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FM FCO 311430Z DECEMBER 81

TO IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON

TELEGRAM NUMBER 2009 OF 31 DECEMBER

INFO IMMEDIATE DAMASCUS, TEL AVIV, CAIRO, JEDDA, UKMIS NEW YORK.

SECURITY COUNCIL: GOLAN HEIGHTS

1. THE US EMBASSY HERE GAVE US THIS MORNING THE RESULTS OF AMERICAN CONSULTATIONS WITH THE SYRIANS AND SAUDIS ON THE BASIS OF THE IDEAS SET OUT IN WASHINGTON TELNO 3938. THE US AMBASSADOR IN DAMASCUS HAD HAD A LONG MEETING WITH KHADDAM ON 30 DECEMBER IN WHICH HE HAD OUTLINED THE PROPOSED US STRATEGY AND CONFIRMED THAT THE US WOULD VETO SANCTIONS IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL. KHADDAM HAD APPARENTLY BEEN UNIMPRESSED. HE HAD SAID THAT PRACTICAL MEASURES AGAINST ISRAEL WERE NEEDED IN THE CONTEXT OF THE UN CHARTER (ALTHOUGH HE CONCEDED THAT THESE WOULD NOT NECESSARILY HAVE TO BE UNDER CHAPTER SEVEN.) HE HAD ASKED FOR CONCRETE EXAMPLES OF THE ACTION THE US WAS PREPARED TO TAKE TO FOLLOW UP THEIR REJECTION OF THE ISRAELI LAW ON GOLAN AS INVALID. HE HAD DESCRIBED THE US ARGUMENT THAT TO IMPOSE SANCTIONS ON ISRAEL WOULD BE TO ACCEPT THE ISRAELI ACTION AS A FAIT ACCOMPLI AS UNCONVINCING. HE HAD ALSO SAID THAT EVEN IF THE US WERE TO SUCCEED IN OBTAINING FROM THE ISRAELIS A STATEMENT THAT THEY WERE READY TO NEGOTIATE PEACE WITH SYRIA WITHOUT PRECONDITIONS, THIS WOULD NOT BE ENOUGH. HE DID NOT SEE HOW SYRIA COULD NEGOTIATE WITH ISRAEL WHILE THE KNESSET LAW REMAINED IN FORCE. IN SUM, KHADDAM HAD MADE IT CLEAR TO THE US AMBASSADOR THAT AS FAR AS HE WAS CONCERNED, PRESENT US THINKING HELD NO ATTRACTIONS FOR SYRIA, ALTHOUGH THE SYRIANS REMAINED INTERESTED IN CONTINUING THE DIALOGUE WITH THE US. THE US AMBASSADOR'S OWN COMMENTS TO WASHINGTON HAD BEEN THAT OBVIOUSLY MORE WOULD BE NEEDED IF THE SYRIANS WERE TO BE GOT ON BOARD.

2. THE US AMBASSADOR IN JEDDA HAD ALSO HAD A TWO HOUR MEETING WITH PRINCE SAUD ON 30 DECEMBER. SAUD HAD BEEN SYMPATHETIC TO

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THE GENERAL US APPROACH AND HAD CONFIRMED THAT SYRIA WAS WILLING TO WORK WITH THE AMERICANS ON LANGUAGE WHICH COULD AVOID A US VETO. HE HAD HAD NO SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS OF HIS OWN TO MAKE BUT HAD SAID THAT THE AMERICANS WOULD NEED TO OFFER MORE THAN MERE CONDEMNATION OF ISRAEL AND REPETITION OF SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 497. HE HAD URGED THE AMERICANS TO FOCUS ON WHAT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE, SHORT OF MANDATORY SANCTIONS, TO SHOW THAT THE US WERE READY TO TAKE ON ISRAEL OVER AN ISSUE OF THIS KIND. HE HAD DOUBTED THAT SYRIA COULD ACKNOWLEDGE PUBLICLY RESOLUTION 242. SAUD'S GENERAL VIEW WAS THAT THE RENEWED SECURITY COUNCIL CONSIDERATION GAVE THE AMERICANS AN OPPORTUNITY TO TAKE A STRONG STAND AGAINST ISRAEL AND REASSURE THE ARABS OF AMERICAN EVENHANDEDNESS.

3. MEANWHILE THE ISRAELI EMBASSY HERE HANDED OVER ON 31 DECEMBER THE TEXT OF A LETTER GIVEN TO THE UN SECRETARY GENERAL BY THE ISRAELI PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE ON 29 DECEMBER. THIS REHEARSES THE ISRAELI ARGUMENTS FOR THE GOLAN LAW, CONCENTRATING ON SYRIAN REFUSAL TO NEGOTIATE PEACE WITH ISRAEL. THE LETTER CONCLUDES BY SAYING QUOTE THE GOVERNMENT OF ISRAEL WISHES TO REITERATE THAT IT IS WILLING, NOW AS ALWAYS, TO NEGOTIATE UNCONDITIONALLY WITH SYRIA, AS WITH ITS OTHER NEIGHBOURS, FOR A LASTING PEACE, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS 242 AND 338. THE GOLAN HEIGHTS LAW DOES NOT PRECLUDE OR IMPAIR SUCH NEGOTIATIONS UNQUOTE. THIS IS WHAT THE AMERICANS WERE HOPING TO PERSUADE THE ISRAELIS TO SAY. BUT KHADDAM'S COMMENTS TO THE US AMBASSADOR SUGGEST THAT SUCH A STATEMENT WILL CUT LITTLE ICE WITH THE SYRIANS AND WILL NOT TAKE THE HEAT OUT OF THE SITUATION.

4. GRATEFUL FOR ANYTHING FURTHER YOU CAN DISCOVER ABOUT US THINKING IN THE LIGHT OF THE SYRIAN AND SAUDI REACTIONS DESCRIBED ABOVE.

CARRINGTON

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