

Prime Minister

The Israelis are reported to have said that President Mubarak's visit should not go ahead if he will not visit Jerusalem. Mubarak's message to you (attached) simply says that the visit will have to be postponed if the Israelis insist on this.

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TO IMMEDIATE FCO
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JEDDA, KUWAIT

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MY TELNO 103: PRESIDENT MUBARAK'S VISIT TO ISRAEL

1. I WAS SUMMONED THIS AFTERNOON BY THE FOREIGN MINISTER TO BE TOLD ABOUT THE NEW DIFFICULTY THAT HAS ARISEN WITH THE ISRAELIS, OVER JERUSALEM. HE HANDED ME AN "ORAL MESSAGE" FROM PRESIDENT MUBARAK TO THE PRIME MINISTER, WHICH SETS OUT THE EGYPTIAN POSITION AT LENGTH. TEXT IN MIFT (NOT REPEATED TO ALL). SIMILAR MESSAGES ARE GOING TO THE OTHER EUROPEAN HEADS OF GOVERNMENT WHOM MUBARAK MET ON HIS RECENT TOUR, AND AMBASSADOR GHORBAL HAS RETURNED TO WASHINGTON WITH A MESSAGE FOR PRESIDENT REAGAN.

2. KAMAL HASSAN ALI'S MAIN POINT WAS THAT THE ISRAELIS WERE WELL AWARE OF THE DIFFICULTY THAT VISITING JERUSALEM HAS POSED FOR THE EGYPTIANS EVER SINCE THE PASSAGE OF THE KNESSET BILL, AND HAD ON THE WHOLE BEEN CO-OPERATIVE IN FINDING WAYS ROUND IT (TO THE EXAMPLES QUOTED IN MUBARAK'S MESSAGE HE ADDED THE EXCHANGE OF RATIFICATIONS OF THE PEACE TREATY AT THE US FIELD MISSION IN SINAI, THOUGH THE ISRAELIS HAD WANTED JERUSALEM). IT WOULD HAVE BEEN IMPOSSIBLE FOR MUBARAK TO GO TO JERUSALEM IN THE SAME MONTH IN WHICH JUDGEMENT IS TO BE GIVEN IN THE TRIAL OF SADAT'S ASSASSINS AND WITH THE TRIAL OF OTHER FUNDAMENTALISTS DUE TO BEGIN ON 30 MARCH. THE EGYPTIANS HAD SAID AS MUCH LAST WEEK TO SHAMIR, WHO HAD UNDERTAKEN TO SEEK A COMPROMISE. THE EGYPTIANS WERE THEREFORE SURPRISED TO LEARN FROM THE PRESS LEAKS, AND THE SUBSEQUENT ANNOUNCEMENT AFTER TODAY'S ISRAELI CABINET MEETING, THAT IF JERUSALEM COULD NOT BE INCLUDED THE ISRAELIS WOULD PREFER THE VISIT TO BE CANCELLED.

3. I ASKED WHETHER THE EGYPTIANS REGARDED THIS AS A SERIOUS DEVELOPMENT WHICH MIGHT HAVE DAMAGING CONSEQUENCES. KAMAL ALI REPLIED WITH A SMILE THAT IN EGYPTIAN/ISRAELI RELATIONS THE

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UNEXPECTED HAD USUALLY COME FROM ONLY TWO SOURCES, PRESIDENT SADAT AND MR BEGIN, AND SADAT WAS NOW GONE. HE HOPED BEGIN WOULD RESIST THE TEMPTATION TO MAKE A MAJOR ISSUE OUT OF THE AFFAIR. HE DID NOT RISE TO MY SUGGESTION THAT THE EGYPTIANS MIGHT BE SECRETLY RELIEVED TO BE SPARED THE EMBARRASSMENT OF MUBARAK'S VISITING ISRAEL AT ALL AT THE PRESENT TIME. I SUSPECT THAT THEY ARE, THOUGH THEIR NERVOUSNESS IS APPARENT FROM THE FACT THAT THE LATEST UPSET HAS BEEN REPORTED ONLY INDIRECTLY (QUOTING ISRAEL RADIO) IN THE LOCAL MEDIA.

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