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FM FCO 161330Z DEC 81

TO IMMEDIATE DAMASCUS

TELEGRAM NUMBER 268 OF 16 DECEMBER

INFO IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON, UKMIS NEW YORK.

INFO PRIORITY OTHER ME

POSTS, ATHENS, BONN, BRUSSELS, UKREP BRUSSELS, COPENHAGEN,
DUBLIN, THE HAGUE, LUXEMBOURG, PARIS AND ROME.

GOLAN

1. THE JORDANIAN, SYRIAN, ALGERIAN AND QATARI AMPASSADORS, REPRESENTING ARAB LEAGUE AMPASSADORS IN LONDON, CALLED ON ME THIS MORNING TO MAKE REPRESENTATIONS ABOUT THE ISRAELI ACTION ON THE GOLAN. THEY EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR THE STATEMENTS MADE BY THE PRIME MINISTER AND MYSELF AND HOPED THAT OUR OPPOSITION TO THE MOVE WOULD BE REFLECTED IN THE UN. THE JORDANIAN SAID THAT THE TIME HAD NEVERTHELESS COME FOR EUROPE AND THE US TO REEVALUATE THE WHOLE RANGE OF THEIR RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL. UP TO NOW ISRAEL HAD IGNORED ALL UN DECLARATIONS AND PEACE INITIATIVES PROPOSED BY EUROPE HAD BEEN NO MORE THAN AN ACADEMIC EXERCISE PRACTICAL MEASURES WERE NOW ESSENTIAL. THE REGION WOULD OTHERWISE BE HEADING FOR A GREAT CONFLICT.
2. THE SYRIAN AMPASSADOR SAID HE HAD BEEN INSTRUCTED BY HIS GOVERNMENT TO INFORM US THAT SYRIA CONSIDERED THE ISRAELI MOVE ILLEGAL AND A PROVOCATION TO WAR, AND THEY REGARDED IT AS CANCELLING THE ISRAEL/SYRIAN CEASEFIRE. IT WAS A VERY SERIOUS STEP WHICH THREATENED THE SECURITY OF THE WHOLE REGION. THE SYRIAN GOVERNMENT HOPED THAT THE UK WOULD SUPPORT SYRIA AT THE UNITED NATIONS AND WOULD DO THEIR BEST TO SECURE ALL POSSIBLE MEASURES TO PREVENT THE ISRAELIS FROM CARRYING THROUGH THEIR INTENTIONS. HE NOTED THAT THE FOREIGN MINISTERS OF THE TEN HAD 'DEPLORED' THE ISRAELI ACTION: THIS WORDING WAS NOT STRONG ENOUGH - THE SYRIANS WANTED CONDEMNATION, FOLLOWED BY PRACTICAL MEASURES.
3. I TOOK NOTE OF THESE REPRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSED WITH THE AMPASSADORS WHAT ISRAELI MOTIVES MIGHT BE. I SAID I UNDERSTOOD THE ANGER AND FRUSTRATION FELT IN THE ARAB WORLD AND AGREED WITH

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MUCH OF THEIR ANALYSIS. I POINTED OUT, HOWEVER, THAT A RESOLUTION CALLING FOR SANCTIONS WOULD MOST PROBABLY MEET AN AMERICAN VETO AND THEIR HOPE FOR PRACTICAL MEASURES WOULD THUS BE DISAPPOINTED. IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT THEY SHOULD JUDGE CAREFULLY THE ACTION CALLED FOR AT THE SECURITY COUNCIL. AS FOR ARAB CRITICISM OF EUROPEAN EFFORTS SO FAR, I SAID THAT WE HAD NEVER BELIEVED WE COULD SOLVE THE MIDDLE EAST PROBLEM OURSELVES. THE COLLAPSE OF THE FEZ SUMMIT WAS AN INDICATION THAT THE ARAB COUNTRIES HAD THEMSELVES LOST AN OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE PROGRESS TOWARDS PEACEFUL NEGOTIATIONS.

4. THE MEETING WAS FRIENDLY THROUGHOUT, BUT THE AMBASSADOR MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE ARABS COULD NO LONGER COUNTENANCE MERE VERBAL CONDEMNATION OF ISRAEL. THIS TIME THEY WERE EXPECTING SERIOUS PRACTICAL MEASURES TO BE TAKEN.

CARRINGTON

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