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 FM TEL AVIV
 TO PRIORITY FCO
 TELNO 307
 OF 210840Z AUGUST 86
 INFO PRIORITY MOSCOW, WARSAW, WASHINGTON
 INFO ROUTINE AMMAN, CAIRO, DAMASCUS

*Amended distribution
 228.*

HELSINKI TELEGRAM NO. 90

ISRAEL/SOVIET UNION

1. ON 20 AUGUST I ASKED NOVIK (POLITICAL ADVISER TO THE PRIME MINISTER) WHAT THE ISRAELIS THOUGHT LAY BEHIND THE RUSSIANS INITIATIVE IN SETTING UP DIRECT CONTACTS. HE SAID THIS WAS TO BE SEEN IN THE CONTEXT OF THE BUILD-UP TO THE NEXT SOVIET/US SUMMIT. IN THE MONTHS BEFORE THE FIRST SUMMIT MEETING THE RUSSIANS HAD MADE IT CLEAR THAT THEY "WANTED TO KEEP THE JEWS QUIET" AND HAD PROMISED THE ISRAELIS A SUBSTANTIAL PRIZE IF THEY DID NOT STIR THINGS UP. THIS HAD TURNED OUT TO BE THE RELEASE OF SHCHARANSKY WHICH AS NOVIK COMMENTED WAS "NICE FOR US" AND A GOOD PROPAGANDA MOVE BY THE RUSSIANS, BUT NOTHING LIKE THE RELEASE OF SUBSTANTIAL NUMBERS OF JEWS WHICH THE ISRAELIS HAD HOPED FOR. THIS TIME AROUND THE RUSSIANS HAD STARTED BY PROPOSING A MEETING BETWEEN CONSULAR OFFICIALS IN TEL AVIV IN OCTOBER AND HAD CLEARLY HOPED THAT THIS IN ITSELF WOULD KEEP THE ISRAELIS QUIET. BUT ISRAEL WAS NOT GOING TO BE CAUGHT AGAIN AND HAD DEMANDED THE EARLIER EXPLORATORY MEETING IN HELSINKI TO SEE WHAT WAS ON OFFER.

2. NOVIK SAID THAT THE RUSSIANS BEHAVED IMPECCABLY AT THE MEETING ITSELF. THEY HAD LISTED THEIR DETAILED REQUIREMENTS FOR ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS ON THE VISIT TO TEL AVIV. WHEN THE ISRAELI TEAM HAD SET OUT THEIR DEMANDS ON SOVIET JEWRY THE RUSSIANS HAD TAKEN DETAILED NOTES AND HAD PROMISED, IN CIVIL TONES, TO REPORT BACK TO THEIR MASTERS.

3. NOVIK THOUGHT THAT THE SUBSEQUENT SHARP STATEMENT BY SOVIET FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESMAN, GERASIMOV, IN WHICH HE ACCUSED THE ISRAELIS OF UNJUSTIFIABLE INTERFERENCE OVER THE ISSUE OF SOVIET JEWRY WAS A RESULT OF THE WAY THAT THE ISRAELI MEDIA HAD OVER-PLAYED THE IMPORTANCE OF THE HELSINKI MEETING IN THE DAYS LEADING UP TO IT. NOVIK COMMENTED THAT IF THE ISRAELI MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS HAD NOT CONTRIVED TO LEAK THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE MEETING SEVERAL DAYS TOO EARLY THERE WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN TIME FOR THE PRESSURE TO BUILD-UP IN THE PRESS FOR THE ISRAELIS TO SET PRE-CONDITIONS ON THE SOVIET JEWRY ISSUE. HE THOUGHT THAT ONCE THE NOISE HAD ABATED THE RUSSIANS WOULD WISH TO RESUME CONTACTS AS PREVIOUSLY PLANNED.

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3. ON THE RELATED ISSUE OF ISRAELI POLISH RELATIONS OUR DUTCH COLLEAGUES HERE NOW CONFIRM THAT A POLISH DIPLOMAT WILL BE INSTALLED IN THE BANK OF POLAND IN TEL AVIV SOMETIME IN SEPTEMBER AND THAT AN ISRAELI OFFICIAL WILL JOIN THE INTERESTS SECTION IN THE DUCH EMBASSY IN WARSAW AT THE SAME TIME (OUR TELNO 201 REFERS).

FULLER

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TVHPAAN 2619

EAST WEST & US/SOVIET RELATIONS

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