

MIDDLE EAST: ADVANCE COPIES

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MR MOBERLY
~~SIR J BULLARD~~ *Mr Goodson*
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~~NO 10 DOWNING STREET~~
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UNCLASSIFIED
FM MOSCOW 061238Z AUG 82
TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELEGRAM NUMBER 464 OF 6/8
INFO PRIORITY UKMIS NEW YORK

LEBANON

1. PRAVDA TODAY CARRIED THE SUMMARY OF A TELEGRAM FROM BREZHNEV TO ARAFAT CONVEYING SOVIET ADMIRATION AT THE COURAGE OF THE DEFENDERS OF BEIRUT; AND POINTING OUT THAT THE SOVIET MISSION TO THE UN HAD BEEN INSTRUCTED TO REQUEST AN EMERGENCY SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING WITH THE AIM OF SECURING FULFILLMENT OF EARLIER RESOLUTIONS 'ABOVE ALL FOR AN IMMEDIATE CEASEFIRE, DEPLOYMENT OF UN OBSERVERS IN AND AROUND BEIRUT, AND AN END TO ISRAELI AGGRESSION'.
2. PRAVDA ALSO REPORTED A MEETING ON 5 AUGUST BETWEEN PRIME MINISTER TIKHONOV AND A DELEGATION SENT TO MOSCOW AFTER THE RECENT NICOSIA MEETING OF THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENTS'S (NAM) CO-ORDINATION BUREAU, AND COMPRISING THE FOREIGN MINISTERS OF CUBA, NICARAGUA AND CYPRUS. MAIN POINTS OF THE REPORT WERE:

- (I) CONDEMNATION IN STANDARD SOVIET TERMS OF UNITED STATES AND ISRAEL:
- (II) DANGER OF US PLANS TO DEPLOY TROOPS IN THE LEBANON:
- (III) NON-ALIGNED PRAISE FOR THE SOVIET UNION'S POSITION:
- (IV) REFERENCES TO THE NEED FOR ARAB UNITY:
- (V) REFERENCES TO THE NEED FOR PLO PARTICIPATION IN COLLECTIVE EFFORTS TO RESOLVE THE MIDDLE EAST PROBLEM AS THE SOLE LEGITIMATE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PALESTINIANS AND TO THE SOVIET PROPOSAL FOR AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE MIDDLE EAST.

3. SEE MIFT FOR COMMENT.

4. FCO PLEASE REPEAT FURTHER AS NECESSARY.

KEEBLE

NNNN

TO: FCO

FROM: [unclear]

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17 (XIS)

Lebanon

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FM MOSCOW 061254Z AUG 82

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 465 OF 6/8

INFO PRIORITY UKMIS NEW YORK

MIPT: LEBANON: SOVIET POLICY

1. THE ARAFAT TELEGRAM IS THE LATEST IN A SERIES OF RECENT
AUTHORITATIVE SOVIET STATEMENTS WHICH TOGETHER MARK AN
ESCALATION IN THE LEVEL OF SOVIET MORAL SUPPORT FOR THE
PALESTINIANS. BREZHNEV'S AUTHORITY HAS NOW BEEN INVOKED THREE
TIMES. THE AIM APPEARS TO BE TO UNDERSCORE THE SOVIET UNION'S
"CLEAR" AND "PRINCIPLED" SUPPORT FOR THE ARAB CAUSE
(INCLUDING THE CONVENING OF AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE
MIDDLE EAST IN WHICH THE RUSSIANS WOULD TAKE PART); AND TO
DISTRACT ATTENTION FROM SOVIET UNWILLINGNESS TO INTERVENE MORE
DIRECTLY ON THE PALESTINIAN SIDE AS THE SITUATION IN BEIRUT
DETERIORATES. AS SUCH THE SOVIET POSITION HAS CHANGED LITTLE
IN ITS ESSENTIALS SINCE THE START OF THE CRISIS AND STILL SEEMS
BASED ON THE FOLLOWING CONSIDERATIONS:

- (I) THE AMERICANS' INABILITY/UNWILLINGNESS TO RESTRAIN ISRAEL WILL UNDERMINE THEIR POSITION IN THE ARAB WORLD.
- (II) ONLY DIRECT SOVIET MILITARY INTERVENTION, OR ITS THREAT, COULD TURN THE TABLES IN BEIRUT, BUT SOVIET INTERESTS ARE NOT SUFFICIENTLY THREATENED TO JUSTIFY A HIGH RISK CONFRONTATION WITH THE AMERICANS.
- (III) CONTINUING ARAB DISUNITY AND AMBIVALENCE TOWARDS THE PALESTINIANS PROVIDE A RESPECTABLE FIG-LEAF FOR SOVIET QUIESCENCE.

2. THE LONGER THE CRISIS GOES ON THE GREATER THE RISK TO SOVIET CREDIBILITY IN ARAB EYES AND THE SHARPER THE DILEMMA OF HOW TO PASS AS THE ARABS' FRIEND WITHOUT ACTUALLY DOING VERY MUCH FOR THEM. INCREASED SOVIET DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITY, IN PARTICULAR AT THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL, IS A PARTIAL RESPONSE TO THIS (TODAY'S PRAVDA REPORTS AN INTERVENTION BY THE SOVIET DELEGATE POINTING CLEARLY TOWARDS A CALL FOR SANCTIONS). THOUGH THE SOVIET DILEMMA WILL BECOME ACUTE IF THE ISRAELIS STORM BEIRUT, I DO NOT SEE THE RUSSIANS GOING BEYOND AN INTENSIFIED POLITICAL AND DIPLOMATIC CAMPAIGN PLUS ARMS SUPPLIES FOR SYRIA AND OTHERS.

3. THE ARAFAT MESSAGE MAY ALSO REFLECT THE RUSSIANS' CONCERN THAT HABIB MAY YET PULL OFF AN AGREEMENT IN WHICH THE PLO WILL EXTRACT SOME MEASURE OF RECOGNITION FROM THE US TO THE DETRIMENT OF SOVIET POLITICAL INFLUENCE WITH THE PALESTINIANS AND IN THE ARAB WORLD GENERALLY.

4. FCO PLEASE REPEAT FURTHER AS NECESSARY.

KEEBLE

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