE MADE MORE OR LESS FORMAL APPROACHES TO BOTH THE ITALIANS AND DUTCH IN FAVOUR OF A FORTHCOMING EUROPEAN RESPONSE ALTHOUGH, UNDER QUESTIONING FROM ANDREANI, BOTH BOTTAI AND REININK SAID THAT THE EGYPTIANS HAD NOT SPECIFICALLY ASKED THE FOUR TO REPLY QUICKLY TO SHAMIR. WE OURSELVES HAVE NOT HAD AN EGYPTIAN APPROACH ON THIS SUBJECT. (also attached)

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