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TO IMMEDIATE DAMASCUS

TELEGRAM NUMBER 165 OF 21 JULY

INFO IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON AND JEDDA: PRIORITY UKMIS NEW YORK, BAGHDAD, TEHRAN, TEL AVIV, PARIS, BEIRUT, TUNIS

WASHINGTON TELNO 2500: LEBANON: MR HURD'S CALL ON THE SYRIAN FOREIGN MINISTER

Prime Minister

This is difficult to  
reconcile with other  
accounts of the talks in  
Washington.

A-2C-22-7

1. MR HURD SPENT 30 MINUTES WITH KHADDAM AT HEATHROW THIS MORNING DURING THE FOREIGN MINISTER'S BRIEF TRANSIT BETWEEN WASHINGTON AND DAMASCUS.
2. KHADDAM SAID THAT HE AND PRINCE SAUD HAD DONE THEIR BEST TO MAKE THEIR VISIT TO WASHINGTON FRUITFUL. THE DISCUSSIONS HAD BEEN FRANK. THEY HAD STRESSED IMPLEMENTATION OF SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS AND ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM THE LEBANON: FOR THEIR PART THE AMERICANS HAD BEEN INSISTENT ON WITHDRAWAL BY THE PLO FROM BEIRUT. KHADDAM HAD TOLD THE AMERICANS THAT THE PLO WAS WILLING TO LEAVE BUT HAD NOWHERE TO GO. THE AMERICANS HAD SAID THAT THEY WOULD DO WHAT THEY COULD TO FIND A SUITABLE STATE, AND THAT THEY WOULD BE DISCUSSING THIS WITH THEIR ARAB FRIENDS. PRESIDENT REAGAN HAD AGREED THAT ISRAEL SHOULD WITHDRAW ENTIRELY FROM THE LEBANON BUT THERE HAD BEEN NO DISCUSSION ON A TIMETABLE OR A CLEAR FORMULA. NOR DID THE AMERICANS ACCEPT A CLEAR LINK BETWEEN THE CONFLICT IN THE LEBANON AND THE WIDER PALESTINIAN QUESTION. KHADDAM AND PRINCE SAUD WOULD BE REPORTING BACK TO THE ARAB LEAGUE AFTER THE EID HOLIDAY.
3. KHADDAM TOLD MR HURD THAT SYRIA WOULD NOT (NOT) BE PREPARED TO RECEIVE 'THE PLO FIGHTERS'. THIS WOULD SIMPLY MOVE THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM TO ANOTHER ARAB COUNTRY: WOULD BE TANTAMOUNT TO ACKNOWLEDGING ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO INVAD THE LEBANON: AND COULD POSE A SERIOUS DANGER TO SYRIA ITSELF. KHADDAM WAS NOT CLEAR, IN ANSWER TO A QUESTION, WHETHER SYRIA WOULD TAKE NON-FIGHTING MEMBERS OF THE PLO IF THEY COULD BE

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SPLIT UP: HE REPEATED THAT SYRIA WOULD ACCEPT NONE OF THEM HOWEVER LONG THE FIGHT CONTINUED.

4. MR HURD ASKED ABOUT PRESS REPORTS THAT THE PLO WOULD BE READY TO ACCEPT THE EXISTENCE OF ISRAEL ON THE CONDITION THAT ISRAEL ACCEPTED PALESTINIAN RIGHTS: AND THAT IN RETURN FOR THIS UNDERTAKING THEY EXPECTED DIRECT TALKS WITH THE AMERICANS. KHADDAM SAID THAT THIS HAD NOT COME UP IN WASHINGTON. THE PLO HAD TAKEN NO SUCH DECISION. NOR COULD THEY WITH SOME OF THEIR LEADERS BESIEGED IN BEIRUT AND SEPARATED FROM THEIR COLLEAGUES. NOR WAS IT OPEN TO ONE MAN OPEN SQUARE BRACKETS PRESUMABLY ARAFAT CLOSE SQUARE BRACKETS TO TAKE DECISIONS ON SUCH MATTERS. KHADDAM DID NOT AGREE THAT OUT OF THEIR PRESENT MILITARY REVERSE THE PLO WOULD BE ABLE TO MAKE POLITICAL PROGRESS. ANY POLITICAL MOVE IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES WOULD AMOUNT TO A POLITICAL DEFEAT. THE PALESTINIANS WERE NOW FACED WITH A NEW PERIOD OF CONTINUED OPPRESSION. PEOPLE DID NOT UNDERSTAND SUFFICIENTLY THAT RECENT EVENTS HAD BROUGHT TO AN END MODERATE PLO LEADERSHIP AND MADE INEVITABLE THE APPEARANCE OF MORE RADICAL LEADERS.

5. ON THE QUESTION OF A MULTI-NATIONAL FORCE TO SUPERVISE WITHDRAWAL KHADDAM INSISTED THAT THIS MUST BE UNDER UN AUSPICES. SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS ALREADY PROVIDED A LEGITIMATE INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR A FORCE. IF UNIFIL HAD BEEN INEFFECTIVE AGAINST THE ISRAEL INVASION, THEN DIFFERENT AND MORE EFFECTIVE RULES SHOULD BE DRAWN UP FOR THE FUTURE.

6. MR HURD ASKED WHETHER SYRIA WAS READY TO WITHDRAW FROM LEBANON. MR KHADDAM SAID THAT AFTER AN ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL THE SYRIANS WOULD AT ONCE WITHDRAW IF ASKED TO DO SO BY THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT AND AN ARAB SUMMIT.

7. KHADDAM WAS NOT DISTURBED BY THE PROSPECT OF A BLOODY BATTLE IF THE PLO DID NOT WITHDRAW FROM BEIRUT: 'THOSE WHO FIGHT FOR THEIR RIGHTS MUST MAKE GREAT SACRIFICES'. MR HURD SAID THAT THIS WOULD BE A CATASTROPHE FOR EVERYONE, IN PARTICULAR FOR THE ARABS WHO WOULD HAVE SHOWN THEMSELVES DISUNITED AND UNABLE TO SAVE ON ARAB CAPITAL. KHADDAM RETORTED THAT IT WAS BETTER FOR THE ARABS TO SUFFER ENORMOUS CASUALTIES THAN FOR

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ARAFAT TO BE FORCED TO LEAVE BEIRUT IN IGNOMINY. THE SHOCK OF THOUSANDS OF DEATHS WOULD FURTHER THE CAUSE OF ARAB UNITY AND HASTEN ISRAEL'S DEFEAT. HE ACCEPTED THAT THE INVASION HAD CREATED A CHANGE OF ATTITUDE IN THE WEST AND A NEW OPPORTUNITY. HE ACCEPTED TOO THAT IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE TO THROW THIS AWAY. BUT HE DID NOT SEE THIS AS A REASON TO RUSH INTO AN AGREEMENT.

8. THERE WAS A BRIEF DISCUSSION ON IRAN/IRAQ. KHADDAM REFERRED TO KHOMEINI IN TERMS OF A SAVIOUR TO THE TRUE ARAB CAUSE. IF IRAN WISHED TO SEND 'A MILLION MEN' TO JERUSALEM SYRIA WOULD WELCOME THEM IRRESPECTIVE OF THE ROUTE THEY CHOSE TO REACH THEIR OBJECTIVE.

9. COMMENT: KHADDAM THOUGH GOOD HUMOURED WAS AS OBDURATE, HARD-LINE AND PARADOXICAL AS EVER. HIS CONVERSATION BECAME MORE IMPASSIONED THE FURTHER THAT ARAB PROBLEMS WERE EXAMINED. HE APPEARED AS CONVINCED AS EVER THAT A LONG DRAWN-OUT STRUGGLE REMAINED INEVITABLE. BY CONTRAST IN A PRIVATE WORD WITH MR HURD AFTERWARDS HE SAID THAT THE TALKS IN WASHINGTON HAD BEEN CONSTRUCTIVE AND HE HOPED SOMETHING WOULD COME OF THEM. HE ADDED THAT SYRIA APPRECIATED THE STAND WHICH HMG HAD TAKEN OVER THE LEBANON. MR HURD MENTIONED THE SECRETARY OF STATE'S HOPE TO VISIT SYRIA BEFORE LONG: KHADDAM WELCOMED THIS.

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STANDARD

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EESD	CONS D
ECD	CONS EM UNIT
WED	CABINET OFFICE

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