

PS TO PRIME MINISTER
NO 10 DOWNING ST

CONFIDENTIAL

FM MUSCAT

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELNO 175

OF 200800Z MAY 90.

AND TO IMMEDIATE OTHER MIDDLE EAST POSTS, WASHINGTON

MY TELNO 171(NOT TO ALL): OMAN/IRAN/LEBANESE HOSTAGES

SUMMARY

1. OMAN FOREIGN MINISTER REPORTS ON CONTACTS WITH IRAN AND RAFSANJANI'S PLEA TO THE WEST TO ENCOURAGE THE RELEASE OF FURTHER HOSTAGES BY A GESTURE TOWARDS THE HIZBULLAH.

DETAIL

2. AS EXPECTED (TUR) , YUSUF ALAWI INVITED ME TO CALL ON HIM YESTERDAY EVENING (19 MAY) BUT HIS MAIN MESSAGE WAS ABOUT HOSTAGES IN LEBANON.

3. HE SAID THAT AT HIS MEETING WITH RAFSANJANI IN TEHRAN ON 11 MAY, THE LATTER HAD DESCRIBED HIS EFFORTS TO FREE THE HOSTAGES IN LEBANON AS A GESTURE TOWARDS THE WEST. HE HAD TRIED HIS BEST AND HAD SUCCEEDED IN THE RELEASE OF TWO AMERICANS, BUT THERE HAD BEEN NO RESPONSE TO THIS INITIATIVE FROM THE AMERICANS. RAFSANJANI NOW FELT THAT HE COULD DO NO MORE. THE HIZBULLAH IN LEBANON FELT ANGRY AND CHEATED. OMAN WANTED TO ENCOURAGE RAFSANJANI TO CONTINUE AND ALAWI HAD ASKED WHAT KIND OF A GESTURE HE EXPECTED. RAFSANJANI HAD REPLIED THAT THE USA SHOULD BRING PRESSURE TO BEAR ON ISRAEL TO RELEASE A NUMBER OF LEBANESE SHIA HELD BY ISRAEL. HE ASKED WHETHER OMAN COULD HELP HIM BY PERSUADING THE ALLIES OF THE USA TO DO SOMETHING TO CONVINCE THE HIZBULLAH THAT THEIR GESTURE HAD NOT BEEN IN VAIN.

4. ALAWI SAID HE HOPED WE IN BRITAIN AND THE EC AS A WHOLE WOULD LISTEN TO THE IRANIANS' PLEA. IT SEEMED THE ONLY WAY FORWARD ON THE OTHER HOSTAGES. I REFERRED TO BISHOP JOHN BROWN'S EFFORTS TO ASCERTAIN THE POSITION OF CERTAIN SHIA BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN KIDNAPPED. ALAWI SAID THERE WERE MANY OTHERS IN ISRAELI HANDS. IT WAS VERY IMPORTANT FOR RAFSANJANI'S POSITION AND IRAN'S OPENING TOWARDS THE WEST THAT FURTHER EFFORTS SHOULD BE MADE WHICH WOULD GO AT LEAST SOME WAY TO SATISFYING THE HIZBULLAH.

COMMENT

5 . ALAWI IS LEAVING ON 22 MAY FOR THE ARAB SUMMIT PREPARATORY

MEETING AND IS ALSO LIKELY TO ATTEND THE SUMMIT THEREAFTER.
HE REMAINS IN CONTACT WITH THE IRANIANS ON OTHER MATTERS (SEE
MIPT- NOT TO ALL) AND WOULD WELCOME ANY COMMENTS WE WOULD WISH
TO HAVE FED BACK.

CLARK

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142

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ADDITIONAL

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LEBANON KIDNAPPINGS

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