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TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 008 OF 10 JANUARY

AND TO IMMEDIATE CAIRO, DAMASCUS

AND TO PRIORITY WASHINGTON, PARIS, ROME, BEIRUT, TEL AVIV AND
KHARTOUM

Nothing new here.

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FOLLOWING FROM PRIVATE SECRETARY

SECRETARY OF STATE'S VISIT TO EGYPT: CALL ON PRESIDENT MUBARAK

SUMMARY

1. SECRETARY OF STATE HAD JUST OVER 45 MINUTES WITH MUBARAK AND DREW HIM OUT ON LEBANON, ARAB/ISRAEL, IRAN/IRAQ AND THE SUDAN. IN A BRIEF DISCUSSION OF BILATERAL RELATIONS, SECRETARY OF STATE PUT DOWN A MARKER ABOUT TRADE: WE WANTED TO SELL MORE, AND HAD HAD SOME RECENT DISAPPOINTMENTS. MUBARAK REPLIED THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO BUY MORE FROM US - BRITISH EQUIPMENT HAD AN EXCELLENT REPUTATION- BUT THE PROBLEM WAS MONEY: WHERE IT WAS AVAILABLE, WE WERE THE NATURAL CHANNEL. MUBARAK MADE CLEAR THE IMPORTANCE HE ATTACHES TO AN EARLY VISIT TO EGYPT BY THE PRIME MINISTER.

LEBANON

2. SECRETARY OF STATE POINTED TO A NUMBER OF DIFFICULTIES IN THE WAY OF A SATISFACTORY OUTCOME AND RAISED THE QUESTION OF A GREATER ROLE FOR THE UNITED NATIONS. THE MNF WAS THERE TO ACHIEVE A PURPOSE AND HE HOPED THAT WE WERE HELPING TO SECURE STABILITY: BUT IT COULD NOT STAY FOR EVER. MUBARAK MADE THE FOLLOWING POINTS IN REPLY:

(I) HE DID NOT SHARE GEMAYEL'S OPTIMISM ABOUT THE PROSPECTS FOR RECONCILIATION, AND GEMAYEL HAD RECENTLY SENT HIM A MESSAGE SUGGESTING THAT IN HIS VIEW THE SYRIANS WOULD NOT WITHDRAW COMPLETELY, EVEN IF THE ISRAELIS DID.

(II) IT WAS NEVERTHELESS ESSENTIAL THAT ISRAEL WITHDREW: THE ISRAELI INVASION HAD BEEN THE CAUSE OF THE PROBLEM, WHICH PUT THE UNITED STATES AND THE WEST IN A DIFFICULT POSITION AND STOOD TO BENEFIT ONLY THE SOVIET UNION. HE HAD TOLD SHAMIR AND SHARON AS MUCH BEFORE THE INVASION, AND HAD PRESSED THE UNITED STATES TO USE THEIR INFLUENCE AGAINST IT. BUT HAIG HAD HAD OTHER IDEAS.

(III) SYRIA WAS NOT A THREAT TO ISRAEL AND ISRAEL KNEW IT. IF THE ISRAELIS WITHDREW TO THEIR BORDERS AND MADE IT CLEAR TO THE SYRIANS THAT THEY WOULD TOLERATE NO INCURSIONS, EITHER FROM SYRIA OR THROUGH THE LEBANON, THE SYRIANS WOULD TAKE THE MESSAGE. BEGIN HAD BEEN CONSIDERING THE IDEA BUT HE DOUBTED WHETHER SHAMIR WOULD HAVE THE COURAGE TO IMPLEMENT IT.

(IV) AFTER ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL, THE ARABS WOULD BE IN A GOOD POSITION TO PRESS SYRIA TO DO LIKEWISE. THE SAUDIS SHOULD PLAY THEIR PART BY REDUCING THE FLOW OF FUNDS TO SYRIA AND THE AMERICANS SHOULD PRESS THEM TO DO SO (HE CLAIMED THAT SAUDI FUNDS REACHED SYRIA ONLY WITH US APPROVAL).

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1 (v)

(V) MUBARAK SAID THAT ARAFAT HAD COMPLAINED BITTERLY TO HIM ABOUT SYRIAN ATTACKS ON HIS PEOPLE IN THE LEBANON. HE ADDED THAT IT WAS STRIKING THAT ISRAEL HAD BLOCKED MILITARY TRAFFIC ON THE ROAD FROM DAMASCUS TO BEIRUT UNTIL THE SYRIANS HAD STARTED ATTACKING ARAFAT, WHEREUPON THEY HAD LET EVERYTHING THROUGH.

(VII) ON THE SYRIAN POSITION, MUBARAK SAID THAT HE HAD MADE IT CLEAR TO ASSAD THAT HE WAS GIVING THE ISRAELIS A PRETEXT FOR STAYING IN SOUTH LEBANON BY REMAINING IN THE BEKAA. BUT THE FACT WAS THAT THE SYRIANS HAD ONLY TOLD GEHAYEL THAT THEY WOULD WITHDRAW BECAUSE THEY HAD CALCULATED THAT THE ISRAELIS WOULD NOT. THE AGREEMENT OF 17 MAY HAD THEREFORE COME AS A SHOCK TO THEM. (VIII) IN CONCLUSION, MUBARAK EMPHASISED AGAIN THAT WITHOUT ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL THE SOVIET UNION WOULD BE ABLE TO INCREASE ITS INFLUENCE IN THE AREA. THEY KNEW THAT THE ARABS TURNED TO THEM ONLY WHEN THEY NEEDED ARMS. HE QUOTED, BY WAY OF EXAMPLE, SOVIET ATTEMPTS TO GET A FOOT IN THE DOOR IN EGYPT BY OFFERING TO SUPPLY HELICOPTERS AT KNOCK-DOWN PRICES.

ARAB/ISRAEL

3. MUBARAK ARGUED THAT THE AMERICANS SHOULD PRESS ISRAEL TO TALK TO ARAFAT AND SHOULD TALK TO HIM THEMSELVES, IN ORDER TO PULL THE RUG FROM UNDER THE RUSSIANS AND OTHERS WHO WERE OPPOSED TO A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT. IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT THE MODERATE PALESTINIANS BE ENCOURAGED. ARAFAT COULD NOT EXPLICITLY ENDORSE RESOLUTION NO 242 OR RECOGNISE ISRAELI RIGHT TO EXIST, BUT IT WAS CLEAR THAT THEY HAD ALREADY DONE SO INDIRECTLY. THERE WERE SIMILAR LIMITS TO WHAT OTHER MODERATE ARABS WERE PREPARED TO SAY IN PUBLIC (HE WAS CRITICAL OF SAUDI PUSILLANIMITY), BUT THERE WAS NO DOUBT THAT THEY WANTED PEACE.

4. MUBARAK EXPRESSED SOME DOUBTS ABOUT THE LIKELY EFFECT OF THE RECALL OF THE JORDANIAN PARLIAMENT WHICH THE REJECTIONISTS WOULD OPPOSE AND WHICH WAS CAUSING CONCERN ALSO AMONG SOME OF ARAFAT'S PEOPLE. BUT ARAFAT WOULD GO TO JORDAN SOON, AND MUBARAK WAS PRESSING KING HUSSEIN TO BE MORE FLEXIBLE ABOUT THE LINK.

5. MUBARAK DESCRIBED THE HIGH PROFILE DECLARATION ON THE US/ISRAELI STRATEGIC RELATIONSHIP AS A DISASTER. THERE WAS ABSOLUTELY NO REASON TO HAVE DONE THIS AT THIS VERY CRITICAL TIME, AND THE RESULT HAD BEEN ONLY TO ALLOW THE RUSSIANS AND OTHERS TO ARGUE THAT THE UNITED STATES WAS NOT SINCERE IN WANTING EITHER A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OR GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE ARABS. HE HAD MADE IT CLEAR TO RUMSFELD THAT HE WOULD HAVE EXPECTED AN OPPORTUNITY TO ADVISE BEFORE SUCH A DECISION WAS TAKEN.

6. HE CONCLUDED THAT IF 1984 PASSED WITHOUT A SIGNIFICANT MOVE FORWARD ON ARAB/ISRAEL, IT WOULD BE TOO LATE. THE SETTLEMENTS WOULD BE A FAIT ACCOMPLI.

2
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7. MUBARAK SAW NO PROSPECT OF AN EARLY END TO THE WAR AND ARGUED THAT KHOMEINI WANTED IT TO CONTINUE FOR DOMESTIC POLITICAL REASONS. SUDAN

8. MUBARAK MADE CLEAR IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE HOW ACTIVE HE HAD BEEN IN PERSUADING NIMEIRI OF THE DANGERS OF HIS POLICY OF ISLAMISATION. NIMEIRI HAD BEEN PERSUADED TO EMBARK ON THIS COURSE BY THE MOSLEM BROTHERHOOD, WHO HAD ARGUED THAT IT WOULD LEAD TO STABILITY. MUBARAK HAD IMPRESSED ON NIMEIRI THE FACT THAT IT WOULD ACHIEVE THE OPPOSITE, AND GIVE THE COMMUNISTS A WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITY TO CAUSE TROUBLE. HE THOUGHT THAT NIMEIRI HAD BEEN CONVINCED, BUT ADDED THAT HE HAD FOUND ATTRACTIVE THE IDEA OF RULING QUOTE LIKE A KING UNQUOTE IN A COUNTRY WITHOUT ELECTIONS. MUBARAK DISCOUNTED THE POSSIBILITY OF QADDAFI MEDDLING SUCCESSFULLY IN THE SUDAN, AND WAS TYPICALLY DISPARAGING ABOUT HIS MENTAL STATE.

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3
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