

Prime Minister

GRS240

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TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 885 OF 6 APRIL

INFO PRIORITY AMMAN, KUWAIT, JEDDA, CAIRO, TEL AVIV,
UKMIS NEW YORK, ROUTINE BEIRUT, DAMASCUS, ALGIERS, TUNIS, RABAT.

MIPT

ISRAEL/LEBANON

1. VELIOTES TOLD MINISTER THIS EVENING THAT THE TALKS WERE OBVIOUSLY STALLED. HABIB INTENDED TO RETURN TO ISRAEL THIS WEEKEND TO SEE IF THE ISRAELIS HAD DIGESTED HIS WARNINGS ABOUT THE PRACTICAL LIMITS ON LEBANESE ABILITY TO REACH AN AGREEMENT. HE WOULD ALSO SEE IF THE PRESIDENT'S STRONG REMARKS ABOUT WITHHOLDING THE F16S HAD SUNK IN. HE EXPECTED THAT THE ISRAELIS MIGHT BE TRUCULENT TO BEGIN WITH, BUT SOONER OR LATER THEY MUST RECOGNISE THAT THEIR CONTINUED OCCUPATION OF SOUTHERN LEBANON HAD RAISED DEEP CONCERN IN THE U S, NOT LEAST WITH THE PRESIDENT, WHO WAS NOW FIRMLY CONVINCED THAT ISRAEL'S QUOTE ARMY OF OCCUPATION UNQUOTE MUST BE WITHDRAWN BEFORE FULL COOPERATION BETWEEN THE U S AND ISRAEL CAN BE RESTORED.

2. VELIOTES SAID THAT SHAMIR HAD RECENTLY ARGUED IN WASHINGTON THAT THE F16S SHOULD BE RELEASED IN ORDER TO SHOW THE RUSSIANS THAT NOTWITHSTANDING U S CONCERN ABOUT ISRAELI BEHAVIOUR IN THE LEBANON, THE AMERICANS WOULD NOT LEAVE ISRAEL AT THE MERCY OF THE SOVIET ARMS RECENTLY SUPPLIED TO SYRIA. THIS HAD BEEN EXHAUSTIVELY DISCUSSED IN THE WHITE HOUSE, BUT THE DECISION HAD BEEN TAKEN TO CONTINUE TO DENY THE AIRCRAFT.

3. VELIOTES ADDED THAT THE JEWISH LOBBY IN THE U S HAD BEEN COMPARATIVELY RESTRAINED ON THE F16S SINCE ISRAEL'S OCCUPATION OF LEBANON WAS STRIKINGLY UNPOPULAR IN CONGRESS.

WRIGHT

MIDDLE EAST

STANDARD

NENAD	MAED
MED	ESSD
NAD	ERD
SAD	ESID
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