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MY TELNO 345: THE PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO ISRAEL:  
EGYPTIAN REACTIONS

SUMMARY

1. THE EGYPTIAN FOREIGN MINISTER, IN A BBC ARABIC SERVICE INTERVIEW WIDELY REPORTED IN TODAY'S EGYPTIAN PRESS, WELCOMES MRS THATCHER'S STATEMENTS IN ISRAEL ON THE PALESTINIAN RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION BUT CRITICISES HER SUGGESTION THAT AN ALTERNATIVE LEADERSHIP MIGHT HAVE TO BE FOUND. SOME ADVERSE COMMENT IN THE EGYPTIAN PRESS.

DETAIL

2. THE EGYPTIAN PRESS TODAY REPORTS PROMINENTLY AN INTERVIEW GIVEN BY THE EGYPTIAN FOREIGN MINISTER TO THE BBC ARABIC SERVICE, COMMENTING ON THE PRIME MINISTER'S REMARKS IN ISRAEL ABOUT AN ALTERNATIVE PALESTINIAN LEADERSHIP. MAGID SAID THAT THE CHOICE OF LEADERS SHOULD BE LEFT TO THE PALESTINIANS ALONE AND THAT "NO OTHER PARTY HAD A RIGHT TO INTERFERE IN THE MATTER" (SEE MY TELNO 338 GIVING MAGID'S VIEWS ON THIS PRIOR TO THE PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT). HE REAFFIRMED THE EGYPTIAN COMMITMENT

MINISTER'S VISIT). HE REAFFIRMED THE EGYPTIAN COMMITMENT TO THE PLO, UNDER ARAFAT'S CHAIRMANSHIP, AS THE SOLE LEGITIMATE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE. MAGHD ADDED THAT THE EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT'S VIEW WOULD BE MADE KNOWN WHEN FULL REPORTS OF MRS THATCHER'S STATEMENTS IN ISRAEL HAD BEEN RECEIVED (HE HAD IN FACT ALREADY SENT THE RELEVANT TRANSCRIPTS TO MAGHD'S OFFICE).

3. MAGHD THEN WENT ON TO DESCRIBE MRS THATCHER'S VISIT TO ISRAEL AS IMPORTANT AND USEFUL IN DEMONSTRATING BRITAIN'S COMMITMENT TO KEEPING THE PEACE PROCESS GOING. HE ALSO WELCOMED WHAT MRS THATCHER HAD SAID ABOUT THE RIGHT OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE TO SELF-DETERMINATION, AND HER CALL FOR THE HOLDING OF LOCAL ELECTIONS AND THE IMPROVEMENT OF LIVING STANDARDS FOR THE PALESTINIANS.

4. SOME ADVERSE COMMENT HAS APPEARED IN THE PRESS HERE ON THE PRIME MINISTER'S SUGGESTION THAT THE PALESTINIANS MIGHT HAVE TO SEEK AN ALTERNATIVE LEADERSHIP. THE ENGLISH-LANGUAGE DAILY, THE EGYPTIAN GAZETTE, CRITICISED HER REMARKS ON THE SUBJECT AT A TIME WHEN THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF PALESTINIANS INCLUDING THOSE SHE HAD SEEN IN JERUSALEM WERE SO FIRMLY BEHIND ARAFAT AND THE PLO.

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