

FILE - 1

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LNCYAN 2386 TFHPAN 0533
CONFIDENTIAL
DD 091200Z CAOFF
FM ROME TO FCOLN
091020Z JUN
GRS 722

CONFIDENTIAL
UK COMMS ONLY
FM ROME

TO DESKBY 091200Z FCO
TELNO 362
OF 091020Z JUNE 87
AND TO DESKBY 091200Z CABINET OFFICE (FOR ASSESSMENTS STAFF)
INFO DESKBY 091200Z VENICE (FOR DELEGATION TO ECONOMIC SUMMIT)
INFO DESKBY 091200Z MODUK

CD
9/6

Mr Hall 9/6
Mr P. Craddock 9/6
we have nothing to add.

flightht
9.6.

OUR TELNO 360: EXPLOSION AT BRITISH EMBASSY FROM FITZHERBERT

SUMMARY

1. MORE INFORMATION IS NOW BECOMING AVAILABLE ABOUT THE EXPLOSIONS THIS MORNING AT THE BRITISH AND AMERICAN EMBASSIES. STILL NO IDENTIFICATION OF RESPONSIBILITY.

DETAIL

2. THE ITALIAN AUTHORITIES HAVE NOW DISCOVERED A PRIMITIVE MORTAR-TYPE LAUNCHING DEVICE HIDDEN BEHIND A TEMPORARY FENCE JUST OPPOSITE THIS EMBASSY, FROM WHICH IT APPEARS THE EXPLOSIVE WAS LAUNCHED. THERE WAS A CHEMICAL TIME FUSE WHICH ALLOWED THE PERPETRATORS TO GET AWAY BEFORE THE DEVICE ACTUALLY FIRED. THERE ARE STILL NO REPORTS OF ANYBODY HAVING BEEN SEEN ON THE SPOT DESPITE THE 24 HOUR POLICE GUARD AT THE EMBASSY'S MAIN GATE, WHICH IS DIRECTLY OPPOSITE THE POINT FROM WHICH THE DEVICE WAS FIRED.

3. FURTHER DETAILS ARE NOW AVAILABLE OF THE ATTACK AGAINST THE AMERICAN EMBASSY. THE AMERICANS HAVE TOLD US THAT THERE WERE TWO SEPARATE EXPLOSIONS, BOTH AT ABOUT 0740 (LOCAL). ONE WAS A CAR BOMB IN VIA BONCOMPAGNI ON THE NORTHERN SIDE OF THE EMBASSY COMPOUND AND NEXT TO THE EXCELSIOR HOTEL. THIS WAS A BIG EXPLOSION, AND PARTS OF THE CAR ENDED UP IN THE EMBASSY CAR PARK. SOME WINDOWS WERE BROKEN AND ONE OR MORE ITALIAN PASSERS BY WERE INJURED, NONE SERIOUSLY. THE EXPLOSION ALSO CAUSED A NEIGHBOURING CAR TO EXPLODE. AT ABOUT THE SAME TIME AT LEAST TWO EXPLOSIVE DEVICES WERE LAUNCHED AT THE FRONT OF THE EMBASSY IN VIA VENETO, FROM A LAUNCHING DEVICE ON A FOURTH FLOOR BALCONY OF THE HOTEL AMBASCIATORE OPPOSITE THE MAIN EMBASSY ENTRANCE. MINOR DAMAGE WAS CAUSED. NO ONE WAS HURT. INITIAL INVESTIGATIONS SUGGEST THAT BOTH THE LAUNCHER AND THE DEVICES WERE CRUDE AND HOME MADE.

4. ACCORDING TO THE ITALIAN RADIO NEWS, THE CAR BOMB WAS IN A FORD SIERRA, AND PARTS OF IT WERE BLOWN INTO A ROOM ON THE FIFTH STOREY OF THE HOTEL EXCELSIOR OPPOSITE THE US EMBASSY. THE RADIO ALSO CLAIMS THAT A SOUTH KOREAN NATIONAL HAD BEEN RENTING THE ROOM IN THE AMBASCIATORE HOTEL FROM THE BALCONY OF WHICH THE DEVICES WERE LAUNCHED AGAINST THE EMBASSY. THE NEWS CLAIMS THAT THE INVESTIGATORS BELIEVE THAT THE ATTACKS WERE CARRIED OUT BY MIDDLE EASTERN TERRORISTS, DESPITE THE APPARENT INVOLVEMENT OF A SOUTH KOREAN.

5. THE AMERICANS HAVE CONFIRMED TO US THE GENERAL LINES OF THESE REPORTS, BUT DIFFER IN DETAIL. ACCORDING TO THEM THE CAR WAS A RENAULT, HIRED FROM A CAR RENTAL COMPANY IN GENOA. THE ROOM IN THE AMBASCIATORE HOTEL WAS HIRED BY A MAN WITH A CHINESE NAME AND A CANADIAN PASSPORT, NOT A SOUTH KOREAN. THE AMERICANS HAVE ALSO POINTED TO THE POSSIBLE SIMILARITY WITH INCIDENTS AT THE TOKYO SUMMIT, WHEN THE JAPANESE RED ARMY APPARENTLY FIRED SOME INCENDIARY DEVICES. THE AMERICANS REGARD THIS SIMILARITY AS HEIGHTENED BY THE APPARENT ORIENTAL ORIGIN OF AN INDIVIDUAL INVOLVED IN THE ATTACK FROM THE AMBASCIATORE HOTEL.

6. NO OTHER SUMMIT 7 EMBASSIES HAVE BEEN ATTACKED. THE POLICE HAVE TOLD US THAT A CAR BOMB HAS BEEN DISCOVERED THIS MORNING AT FIUMICINO AIRPORT, AND SAFELY DEFUSED.

7. TODAY'S NEWSPAPERS CARRY A REPORT OF A TELEPHONE CALL IN BEIRUT BY ISLAMIC JIHAD THREATENING TO STRIKE AGAINST ITALIAN INTERESTS WHEREVER THEY MAY BE FOUND. THE COMMUNIQUE LINKS THIS THREAT WITH THE VISIT OF RONALD REAGAN TO VENICE WHICH SHOWS THE CLOSE COOPERATION BETWEEN THE CIA AND ITALIAN SECURITY SERVICES FOR THE PURPOSES OF STRIKING OUR PALESTINE BROTHERS, ACCORDING TO THE COMMUNIQUE. THE LOCAL POLICE DO NOT ATTACH PARTICULAR SIGNIFICANCE TO THIS THREAT, WHICH IS LITTLE DIFFERENT FROM OTHERS WHICH HAVE BEEN MADE FREQUENTLY IN THE PAST.

8. IT IS STILL TOO EARLY TO SAY WHO WAS BEHIND THE ATTACKS WHICH SEEM CLEARLY TO BE LINKED. NO CLAIMS OF RESPONSIBILITY HAVE YET BEEN RECEIVED. HOWEVER THE FACT THAT THE EXPLOSIVE DEVICES LAUNCHED AGAINST THE AMERICAN EMBASSY ORIGINATED FROM A HOTEL SHOULD GIVE THE LOCAL SECURITY AUTHORITIES PLENTY OF LEADS. WE ARE CONTINUING TO REMAIN IN CLOSE CONTACT WITH THEM AND WILL REPORT DEVELOPMENTS.

9. THE MAYOR OF ROME AND THE CHIEF OF POLICE IN ROME HAVE CALLED AT THE EMBASSY TO EXPRESS THEIR REGRETS AND SYMPATHY. WE HAVE ALSO RECEIVED AN EXPRESSION OF REGRET FROM THE MFA.

10. FCO PLEASE PASS VENICE. CABINET OFFICE PLEASE PASS SNUFFBOX.

BRIDGES

YYYY

ZCZC

TELEX FLASH TO VENICE
INFO IMMEDIATE MILAN - FLORENCE - NAPLES - GENOA
FROM BRITISH EMBASSY ROME -

This was
outside our
Embassy in
Rome.

EXPLOSION AT BRITISH EMBASSY, ROME

1. (FOR VENICE) PLEASE PASS THE FOLLOWING TEXT OF OUR PRESS LINE TO
HMA URGENTLY.

LINE TO TAKE

2. AT ABOUT 0700 (LOCAL) THERE WAS A SMALL EXPLOSION IN THE
ARTIFICIAL LAKE IN FRONT OF THE MAIN EMBASSY BUILDING. NO DAMAGE WAS
CAUSED, AND THERE WERE NO CASUALTIES. WE ARE IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH THE
POLICE AUTHORITIES, WHO ARE INVESTIGATING.

IN RESPONSE TO ENQUIRIES:

3. ANY CLAIMS?

NO.

4. WHO MAY BE BEHIND IT?

DON'T KNOW.

5. CONNECTION WITH EXPLOSION AT US EMBASSY?

TOO EARLY TO SAY.

END
NORTHERN

DIST:

UKDEL VENICE
PLUS HMA ROME.