

MIDDLE EAST: ADVANCE COPIES

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MR EGERTON
SIR J BULLARD
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CONFIDENTIAL

FM ALGIERS 231808Z FEBRUARY 83

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 60 OF 23 FEBRUARY 1983

INFO PRIORITY TO WASHINGTON, UKMIS NEW YORK, ME POSTS

MIPT: PNC: POLITICAL STATEMENT

1. I REGRET THAT I WAS UNABLE TO GET TO SEE ARAFAT OR PLO TOP PEOPLE. MAHMOUD LABADI AND SHAFIQ AL-HOUT HAD INTENDED TO COME ROUND FOR A DRINK LAST NIGHT BUT IN THE EVENT THE SESSION DID NOT CLOSE UNTIL NEARLY MIDNIGHT AND THEY DEPARTED THIS MORNING.

2. I THINK ON THE WHOLE ARAFAT HAS REASON TO BE SATISFIED, THOUGH I DOUBT WHETHER THE CONGRESS WOULD HAVE BEEN HELD IF HE HAD NOT BEEN PRETTY SURE HE WOULD GET WHAT HE WANTED.

3. THE TERMS OF SOME OF THE DECLARATION ARE MORE MILITANT THAN WE MIGHT HAVE HOPED FOR, BUT THIS REALLY WAS INEVITABLE GIVEN THE TOTAL LACK OF AMERICAN CREDIBILITY. (MAHMOUD LABADI EXPRESSED THIS STRONGLY TO ME ON THE PHONE.)

4. IT IS DISAPPOINTING THAT HUSSEIN IS GRANTED NO MANDATE, THOUGH ARAFAT'S UNCHALLENGED RE-ELECTION MUST GIVE THE LATTER CONSIDERABLE ROOM FOR MANOEUVRE.

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5. BUT THERE ARE POSITIVE ASPECTS:

(A) THE POLICY OF THE ORIGINAL PLO CHARTERS, SO EFFECTIVELY EXPLOITED BY ISRAELI PROPAGANDA, IS NOW CLEARLY A DEAD LETTER.

(B) WHILE THE REAGAN PLAN IS REJECTED, CONFEDERATION WITH JORDAN IS APPROVED, A CHANGE IN POLICY WHICH IS A DIRECT RESPONSE TO THE REAGAN INITIATIVE.

(C) TERRORISM AND INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM IS EXPLICITLY CONDEMNED, WITH THE NOT UNREASONABLE RIDER THAT ISRAELI AGGRESSION IN LEBANON COMES UNDER THAT HEADING.

(D) THE QUOTE STEADFASTNESS FRONT UNQUOTE IS OBLIQUELY BUT FIRMLY SNUBBED.

(E) WE ESCAPE ANY CRITICISM.

5. AS A PUBLICITY EXERCISE, THE CONGRESS MUST BE RECKONED A CONSIDERABLE SUCCESS. JOURNALIST FRIENDS TELL ME THAT 1500 GUESTS WERE EXPECTED BUT 4000 ARRIVED.

STRACHAN

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SENT/RECD AT 231844Z NMG/MNJ