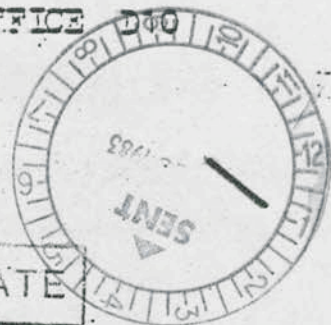


MIDDLE EAST: ADVANCE COPIES 18

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NO 10 DOWNING STREET

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DESKBY 051515Z

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TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 1395 OF 5 DEC

INFO IMMEDIATE ATHENS (DESKBY 051515Z) (FOR S OF S'S PARTY)

UKDEL NATO, WASHINGTON,

INFO PRIORITY DAMASCUS, BEIRUT, AMMAN, TUNIS, TEL AVIV, CAIRO,
JEDDA

MIPT (NOT TO ALL): SOVIET PRESS CONFERENCE: MIDDLE EAST

1. AT THE PRESS CONFERENCE ON 5 DECEMBER ZAMYATIN (HEAD OF THE INTERNATIONAL INFORMATION DEPARTMENT OF THE CPSU CENTRAL COMMITTEE) WAS ALSO ASKED ABOUT RECENT EVENTS IN LEBANON. HE DESCRIBED THE AMERICAN ATTACKS ON SYRIAN POSITIONS AS A "BANDIT ACT" AIMED AT WIDENING US/ISRAELI INTERVENTION. IN A LENGTHY, UNTEMPERATE REPLY HE SAID THAT THE SOVIET UNION CONDEMNED THESE ATTACKS. "ALL NECESSARY STEPS" BY THE ARABS WOULD BE TAKEN "WITH SOVIET SUPPORT AND SYMPATHY." THE SOVIET UNION WOULD GIVE ASSISTANCE AND AID ("SODEISTVIYE POMOSHCH") TO THOSE FIGHTING AGAINST (US AND ISRAELI) AGGRESSION.
2. OTHERWISE THERE HAS SO FAR BEEN LITTLE DIRECT COMMENT IN THE SOVIET PRESS ON THE WEEKEND'S EVENTS WHICH HAVE, HOWEVER, BEEN WIDELY REPORTED. THE US AIR STRIKE AND SHELLING BY WARSHIPS POSITIONED OFF THE LEBANESE COAST HAVE BEEN LINKED WITH ISRAELI AIR STRIKES IN CENTRAL LEBANON AND PRESENTED AS THE RESULT OF AGREEMENTS, MADE DURING SHAMIR'S WASHINGTON VISIT, TO COORDINATE MORE CLOSELY MILITARY ACTION BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE US.

SUTHERLAND