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TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELNO 153 OF 16 MARCH
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MUBARAK'S US AND EUROPEAN TOUR: PRESS COVERAGE

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SUMMARY

1. EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT PRESS PRAISES SUCCESS OF MUBARAK'S LONDON VISIT, AND WELCOMES HMG'S REPORTED SUPPORT OF HIS PEACE INITIATIVE.

PEACE INITIATIVE.

DETAIL

2. THE EGYPTIAN PRESS GAVE A VERY FULL AND UNUSUALLY POSITIVE ACCOUNT OF MUBARAK'S TALKS IN LONDON. ALL THE GOVERNMENT DAILIES GAVE PROMINENCE TO THE PRIME MINISTER'S SUPPORT OF EGYPTIAN AND JORDANIAN EFFORTS TO PROMOTE DIALOGUE WITH ISRAEL, AND QUOTED BRITISH OFFICIAL STATEMENTS BACKING MUBARAK'S EFFORTS TO GET A SETTLEMENT AND TO KEEP UP THE MOMENTUM.

3. THE PRESS ALSO REPORTED MUBARAK'S INTERVIEW WITH VISNEWS, HIS MEETINGS WITH MR HESELTINE AND MR TEBBIT, AND THE CALLS PAID ON HIM BY OPPOSITION LEADERS: BOTH MR KINNOCK AND DR OWEN ARE REPORTED AS HAVING SUPPORTED THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT'S STAND IN ITS SUPPORT FOR MUBARAK'S INITIATIVE.

4. ONE NEWSPAPER SUGGESTED THAT IN THE LIGHT OF MUBARAK'S DISCUSSIONS WITH PRESIDENT MITTERRAND AND MRS THATCHER, AND THE EXPECTED MEETINGS WITH CHANCELLOR KOHL AND MR CRAXI ON HIS WAY BACK TO EGYPT TODAY, THE TEN WOULD ISSUE A STATEMENT AT THE 30 MARCH EUROPEAN COUNCIL IN SUPPORT OF THE JORDANIAN-PALESTINIAN AGREEMENT, AND ALSO REITERATING THE VENICE PRINCIPLES. THE SAME NEWSPAPER ALSO QUOTED A BRITISH GOVERNMENT COMMITMENT TO 'USE ITS GOOD OFFICES TO REMOVE THE OBSTACLES STANDING IN THE WAY OF PEACE, THROUGH CONTACTS WITH THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT'.

5. INVITATIONS: THE GOVERNMENT NEWSPAPERS REPORTED THAT BOTH THE PRIME MINISTER AND HM THE QUEEN HAD ACCEPTED INVITATIONS TO VISIT EGYPT EXTENDED BY MUBARAK. THE PRIME MINISTER IS REPORTED AS SAYING THAT SHE WOULD VISIT EGYPT 'AS SOON AS POSSIBLE'.

6. THE ONLY EXCEPTION TO THE UP-BEAT COVERAGE WAS AN EDITORIAL IN THE SMALL CIRCULATION ENGLISH LANGUAGE DAILY 'EGYPTIAN GAZETTE', WHICH CRITICISED BRITISH HALF-HEARTED SUPPORT OF PALESTINIAN INTERESTS. WE PROPOSE TO TAKE THE MATTER UP WITH THEM NEXT WEEK. NO OPPOSITION PAPERS PUBLISH TODAY.

FCO PSE PASS SAVING ADDRESSEES.

WESTON