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FM FCO 241736Z SEP 82
TO IMMEDIATE PEKING
TELEGRAM NUMBER 455 OF 24 SEPTEMBER

FOLLOWING TELEGRAM NOW REPEATED TO YOU FOR PS/PM AT REQUEST OF PLANNING STAFF WAS RECEIVED FROM WASHINGTON TELEGRAM NUMBER 3139 OF 23 SEPTEMBER.

INFO IMMEDIATE TEL AVIV, BEIRUT, PRIORITY PARIS, ROME, MOSCOW, AMMAN, DAMASCUS, CAIRO, JEDDA, TUNIS AND UKMIS NEW YORK.

LEBANON

1. AS THE EXTENT OF ISRAELI INVOLVEMENT IN LAST WEEK'S MASSACRE IN LEBANON IS BECOMING KNOWN AND THE ISRAELI CABINET STATEMENT OF 19 SEPTEMBER (WHICH APPEARED AS A FULL PAGE ADVERTISEMENT IN LEADING U S NEWSPAPERS) REVEALED AS INSENSITIVE AND INACCURATE, AMERICAN CRITICISM OF BEGIN HAS REACHED UNPRECEDENTED LEVELS. HIS REFUSAL OF AN INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION HAS ATTRACTED CENSURE, EVEN FROM POLITICIANS AND JOURNALISTS WHO ARE NORMALLY WHOLLY COMMITTED TO ISRAEL. SENATOR KENNEDY HAS CALLED FOR A FULL ENQUIRY. SENATOR CRANSTON, IN A LETTER TO BEGIN, SAID THAT THE RECENT BEHAVIOUR OF ISRAELI FORCES IN BEIRUT WAS CAUSING DEEP CONCERN AND EXPRESSIONS OF OUTRAGE. IT INCREASINGLY APPEARED THAT BEGIN-SHARON HAD SUBSTITUTED NAKED MILITARY FORCE FOR A BALANCED FOREIGN POLICY WHICH SHOULD REFLECT "A DECENT RESPECT FOR THE OPINION OF MANKIND" (A DELIBERATE QUOTE FROM JEFFERSON). CRANSTON ALSO CALLED FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF ISRAELI FORCES FROM LEBANON WHEN THE MULTINATIONAL FORCE ARRIVED AND FOR BEGIN TO RECONSIDER THE PRESIDENT'S MIDDLE EAST INITIATIVE.

2. THE PRESS HAVE BEEN EQUALLY CRITICAL. EVEN GEORGE WILL AND WILLIAM SAFIRE HAVE BROUGHT THEMSELVES TO CRITICISE BEGIN.

LEBANON WHEN THE MULTINATIONAL FORCE ARRIVED AND FOR BEGIN TO RECONSIDER THE PRESIDENT'S MIDDLE EAST INITIATIVE.

2. THE PRESS HAVE BEEN EQUALLY CRITICAL. EVEN GEORGE WILL AND WILLIAM SAFIRE HAVE BROUGHT THEMSELVES TO CRITICISE BEGIN. OTHER COLUMNISTS HAVE BEEN MORE OUTSPOKEN. MARY MCGRORY (WASHINGTON POST) SAYS THAT BEGIN'S DISCLAIMERS OF ALL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE MASSACRES ARE NOT MERELY SHAMEFUL, BUT ABSURD, AND ANTHONY LEWIS (NEW YORK TIMES) DESCRIBES BEGIN'S CLOSING HIS EYES TO EVEL AS AN ASTOUNDING OFFENCE TO JEWISH VALUES. IRVING HOWE, IN A NEW YORK TIMES ARTICLE WHICH REFLECTS THE VIEWS OF MANY JEWISH-AMERICANS, SAYS THAT AFTER BEIRUT SILENCE IS IMPOSSIBLE "FOR WARM FRIENDS OF ISRAEL, OPEN CRITICS OF BEGIN-SHARON". FOUR LEADING US-JEWISH ORGANISATIONS, INCLUDING B'NAI B'RITH AND THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE, HAVE CALLED FOR A FULL ENQUIRY.

3. THE ADMINISTRATION ARE AWARE OF THE DANGER OF BECOMING INVOLVED IN THE POLITICAL DEBATE IN ISRAEL, WHICH MIGHT GIVE BEGIN A PRETEXT TO RALLY POLITICAL SUPPORT AGAINST U.S GOVERNMENT INTERFERENCE. IN PUBLIC COMMENT, THEY HAVE DISCLAIMED ANY INTEREST IN BRINGING ABOUT A CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT IN ISRAEL AND HAVE AS FAR AS POSSIBLE ALLOWED THE FACTS OF LAST WEEK'S EVENTS TO SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES. VELIOTES REFUSED YESTERDAY TO TESTIFY TO A HOUSE SUB-COMMITTEE IN OPEN SESSION. NE E EESSZ YEN ARTICLE ZS ZES E EAY'S NEW YORK TIMES WHICH CLEARLY REFLECTS WHITE HOUSE BREIFING, DESCRIBES THE PRESIDENT'S GROWING FRUSTRATION IN DEALING WITH THE ISRAELI LEADERS AND IRRITATION THAT THEY HAVE MISID TO HAVE BEEN DEEPLY SHOCKED BY THE BEIRUT MASSACRES. BUT THE ARTICLE ALSO QUOTES PRESIDENTIAL AIDES AS SAYING THAT REAGAN CONSIDERS BEGIN'S FUTURE PURELYH AN INTERNAL ISRAELI MATTER AND IS AWARE THAT ANY ECONOMIC, MILITARY OR POLITICAL PRESSURE AGAINST ISRAEL WOULD BE COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE.

4. U S OFFICIALS ARE, HOWEVER, ARGUING THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO INCREASE IN THE ADMINISTRATIONS PROPOSED DOLLARS 2.4 BILLION AID PACKAGE FOR ISRAEL. ISRAEL'S SUPPORTERS IN CONGRESS EARLIER THIS YEAR ADDED TO THE PACKAGE DOLLARS 200 MILLION - DOLLARS 300 MILLION IN NEW MILITARY GRANTS AND DOLLARS 125 MILLION TO COVER INTEREST ON OLD U S LOANS TO ISRAEL.

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