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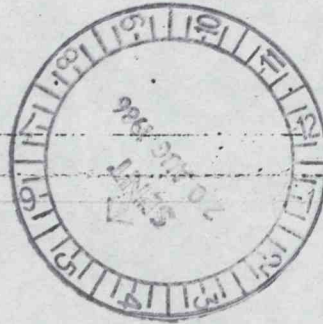
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OF 201140Z AUGUST 86

INFO PRIORITY WASHINGTON, TEL AVIV, HELSINKI, DAMASCUS, CAIRO

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ISRAEL/SOVIET UNION MEETING IN HELSINKI

1. AT A PRESS CONFERENCE ON 19 AUGUST, MFA PRESS SPOKESMAN GERASIMOV STAMPED VERY HARD ON SUGGESTIONS THAT SOVIET/ISRAELI CONTACTS HAD DEALT WITH ANYTHING OTHER THAN CONSULAR AFFAIRS. IN A PREPARED STATEMENT HE SAID THAT THE SIDES HAD DISCUSSED THE QUESTIONS OF RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH PROPERTY IN ISRAEL AND CONSULAR ASSISTANCE TO SOVIET CITIZENS IN ISRAEL. THE ISRAELIS HAD RAISED THE QUESTION OF THE JEWISH POPULATION IN THE SOVIET UNION. THIS WAS GROSS INTERFERENCE IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF THE SOVIET UNION. IN ANSWER TO QUESTIONS, GERASIMOV SAID THAT THE MEETING HAD BEEN A "FRUITLESS EXCHANGE". THERE WAS NO QUESTION OF SOVIET OFFICIALS VISITING TEL AVIV OR ANY PLANS FOR A FURTHER MEETING.

2. APPARENTLY GERASIMOV WAS PRESSED HARD BY THE ARAB MEDIA WITH SOME FAIRLY POINTED QUESTIONS BUT GAVE NOTHING FURTHER AWAY.

MARSHALL

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