

GRS 496

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

FM PARIS 031205Z FEB 82

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 127 OF 03 FEB 82

INFO PRIORITY CAIRO WASHINGTON TEL AVIV

INFO SAVING JEDDA RABAT DAMASCUS BEIRUT BAGHDAD TRIPOLI ALGIERS  
TUNIS AMMAN KUWAIT ABU DHABI UKMIS NEW YORK BONN ROME

MIPT: VISIT TO PARIS BY PRESIDENT MUBARAK

1. THE ELYSEE HAVE TOLD THE EMBASSY THAT AS THE TALKS BETWEEN THE TWO PRESIDENTS TOOK PLACE WITH ONLY AN INTERPRETER PRESENT IT HAS NOT YET BEEN POSSIBLE FOR FRENCH OFFICIALS THEMSELVES TO OBTAIN A FULL ACCOUNT. FOR THE SAME REASON THE QUAI D'ORSAY HAVE NOT YET FIXED A TIME FOR A COMMUNITY BRIEFING.

2. IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT THE TALKS CENTRED ON PRESIDENT MITTERRAND'S FORTHCOMING VISIT TO ISRAEL ON 3-5 MARCH, AND ON WAYS IN WHICH FRANCE'S NEW DIALOGUE WITH ISRAEL COULD BE MADE HELPFUL TO EGYPT.

3. THIS HELP IS MOST LIKELY TO BE OVER THE QUESTION OF PALESTINIAN AUTONOMY IN THE AFTERMATH OF ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM SINAI ON 25 APRIL. PRESIDENT MITTERRAND HAS RUN VARIOUS TRAILERS FOR HIS INTENTION TO TALK TO THE ISRAELIS ABOUT PALESTINIAN RIGHTS. THERE HAVE ALSO BEEN HINTS THAT FRANCE WILL MAKE SOME KIND OF EFFORT TO PERSUADE THE ISRAELIS TO STOP FLOGGING THE DEAD HORSE OF A LIMITED FORM OF AUTONOMY SO THAT THE FAHD PLAN CAN HAVE A CHANCE.

4. IF THIS IS CORRECT, FRENCH POLICY IS NOT VERY DIFFERENT IN ESSENCE FROM THE UK'S OR THAT OF THE TEN GENERALLY. BUT THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT DOES ALL IT CAN TO CONVEY THE IMPRESSION THAT IT IS AHEAD OF THE OTHER EUROPEANS IN INFLUENCE ON ISRAEL, IN SUPPORT FOR A PALESTINIAN STATE, AND IN SUPPORT FOR THE FAHD PLAN. SEEN FROM PARIS, THE FRENCH HAVE BEEN ADROIT IN DOING THIS, AND THERE ARE AS YET NO OBVIOUS SIGNS THAT THE MISTRUST OF FRANCE EXPRESSED FOR EXAMPLE TO HM AMBASSADOR AT AMMAN HAS HAD ANY SERIOUS REPERCUSSIONS ON FRENCH INTERESTS.

5. THE VISIT OF PRESIDENT MUBARAK WILL HAVE BEEN USEFUL TO THE FRENCH IN SEVERAL RESPECTS:

(A) IT HAS STRENGTHENED THE CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH EGYPT. APART FROM THE MAIN ARAB-ISRAEL THEME, THERE MUST HAVE BEEN A COMPARING OF NOTES ON LIBYA (BOTH COUNTRIES SEEM TO BE MOVING WARILY TOWARDS A RAPPROCHEMENT), THE SUDAN (THE FRENCH HAVE PUT UP 14 MILLION POUNDS FOR THE LATEST BALING OUT OPERATION) AND /PERHAPS

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PERHAPS IRAN (THERE HAVE BEEN RUMOURS, DENIED BY THE EGYPTIANS, THAT DURING HIS STAY HERE PRESIDENT MUBARAK SAW MR BAKHTIAR, THE FORMER IRANIAN PRIME MINISTER, NOW OPERATING FROM PARIS). THE MEETING WITH FRENCH BUSINESSMEN SHOWS THAT THE FRENCH HAVE ALSO USED THE VISIT TO GIVE A FURTHER SHOVE TO THEIR FLOURISHING COMMERCIAL RELATIONS WITH EGYPT.

(B) IT HAS MADE FRANCE LOOK LIKE A POTENTIALLY USEFUL PARTNER TO THE MODERATE ARAB STATES, ESPECIALLY SAUDI ARABIA, WHICH APPEAR TO BE SHAPING UP FOR A RECONCILIATION WITH EGYPT. IN THIS CONNECTION IT IS RUMORED THAT PRESIDENT MUBARAK HAD A SECRET MEETING IN FRANCE WITH KING HASSAN OF MOROCCO, WHO HAS BEEN STAYING ON PRIVATELY IN FRANCE AFTER SEEING PRESIDENT MITTERRAND LAST WEEK.

(C) IT HAS REINFORCED THE GENERAL IMPRESSION WHICH THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT WISHES TO GIVE TO THE WORLD AND THE FRENCH PUBLIC THAT FRANCE HAS AN IMPORTANT AND INDEPENDENT ROLE TO PLAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

FCO PLEASE PASS SAVING TO ALL

HIBBERT

[PASSED AS REQUESTED]

STANDARD

NENAD  
MED  
NAD  
UND  
EESD  
ECD  
WED  
RID

MAED  
ES & SD  
ERD  
ESID

CABINET OFFICE

ADDITIONAL DISTRIBUTION

ARAB/ISRAEL DISPUTE