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TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 307 OF 2 DECEMBER

INFO PRIORITY WASHINGTON ROUTINE TEL AVIV BEIRUT DAMASCUS AMMAN
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US/ISRAELI TALKS IN WASHINGTON
SUMMARY

1. US REPORTED TO NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL (NAC) ON SHAMIR VISIT. THERE HAD BEEN NO DISCUSSION OF ANY MODIFICATION OF 17 MAY LEBANON/ISRAEL AGREEMENT. JOINT POLITICAL/MILITARY GROUP (JPMG), WHICH WAS DESIGNED SOLELY TO MEET THE SOVIET THREAT, WOULD CONSIDER MILITARY PLANNING, EXERCISES ETC. US HAD STRESSED CONTINUING IMPORTANCE OF THEIR RELATIONS WITH MODERATE ARABS. POSITIONS OF BOTH SIDES OVER THE WEST BANK RESTATED, AND US HOPE OF GETTING QUOTE ANOTHER ARAB NEGOTIATING PARTNER UNQUOTE TO THE TABLE.

DETAIL

2. AT THIS MORNING'S MEETING OF THE NAC ABSHIRE (US) MADE A STATEMENT ABOUT SHAMIR'S RECENT VISIT TO WASHINGTON. FULL TEXT (WHICH HE DID NOT FOLLOW EXACTLY) FOLLOWS BY BAG TO NENAD AND OTHER RECIPIENTS.
3. ABSHIRE SAID THAT THE US HAD REAFFIRMED ITS SUPPORT FOR THE AGREEMENT OF 17 MAY AS THE VEHICLE FOR THE RESTORATION OF THE TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY AND SOVEREIGNTY OF LEBANON. THERE HAD BEEN NO DISCUSSION OF ANY MODIFICATION TO ITS TERMS. THE PRESIDENT HAD STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF ISRAEL AVOIDING ACTION IN SOUTH LEBANON WHICH WOULD UNDERMINE THE AUTHORITY OF THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT OR WOULD GIVE THE APPEARANCE OF PARTITION. ISRAEL QUOTE ACKNOWLEDGED UNQUOTE THIS.
4. THE PRESIDENT AND SHAMIR HAD DISCUSSED THE INCREASED SOVIET THREAT TO THE REGION AND HAD AGREED TO SET UP A JPMG TO CONSIDER WAYS OF COUNTERING IT. THERE HAD BEEN NO, REPEAT NO, DISCUSSION OF JOINT MILITARY OPERATIONS. THE JPMG WOULD CONSIDER AT ITS FIRST MEETING IN EARLY JANUARY COMBINED MILITARY PLANNING, JOINT EXERCISES AND THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PREPOSITIONING OF US EQUIPMENT IN ISRAEL. ABSHIRE EMPHASISED THAT THE WORK OF THE JPMG WAS DESIGNED SOLELY TO MEET THE SOVIET THREAT AND WOULD NOT BE DIRECTED AGAINST THE ARAB STATES. IT HAD BEEN MADE CLEAR TO THE ISRAELIS THAT THE US ATTACHED IMPORTANCE TO ITS RELATIONS WITH THE MODERATE ARAB STATES WHICH STRENGTHENED SECURITY AND STABILITY IN THE REGION. IT WAS IN THE INTERESTS ALSO OF ISRAEL THAT THE US SHOULD HAVE GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE MODERATE ARABS. ABSHIRE REPEATED THAT ALL THE WORK OF THE JPMG WOULD BE DIRECTED TOWARDS COUNTERING THE SOVIET THREAT. SPEAKING PERSONALLY HE REJECTED ANY CONCLUSION THAT THE ROLE OF THE US MARINES IN LEBANON HAD CHANGED AS A RESULT OF THESE ARRANGEMENTS.

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5. I WAS THE ONLY ONE TO SPEAK. I SAID THAT THIS WAS AN IMPORTANT STATEMENT ON WHICH I SHOULD NOT WISH TO COMMENT OFF THE CUFF, BUT I WONDERED WHETHER IN THE COURSE OF THE DISCUSSIONS ANYTHING HAD BEEN SAID ABOUT THE WEST BANK. ABSHIRE SAID THAT THIS WAS COVERED IN THE FULL STATEMENT WHICH HE WOULD BE CIRCULATING (THIS READS: QUOTE WE RESTATED OUR VIEW THAT CONTINUED SETTLEMENT ACTIVITY DOES NOT CONTRIBUTE TO ISRAEL'S SECURITY, UNDERMINES THE CONFIDENCE OF THOSE WHOM WE ARE TRYING TO PERSUADE TO JOIN NEGOTIATIONS AND IN THAT SENSE IS AN OBSTACLE TO PEACE. WE ALSO EXPRESS THE VIEW THAT AT A TIME WHEN THERE IS CONSIDERABLE TURMOIL IN THE ARAB WORLD AND SIGNS OF RETHINKING OF POSITIONS BY JORDAN ON JOINING THE PEACE PROCESS, WE HOPE THAT ISRAEL WILL RESPOND THOUGHTFULLY TO ANY MOVES KING HUSSEIN MIGHT MAKE. WE STATED OUR STRONG HOPE THAT WE WILL BE ABLE TO DEEPEN OUR CONSULTATION WITH ISREAL, JORDAN AND THE LOCAL INHABITANTS ON IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF PALESTINIAN LIFE AND EMPHASISED OUR SERIOUSNESS IN PURSUING THIS INITIATIVE. ISRAEL ACKNOWLEDGED OUR POSITIONS AND RESTATED THEIR STANCE ALONG FAMILIAR LINES. WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT ISRAEL CAN BEST BE CHALLENGED TO RECONSIDER ITS POLICIES BY ANOTHER ARAB NEGOTIATING PARTNER AGREEING TO COME TO THE TABLE. UNQUOTE)

GRAHAM

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