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FM JERUSALEM 271100Z JUL 83

PS/TO. NO. 10. DOWNING STREET.

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 58 OF 27 JULY

INFO PRIORITY AMMAN CAIRO TEL AVIV UKMIS NEW YORK WASHINGTON

HEBRON

1. THE LATEST OUTRAGE IN WHICH THREE ARABS WERE KILLED IN THE ATTACK ON THE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY IN HEBRON YESTERDAY HAS CAUSED FURTHER TENSION IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES. THERE WERE DISTURBANCES IN SOME PARTS OF THE WEST BANK YESTERDAY, WITH ONE GIRL KILLED IN NABLUS IN A CONFRONTATION BETWEEN THE SECURITY FORCES AND ARAB DEMONSTRATORS. A GENERAL STRIKE WAS CALLED FOR TODAY AND TOMORROW BUT IS SO FAR BEING OBSERVED ONLY IN EAST JERUSALEM AND NABLUS. THIS REACTION IS MUCH MORE LIMITED THAN IT WOULD HAVE BEEN ONLY A YEAR OR TWO AGO, AND MAY THEREFORE WELL INDICATE THE PRESENT LOW STATE OF MORALE HERE.

2. HEBRON ITSELF IS UNDER CURFEW AND SEALED OFF: I WAS PREVENTED FROM ENTERING THE TOWN TODAY.

3. THE IDENTITY OF THOSE RESPONSIBLE HAS NOT YET BEEN ESTABLISHED. ISRAEL RADIO HAS INCLUDED INTER-PLO RIVALRY AMONG THE VARIOUS POSSIBILITIES. THE ARAB COMMUNITY ARE HOWEVER CONVINCED THAT THE ATTACK WAS THE WORK OF JEWISH EXTREMISTS AND THAT IT WAS PRIMARILY TO AVENGE THE STABBING OF A SETTLER IN HEBRON THREE WEEKS AGO. THE SCALE AND NATURE OF THE ATTACK ARE CERTAINLY INCONSISTENT WITH PREVIOUS INCIDENTS INVOLVING RIVAL PLO FACTIONS HERE. ON THE OTHER HAND, THERE HAVE BEEN A NUMBER OF LESS SERIOUS ATTACKS AGAINST THE ARABS IN HEBRON IN RECENT MONTHS, NOTABLY THE PLANTING OF GRENADES (ALSO USED THIS TIME) IN A FOOTBALL FIELD LAST OCTOBER (MY TELELETTER 014/1 OF 3 NOVEMBER 1982 TO CHAPLIN, NENAD).

4. THE ISRAELI AUTHORITIES HAVE STATED THAT THEY WILL DILIGENTLY HUNT DOWN THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ATTACK. HOWEVER, AS THE ENGLISH-LANGUAGE JERUSALEM POST POINTS OUT IN AN EDITORIAL TODAY, 'PAST EXPERIENCE SUGGESTS' THAT DESPITE THIS PROMISE 'THE KILLERS AT THE UNIVERSITY MAY WELL REMAIN AT LARGE'. THE PAPER ONCE AGAIN CONTRASTS THE AUTHORITIES' TREATMENT OF ATTACKS ON JEWS WITH THEIR HANDLING OF CRIMES AGAINST ARABS IN THE TERRITORIES.

HAMLEY

MIDDLE EAST

STANDARD

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ECD MR EGERTON
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