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C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 003734

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TEXT

TAGS: PREL, AR, IS
SUBJECT: ISRAELI FONMIN'S VISIT A SURPRISE PLUS FOR
- BILATERAL RELATIONS

1. CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT

SUMMARY

2. ISRAELI FOREIGN MINISTER SHIMON PERES' TECHNICAL STOP-OVER IN BUENOS AIRES JUNE 1, AT THE END OF A THREE-COUNTRY TOUR OF LATIN AMERICA, TURNED INTO THE HIGHLIGHT OF HIS TOUR, ACCORDING TO ISRAELI DCM. PEREZ MET UNEXPECTEDLY WITH PRESIDENT MENEM FOR OVER AN HOUR, AND THE TWO EXCHANGED VIEWS ON BILATERAL RELATIONS AND THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST. THE ISRAELIS ARE VERY PLEASED WITH THE VISIT, AND WITH THE CONTINUING SIGNS OF CORDIALITY IN THE RELATIONSHIP.
END SUMMARY

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UNEXPECTED BONUS

2. PERES ORIGINALLY WAS EXPECTED TO MAKE A ONE-HOUR LAYOVER IN BUENOS AIRES, AFTER HAVING MADE OFFICIAL VISITS TO MEXICO, COLOMBIA AND CHILE, EN ROUTE TO MOROCCO AND TEL AVIV. ACCORDING TO DCM RAFAEL ELDAD, WHEN THE MFA LEARNED THAT THE TECHNICAL STOP-OVER WAS TO BE PROLONGED TO FOUR HOURS, MINISTER DI TELLA EXPRESSED INTEREST IN GOING TO THE AIRPORT TO MEET WITH PERES. THEN, WHEN MENEM LEARNED OF THE FOREIGN MINISTER'S CHANGE IN SCHEDULE, HE INSISTED THAT HE COME TO GOVERNMENT HOUSE FOR A FORMAL MEETING. MENEM, WHO HAD ANNOUNCED PLANS EARLY IN THE WEEK TO REMAIN AT THE OLIVOS RESIDENCE "RESTING," MADE A SPECIAL TRIP TO THE CASA ROSADA TO RECEIVE PERES. WHEN THE MEETING LASTED LONGER THAN EXPECTED, AND IT BECAME APPARENT THAT PERES WOULD BE LATE FOR HIS FLIGHT, MENEM OFFERED THE EXECUTIVE HELICOPTER TO TAKE THE ISRAELI TO EZEIZA, AND ARRANGED FOR A 20-MINUTE DELAY IN THE DEPARTURE OF THE AEROLINEAS ARGENTINAS FLIGHT.

THE TALKS

3. ACCORDING TO ELDAD, ALTHOUGH FOREIGN MINISTER DI TELLA AND SEVERAL MFA OFFICIALS ATTENDED THE MEETING WITH MENEM, ALONG WITH THE ISRAELI AMBASSADOR AND PEOPLE FROM HIS MISSION, ONLY MENEM AND PERES SPOKE -- THROUGH AN ENGLISH-SPANISH INTERPRETER. THEY DISCUSSED A NUMBER OF TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP, THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS, AND ISRAELI RELATIONS WITH SYRIA. NEITHER MENEM NOR PERES RAISED THE ISSUE OF THE 1993 BOMBING OF THE ISRAELI EMBASSY HERE, NOR THE ITALIAN REQUEST FOR EXTRADITION OF A FORMER NAZI DISCOVERED RECENTLY LIVING IN SOUTHERN ARGENTINA. IN PUBLIC COMMENTS LATER, PERES CLAIMED INVOLVEMENT OF A "FOREIGN EMBASSY" IN THE DESTRUCTION OF ISRAEL'S EMBASSY.

COMMENT

4. ELDAD AND AMBASSADOR AVIRAN WERE ECSTATIC OVER THE RESULTS OF WHAT WAS TO HAVE BEEN A ONE-HOUR STOPOVER ON PERES' SCHEDULE. THEY CONTINUE TO BE VERY PLEASED -- AND SOMEWHAT AMAZED -- AT THE WARMTH OF ARGENTINE-ISRAELI TIES, AND AT THE SPECIAL DEFERENCE SHOWN THEM BY PRESIDENT MENEM AND FOREIGN MINISTER DI TELLA. ELDAD ALSO WAS VERY POSITIVE ABOUT THE NEW ARGENTINE AMBASSADOR IN TEL AVIV, JOSE MARIA OTEGUI. CHEEK

ADMIN
END OF MESSAGE

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